



Women As Cultural Agents In The Kokand Khanate In 19th Century: Gender, Education, And Intellectual Life

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Abstract

This article examines women as cultural agents in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century, with particular attention to gender, education, and intellectual life in Central Asia. The study highlights that women were not merely passive members of society or figures confined to domestic roles, but active participants in educational, literary, religious, and cultural processes. Special attention is given to the role of female educators known as *otin* and *otinoyi*, who contributed to girls' literacy, religious instruction, moral upbringing, and the transmission of cultural values. The article also analyzes the intellectual and literary contributions of prominent women such as Jahon Otin Uvaysiy, Mohlaroyim Nodira, Dilshod Barno, Mahzuna, and Anbar Otin. Using historical, gender-based, cognitive-discursive, and linguocultural approaches, the research demonstrates that women's cultural agency in the Kokand Khanate was shaped by social status, family background, religious knowledge, literary competence, and access to educational or courtly environments. The findings show that girls' education and women's intellectual activity were socially embedded and culturally meaningful phenomena that played an important role in preserving religious values, moral norms, literary traditions, and cultural identity in nineteenth-century Central Asia.

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Introduction

Since ancient times, women have been regarded as a fundamental component of society and one of the key factors reflecting culture. Although the concept of gender is relatively new in fields such as linguistics, politics, and social life, it has, in essence, existed since ancient times and encompasses ideas about the role of women in the cultural and spiritual life of humanity. A woman is not merely a means of continuing the human race; she is also a central pillar of societal development.

A woman's engagement in education forms a solid foundation for the intellectual and cultural development of her family, her children, her relatives, and society as a whole. As our wise scholars have said, "If a man is educated, his child will be educated; if a woman is educated, the nation will be educated."

Thus, from ancient times, society has been deeply interested in women being educated, wise, and virtuous. In developed societies, the level of progress and civilization is determined by the attitude toward women and the opportunities created for them. The pages of Uzbekistan's history contain many courageous, poetic, scholarly, and intelligent women who have always impressed others with their wisdom and thoughtful advice.

Figures such as Tomyris, Saroymulik Khanum, Gawhar Shad Begum, Khanzada Begum, and Zeb-un-Nissa Begum serve as clear examples. In particular, Amir Timur always listened to the words of Saroymulik Khanum (also called Bibikhanum), valued her advice, and the Timurid princes were largely raised under her guidance. Among these royal women, especially noteworthy is Gawhar Shad Begum, the mother of Ulugh Beg, who had her own personal signet ring, which is preserved today in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.

The study of women's issues is inextricably linked to the history of social relations, nations and states, as well as the development of cultures and civilizations in human society. Women's rights have been examined in different historical periods in connection with politics and religion; as a result, the image of women in language has been reflected both positively and negatively.

The examination of women's issues is closely intertwined with the historical development of social relations, nations and states, as well as cultural and civilizational processes within human society. Across different historical periods, women's rights have been interpreted through the lenses of politics and religion, which has led to the representation of women in language in both positive and negative ways.

In the modern era, the growing involvement of women in the socio-political spheres of society has contributed to significant changes in societal perceptions. This transformation has, in turn, encouraged increased scholarly attention in linguistics to the concept of women and its representation in language.

Just as the principles of human rights are of fundamental importance, the issue of women's rights is equally pressing and relevant in contemporary discourse.

The expansion of women's participation in the socio-political life of society has led to a transformation in human perceptions. This shift has, in turn, stimulated the emergence of research in linguistics focusing on the concept of women and its representation in language.

Just as the ideas of human rights are of paramount importance, women's rights are equally relevant and urgent. The study demonstrates that certain proverbs and sayings, which assign a burdensome fate to women and promote the notion that "a woman is the property of a man, an obedient servant," as well as attempts to legitimize such inequality by "sanctifying it in the name of God," are fundamentally erroneous [1.58].

