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TRANSFORMATION OF THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KASHKADARYA REGION DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECTS (1991–2024)

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Abstract: This article analyzes the reforms implemented in the school education system of the Kashkadarya region during the years of independence, focusing on the development of educational institutions, the strengthening of material and technical resources, and measures aimed at improving the quality of education. The study examines the transformation processes of the general secondary education system from 1991 to 2024, including the construction of new schools, the reconstruction and modernization of existing educational institutions, the introduction of information and communication technologies, and efforts to enhance the professional capacity of teaching staff. Furthermore, the article addresses the challenges faced by the education system, such as infrastructural disparities between different areas, the need for qualified teachers, and issues related to ensuring educational quality. The findings of the research contribute to identifying the main development trends of the school education system in the Kashkadarya region and determining its future directions and prospects.

Keywords: Kashkadarya Region, general secondary education, school education, educational reforms, transformation, educational infrastructure, material and technical base, teaching staff, quality of education, digitalization, modernization, years of independence.

During the years of independence, the reform of the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the strengthening of its material and technical base, and its advancement to a qualitatively new level have been among the priority directions of state policy. These reforms were especially evident at the regional level, particularly in the Kashkadarya region. Step-by-step changes were implemented in the number, quality, infrastructure, and technical equipment of educational institutions in the region, leading to significant progress in the development of general education schools.

Since 1991, the number of general education institutions has steadily increased each year; new schools were built, existing buildings were reconstructed, and facilities damaged by natural disasters were restored. At the same time, factors such as increased student enrollment, school computerization, provision of qualified teaching staff, and the emergence of the private education sector have all contributed to the modernization of general education in the region.

This study analyzes the development stages of general secondary schools in the Kashkadarya region from 1991 to 2024, as well as changes in infrastructure, construction and renovation works, the dynamics of student numbers, teacher qualifications, and quality indicators of education. The research results are of great importance for assessing the effectiveness of educational policies implemented in the region and for developing future strategies for advancement.

From the early years of independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has paid special attention to the development of its education system. In particular, the number of general secondary education institutions has increased year by year. This trend was mainly due to natural population growth and, consequently, the rising demand for preschool and general education institutions.

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For example, in the case of one region alone, the number of general secondary schools reached 1,000 in 1994, and by 1995, this figure had grown to 1,021. At the same time, the number of students also increased significantly: from 472.2 thousand in 1994 to 488.5 thousand in 1995[1].

As an important legal foundation in the field of education, the Law "On Education" and the "National Program for Personnel Training" were adopted. Based on these normative documents, large-scale reforms were carried out in the sector, important steps were taken to improve the quality of education, modernize the system, and train qualified personnel.

Over the years, new schools were built in the region, and their number steadily increased. In particular, during the period from 1990 to 1994, school buildings with a total capacity of 75,000 students were constructed and put into operation in the region[2]. According to available data, while the number of schools in the region was 720 in 1991, by 1999 this figure had increased to 1,077. In addition, six boarding schools began operating (including three special schools and three orphanages), along with the establishment of 27 lyceums and 4 gymnasiums[3].

In 2010, the number of general secondary schools reached 1,115, and by 2016, it had increased to 1,125. New educational institutions were built and put into operation in various districts, including the city of Chiroqchi. For example, in 1997, a new school building with a capacity of 422 students was constructed in the city, and in 1998, another school building with a capacity of 834 students was built[4].

In 2001, a total of 38 schools in an emergency condition were identified in several districts of the Kashkadarya region, including 15 in Dehqonobod and 12 in Chiroqchi districts. Overall, out of 1,078 secondary schools in the region, 146 were found to be in need of major repairs. Such cases of deteriorated educational institutions were particularly more common in the districts of Kasbi, Kitob, Chiroqchi, Shahrisabz, and Yakkabog[5].

Between 2000 and 2002, a number of schools, their branches, and kindergartens in Qamashi district suffered severe damage as a result of an earthquake. To address the situation, the Cabinet of Ministers issued resolutions on June 27, 2000, and March 15, 2001, and a special decree was issued by the regional governor on May 13, 2002. Based on these documents, measures were outlined for the reconstruction and renovation of 8 schools, 6 branches, and 7 kindergartens in the district. As part of the efforts to eliminate the consequences of the earthquake, 11 new schools were built in accordance with government decisions, and major renovation works were carried out in 33 schools. However, in the case of 28 schools, only one educational block was constructed, while the remaining construction work was halted due to insufficient financial support [6].

In 2002, the total number of general education institutions in the region reached 1,083. Among them, 32 were boarding-type schools, 4 were special schools, 3 were orphanages, 31 were lyceums, and 3 were gymnasiums [7].

By 2004, the number of schools in the Kashkadarya region had reached 1,098. Of these, 9 were primary schools, 287 were incomplete secondary schools, and 755 were general secondary schools. In addition, there were 4 gymnasiums, 39 lyceums, and several specialized schools, including 33 operating as boarding-type institutions and 4 as special schools. That year, the number of students enrolled in schools was 620,100, while the number of teachers reached 53,873[