In this study, the concept of women is analyzed within the frameworks of cognitive linguistics and linguocultural studies — rapidly developing fields of modern scholarship — while also being examined under the "regulatory" norms of national culture. In addition, the research aims to explore the issues of women as cultural subjects in the Kokand Khanate, focusing on gender, education, and intellectual life in nineteenth-century Central Asia [2.3].

Materials

In the cultures of various nations, different aspects of the concept of women have been explored by scholars in linguistics, sociology, law, and Islamic studies. In particular, the concept of women has been examined by F. B. Mukhutdinova within French linguocultural studies, by V. V. Vasyuk in the context of English linguoculture, by L. V. Adonina in Russian cultural studies, and by E. V. Belik from the perspective of English linguocultural analysis.

It should be emphasized, however, that to date the concept of women has not been systematically investigated through a comparative approach in French and Uzbek languages. The distinguishing feature of this study lies in the fact that, for the first time, a comparative analysis of the concept of women in language and culture is conducted on the basis of a cognitive system that encompasses the totality of knowledge associated with society [3, 4, 5, 6].

During the course of this research, the theoretical perspectives of prominent scholars such as Ronald Langacker, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, S. A. Askoldov-Alekseev, Yuri Stepanov, Anna Wierzbicka, E. S. Kubryakova, I. A. Sternin, and S. T. Vorkachev were employed as a conceptual framework. In the field of gender studies, the works of A. V. Kirilina, I. I. Khaleeva, and E. Goroshko were also utilized, while contributions to linguocultural studies by V. A. Maslova and V. V. Vorobyov were taken into account. Additionally, key ideas from cognitive linguistics developed by Ray Jackendoff, Charles Fillmore, Marvin Minsky, Gilles Fauconnier, D. S. Likhachev, and O. A. Kolosova were incorporated.

Furthermore, the research drew upon the theoretical contributions of Uzbek linguists such as D. U. Ashurova, Sh. Safarov, O' Q. Yusupov, A. A. Abduazizov, A. Sodiqov, A. E. Mamatov, and J. A. Yakubov, among others. In particular, the theories advanced by S. A. Askoldov-Alekseev, Yuri Stepanov, and S. T. Vorkachev served as the primary methodological foundation of the study.

Methods

The Research adopts an interdisciplinary methodological framework combining historical, linguistic, gender-based approaches to find out women as cultural subjects in the Kokand Khanate of the nineteenth century. First, a comparative historical analysis is employed to situate the role of women in the Kokand Khanate within the broader context of Central Asian socio-political and cultural development. This approach enables the identification of similarities and differences between regional models of gender relations and intellectual life. Secondly, the research includes a gender analysis framework to investigate the social status between men and women, educational opportunities, as well as intellectual participation of women in last centuries. Last but not least, a cognitive discourse analysis is applied to explore how the concept of "women" is constructed in historical texts and cultural narratives and the role of female in the family, society and cultural life of the khanate. This method is grounded in cognitive linguistics, particularly the works which were written by scholars and writers in the nineteenth century to shape conceptual structures like "mother", "educated woman", "female governor" etc. In addition to the methods which were mentioned above, a linguocultural analysis is conducted to examine the representation of women in language, including lexical units and written discourse. This approach reveals the interaction between language, culture, and gender ideology.

The empirical basis of the study consists of archival and historical sources, including manuscripts, official documents, literary texts, and travel accounts related to the Kokand Khanate. These materials are analyzed using qualitative content analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and culturally embedded meanings. Overall, the integration of these methods ensures a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of women's roles as cultural and intellectual agents in nineteenth-century Central Asia.

In the late 1960s, philosophers and sociologists introduced a conceptual distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender. From this perspective, gender is understood not only as a biological category but also as a psychological, social, and cultural construct. Accordingly, the present study is based on the examination of women as cultural subjects in the cultural life of Kokand. Such an approach allows the research to reinterpret women's roles beyond traditional domestic boundaries and to analyze their participation in education, literature, intellectual activity, and broader socio-cultural processes.

Research

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the cultural life of Kokand experienced remarkable growth. During this period, the city of Kokand had around 120 schools, 40 madrasas and mosques, while Margilan had approximately 80 schools and 10 madrasas and mosques. These educational and religious institutions played an important role in the intellectual and cultural development of the region. Girls' education in the Kokand Khanate was strongly connected with religious learning. Its main purpose was to develop elementary literacy, teach Qur'anic reading, introduce basic Islamic principles, and form proper moral behavior. Girls were taught to read Arabic script, memorize short surahs, and understand essential religious duties such as prayer, fasting, and ethical conduct. At the same time, their education was not restricted only to religious rituals. Many girls also became familiar with Persian and Turkic poetry, moral-didactic texts, basic historical knowledge, and rules of etiquette. This wider educational content reflected the cultural character of Central Asian Islamic society, where religious instruction existed alongside literary and artistic traditions.

The acceptance and continuation of girls' education largely depended on female teachers known as **otin**. These women were usually literate, well-informed in religious matters, and respected within their local communities. They functioned not only as instructors, but also as moral advisers, social mediators, and preservers of cultural memory. In many cases, otins obtained their status through family tradition, while others gained authority through their piety, knowledge, and teaching experience. Their influence did not directly oppose male religious authority; rather, it functioned within socially accepted female spaces, especially in the home and community-based educational settings. In this way, women were able to play an important educational role while remaining within the gender expectations of the period.

In the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, Kokand became a significant center of learning, literature, and enlightenment, producing a number of prominent creative figures. The Kokand ruler Umar Khan paid special attention to the advancement of science, culture, and literature, as well as to the improvement of teaching and learning processes in madrasas and the establishment of various vocational schools.

Umar Khan himself wrote poetry under the pen name Amiri and gathered more than seventy poets around his literary circle. In 1821, by the order of Umar Khan, Fazliy Namangoniy compiled *Majmuayi Shoiron*, an anthology containing the poems of sixty-three poets. This collection included more than ten thousand lines of poetry in Uzbek and Persian-Tajik, representing such genres as ghazal, mukhammas, and tuyuk. During this period, books written in Arabic and Persian were translated into Uzbek. Rare manuscripts were copied by talented calligraphers and decorated with delicate illustrations. Amiri composed poems in both Uzbek and Persian, and his divan of ghazals was later published in Istanbul in 1882 and in Tashkent in 1905 [7]. During this period, women's interest in education and upbringing was

also noticeably significant. The lives and literary activities of such poetesses as Jahon Otin Uvaysiy and Nodirabegim clearly demonstrate the presence of educated women in the intellectual environment of that time.

The literary milieu of Kokand cannot be imagined without the creative legacy of Jahon Otin, who wrote under the pen name Uvaysiy (1779–1845), and Mohlaroyim, known as Nodira. Uvaysiy's family was one of the progressive and enlightened families of its time. Her father wrote in both Uzbek and Tajik, and the intellectual atmosphere within the family played an important role in developing Uvaysiy's literary talent. She studied the works of Alisher Navoi, Lutfiy, Babur, Fuzuli, and Jami with great diligence.

By the nineteenth century, Uvaysiy had become a well-known poetess among the people. Her talent deeply impressed Nodira, the wife of Umar Khan. After Umar Khan ascended the throne of Kokand, Uvaysiy was invited to Kokand. There, she mentored many young people and established a close creative collaboration with Nodira.

Her literary work is distinguished by its humanistic and people-oriented spirit. According to historical sources, Uvaysiy left behind four lyrical divans and three epic poems. Her works express ideas such as respect for human dignity, friendship, loyalty, devotion, concern for the homeland, and sympathy for the sufferings of the people. The high artistic quality of Uvaysiy's poetry can be clearly observed in her well-known poem about the pomegranate:

*Bu na gumbazdir, eshigi, tynugidin yo 'q nishon,
Necha gulgunpo 'sh qizlar manzil aylabdur makon.
Sindurub gumbazni, qizlar holidin olsam xabar,
Yuzlarida parda tortug 'liq tururlar, bag 'ri qon.*

(In this poem, the poet describes a **pomegranate** through metaphorical and symbolic imagery. The “dome” refers to the round shape of the pomegranate. The fact that it has “no door or window” suggests that the fruit is closed and sealed from the outside. The “rose-clad girls” symbolize the red seeds inside the pomegranate. When the “dome” is broken, the seeds appear, covered with a thin membrane like a “veil.” Their “hearts filled with blood” refers to the deep red juice of the pomegranate seeds.)

One important aspect of Jahon Otin's teaching practice was her use of literature as an educational tool. In her pedagogical method, poetry functioned not only as a means of memorization but also as a way of shaping moral consciousness. Through poetic texts, students were able to absorb ethical ideas in an aesthetically meaningful and emotionally effective form. Uvaysiy's own poems were also used in the learning process, as they combined spiritual thought with clear and accessible expression. This approach was consistent with the broader Islamic educational tradition, in which poetry had long served as an important medium for passing knowledge, values, and cultural memory from one generation to another. For girls, poetry created a socially acceptable space for intellectual development, moral reflection, and self-expression.

The educational work of Jahon Otin and other women teachers should also be considered in relation to the wider historical context of the Kokand Khanate. The nineteenth century was a period of political instability, economic difficulty, and growing pressure from the Russian Empire. Under such circumstances, education performed an important social function by strengthening collective identity, moral discipline, and cultural continuity. Although girls' education was not always clearly reflected in official documents, it contributed significantly to the formation of family ethics and social solidarity. Educated women helped preserve religious traditions, moral values, and cultural practices during times of social and political uncertainty.

Mokhlaroyim Nodira

Mokhlaroyim Nodira (1792–1842), an Uzbek poetess, enlightener, and stateswoman, was born in Andijan. Her father, Rahmonqulibiy, was the governor of Andijan and the uncle of Olim Khan, the ruler of Kokand. After Umar Khan was appointed governor of Margilan, he married Nodira.

After becoming acquainted with Uvaysiy, Nodira invited her to serve as a teacher for young children and female servants. Following the accession of her son, Muhammad Ali Khan, to the throne, Nodira actively participated in the administration of the state and commissioned the construction of madrasas [7].

Based on the information provided and the sources cited, it becomes clear that women's interest in education and upbringing was also significant in the nineteenth century. Although certain social restrictions may have existed, it can be argued that women were not excluded from educational, learning, and teaching processes. On the contrary, within the cultural and intellectual environment of the period, women were able to participate in education alongside men and, in some cases, played an important role as teachers, mentors, poets, and cultural figures.

The development of science and education in the khanate was broadly comparable to that of neighboring states in Central Asia. Major urban centers served as the main hubs of cultural and intellectual activity, and madrasas providing higher education were primarily located in cities.

In both elementary schools and madrasas, religious instruction occupied a central place. At the same time, educational institutions also taught secular subjects, including literature, history, rhetoric, logic, algebra, and geometry. In the nineteenth century, fifteen madrasas operated in the capital city of Kokand, while several other major madrasas functioned in other cities of the khanate.

Nevertheless, within the Kokand Khanate, individuals who had completed their education in the madrasas of Bukhara were regarded as having particularly high social and intellectual status.

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Nevertheless, within the Kokand Khanate, individuals who had completed their education in the madrasas of Bukhara were regarded as having particularly high social and intellectual status. Only boys had the opportunities of being taught in the madrasas and girls who were members of simple families could have had special schools and they got the education in family settings, private lessons, or schools led by educated women known as *otin* or *otinoyi* (*otin or otinoyi were ladies who were skilled in religious knowledge and could recite Holy Koran*). Their education mainly included Qur'anic literacy, religious knowledge, reading, writing, moral upbringing, poetry, etiquette, and sometimes broader literary knowledge. Recent studies specifically discuss girls' education in the Kokand Khanate in connection with Jahon Otin Uvaysiy and the role of women educators in Fergana.

Thus, while women's access to institutional madrasa education was more limited than that of men, available evidence indicates that girls and women were able to acquire education through alternative social and cultural channels, particularly within family, literary, and female pedagogical environments.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the issue of women began to acquire particular significance in Turkestan within the broader context of social transformation and national awakening. During this period, the lifestyle, spiritual values, and traditional norms of society were undergoing change under the influence of both internal and external factors. As a result, questions concerning women, especially their access to education, participation in public life, and position within the family and society became increasingly relevant.

At the same time, women in Turkestan were often portrayed as having limited social rights and being almost entirely confined to the sphere of family life. Such perceptions were frequently associated with the Islamic character of the society. In turn, this view encouraged various discussions in Western intellectual circles and led to the publication of articles and books addressing the question of women's emancipation.

Depending on the nature of methodological approaches and the specific features of scholarly assessments, studies concerning the position of women in nineteenth-century society may be classified into two main groups:

1. The representation of women's issues in diaries and literary works of the period;
2. Articles devoted to women's issues published in newspapers and journals during the period under investigation.

It should be noted that the number of works that provide a comprehensive account of the socio-economic and legal status of women during the Kokand Khanate, based on direct observation of the local population, is relatively limited. Among the most significant examples are N. Nalivkin and M. Nalivkina's *An Essay on the Life of Women among the Sedentary Indigenous Population of Fergana* (*Очерк быта женщины оседлого туземного населения Ферганы*, Kazan, 1886). It is important to emphasize that the city of Kokand is located in the Fergana region, which makes this source particularly relevant to the present study. Another important work is N. Ostroumov's *The Contemporary Legal Status of the Muslim Woman* (*Современное правовое положение мусульманской женщины*, Kazan, 1911).

In addition, several works written by Russian and regional scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries addressed the issue of the emancipation of Muslim women in Turkestan. These include Ahmad-Bek Agaev's *Women According to Islam and in Islam* (*Женщина по исламу и в исламе*, Tiflis, 1901) and O. S. Lebedev's *On the Emancipation of Muslim Women* (*Об эмансипации мусульманской женщины*, Saint Petersburg, 1900), among others.

Newspapers and journals published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also constitute important sources for the study of women's issues. The discussion of this topic in the region was first initiated by the newspaper *Turkestanskije Vedomosti*. Moreover, *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti*, the first local-language newspaper published from 1870 to 1917, began to print articles concerning women's roles in the family and society, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

From this period onward, women increasingly came to be viewed as an essential component of society. Their role was no longer limited exclusively to the domestic sphere; rather, they gradually began to participate in broader social, political, and public matters.

Although many researchers argue that women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were socially restricted or marginalized within the colonial context, the present study concludes that issues related to women's family life and marriage were strongly protected from a religious perspective during this period. It was often claimed that Muslim women of Turkestan under Tsarist Russian rule occupied a subordinate position within the family and possessed very limited social rights. The consolidation of this image in public consciousness was frequently associated with the Islamic identity of the Turkestani population. As a result, the idea that women had no rights in Islam gradually developed into a persistent stereotype.

However, the findings of this study suggest that the condition of Muslim women in the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should not be assessed solely through this stereotypical lens. Relevant historical sources indicate that attitudes toward women were not always negative or oppressive; rather, women's status, particularly in matters of family and marriage, was shaped by religious, social, and cultural norms that also provided certain forms of protection and recognition.

In the early nineteenth century, under the patronage of Amir Umar Khan, the ruler of Kokand, the literary environment of Kokand became more clearly established and further developed. As a result, a number of talented writers and poets emerged during this period. The poets active in this literary circle and their works were extensively described in the anthology *Majmuat ush-shuaro*, compiled by Fazliy and Mushrif. This source provides information about such poets

and writers as Maxmur, Gulkhaniy, Fazliy, Mushrif, G'oziy, Sodiq, Xijlat, Xoziq, Xotif, and others who lived and created in Kokand in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It should also be emphasized that several female literary figures made a significant contribution to the development of the literary life of the Kokand Khanate in the first half of the nineteenth century. Among them, Jahon Otin Uvaysiy and Nodira Begim from Margilan, as well as Dilshod Barno from Urotepa and Mahzuna, occupied a special place. Their creative activity demonstrates that women were not only present in the cultural environment of the khanate but also actively participated in its intellectual and literary development.

Discussions

Women's cultural agency in the Kokand Khanate through an intersectional gender perspective

In order to examine women's cultural agency in the Kokand Khanate more accurately, this study applies an intersectional gender perspective within the historical and cultural context of nineteenth-century Uzbekistan, particularly the Fergana Valley. This approach allows women's roles to be analyzed not only through the general category of gender, but also in relation to social origin, family background, educational access, religious knowledge, literary competence, and proximity to courtly or intellectual circles. In the Kokand Khanate, women's participation in cultural and intellectual life was shaped by the specific social structure of the period, including family-based education, religious instruction, female pedagogical networks, and literary patronage.

From this perspective, the cultural agency of women in the Kokand Khanate should not be interpreted as a uniform historical phenomenon. Women's opportunities differed according to their social status, educational environment, and connection with literary or ruling circles. For example, Nodira's position as a royal woman, poetess, stateswoman, and patron of education enabled her to participate in public and cultural life beyond the domestic sphere. Her literary activity and support for educational and cultural institutions demonstrate that elite women in the Kokand Khanate could influence intellectual and social processes. Uvaysiy, in contrast, represents another form of female cultural agency: her authority was based on poetic talent, family education, religious and moral knowledge, and pedagogical activity. Her role as a mentor and educator shows that women could transmit knowledge and cultural values through informal and semi-formal educational channels.

This approach is especially important for understanding girls' education in the Kokand Khanate. Although women's access to formal madrasa education was more limited than that of men, this does not mean that women were excluded from learning. In the Fergana Valley, girls and women received education through family instruction, private lessons, religious teaching, and schools led by educated women known as otin or otinoyi. These female educators played an important role in teaching Qur'anic literacy, moral values, etiquette, reading, writing, and elements of literary culture. Therefore, women's intellectual life in nineteenth-century Kokand should not be measured only by formal institutional education. Informal female educational networks also served as important spaces for the transmission of knowledge and cultural identity.

The intersectional perspective also helps to avoid one-sided colonial or orientalist interpretations that portrayed Muslim women of Turkestan only as passive, isolated, or oppressed. While social restrictions certainly existed, historical and literary evidence from the Kokand Khanate shows that women's experiences were diverse. Some women were limited by patriarchal norms, while others participated actively in poetry, education, moral instruction, cultural communication, and literary patronage. The examples of Nodira, Uvaysiy, Dilshod Barno, Mahzuna, and Anbar Otin demonstrate that women contributed to the intellectual and spiritual life of the region in different ways.

Thus, women in the Kokand Khanate should be studied not merely as objects of social regulation, but as cultural agents whose intellectual activity was shaped by the interaction of gender, class, education, religion, family background, and literary environment. Such a multidimensional approach provides a more balanced understanding of women's roles in nineteenth-century Uzbekistan and reveals the significance of female participation in the cultural history of the Kokand Khanate.

Girls' education in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century was not an accidental or marginal practice, but a socially rooted and culturally significant form of learning. Schools organized by Jahon Otin and other female educators played an important role in spreading literacy, religious knowledge, and moral upbringing among women. These educational spaces contributed meaningfully to the intellectual, ethical, and cultural life of society. Jahon Otin Uvaysiy, Nodira's activity as a teacher as well as founder of girls' school shows that Central Asian women were not passive figures; rather, they actively participated in the educational and cultural development of their communities. Studying her schools helps us better understand Islamic education, gender relations, and the historical foundations of women's intellectual development in the region.

Another important aspect of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate was the existence of informal ways of transmitting knowledge, which supported the more structured instruction provided in otin schools. Oral teaching methods were especially important in shaping girls' moral and intellectual growth. Storytelling, the recitation of instructive narratives, moral parables, and family genealogies helped young girls absorb collective memory, ethical values, and social norms. Although these practices are often ignored in formal histories of education, they formed an essential part of women's intellectual formation and helped preserve continuity between generations.

The linguistic environment of girls' education in the Kokand Khanate is also significant. Teaching often took place within a multilingual setting. Chagatai Turkic was commonly used as the main language of everyday communication, Persian served as the language of poetry, literature, and refined expression, while Arabic retained its status as the language of religion and sacred knowledge. Through exposure to these languages, girls developed practical multilingual literacy, especially in poetic, religious, and devotional contexts. This linguistic ability enabled educated

women to read religious texts, engage with literary works, compose poetry, and participate in cultural life within socially accepted limits.

Economic conditions also affected the organization and availability of girls' education. Unlike official madrasas, otin schools were usually supported through local community assistance, family contributions, and informal waqf-based arrangements. This decentralized system made female education flexible, but it also caused differences in quality from one region to another. In large and prosperous urban centers such as Kokand, Margilan, and Andijan, girls had better access to experienced teachers and literary materials. In rural areas, educational opportunities were more restricted, yet they still existed, often as part of domestic and community-based learning practices. The survival of girls' education despite economic limitations shows that local society recognized the importance of women's learning and moral instruction.

Conclusion

The analysis of women's cultural agency in the Kokand Khanate during the nineteenth century demonstrates that women were not merely passive members of society or figures limited to domestic life. On the contrary, historical, literary, and educational evidence shows that women actively participated in the cultural, intellectual, moral, and pedagogical development of the region. Although formal institutional education was more accessible to men, women developed alternative educational spaces through family instruction, private lessons, otin and otinoyi schools, oral pedagogy, religious learning, and literary communication.

The study has shown that girls' education in the Kokand Khanate was closely connected with religious knowledge, moral upbringing, literacy, poetry, etiquette, and cultural memory. Female educators known as otin played an important role in transmitting religious values, ethical norms, and practical literacy among girls. These women functioned not only as teachers, but also as moral guides, preservers of cultural continuity, and respected members of local communities. Therefore, girls' education should not be regarded as an accidental or marginal phenomenon; rather, it was a socially embedded and culturally meaningful form of intellectual formation.

The examples of Jahon Otin Uvaysiy and Mohlaroyim Nodira clearly reveal different forms of female cultural agency in the Kokand Khanate. Uvaysiy represents the image of an educated woman, poet, mentor, and teacher whose literary and pedagogical activity contributed to the intellectual growth of women and young learners. Nodira, as a poetess, stateswoman, and patron of education and literature, demonstrates how elite women could influence cultural and social processes beyond the domestic sphere. The activities of Dilshod Barno, Mahzuna, and other female literary figures further confirm that women were active participants in the literary and spiritual environment of nineteenth-century Kokand.

The findings also indicate that women's roles in the Kokand Khanate should be understood through an intersectional perspective. Gender alone does not fully explain women's position in society. Their opportunities and influence were shaped by social origin, family background, religious knowledge, literary competence, economic conditions, and access to intellectual or courtly circles. Such an approach makes it possible to move beyond one-sided colonial or orientalist interpretations that represented Muslim women of Turkestan only as isolated or oppressed. While social restrictions certainly existed, women's experiences were diverse, and many of them contributed to education, moral instruction, poetry, literary culture, and the preservation of social values.

In conclusion, women in the Kokand Khanate played a significant role in maintaining and transmitting the cultural and intellectual heritage of nineteenth-century Central Asia. Their contribution to education, literature, religious instruction, and moral upbringing helped strengthen social cohesion and cultural identity during a period of political instability and external pressure. The study of women such as Uvaysiy, Nodira, Dilshod Barno, Mahzuna, and Anbar Otin enriches our understanding of gender relations, Islamic education, and women's intellectual history in Uzbekistan. Further research may focus on archival sources, manuscripts, women's poetic texts, and local educational traditions in order to provide a deeper and more source-based understanding of female agency in the cultural history of the Kokand Khanate.

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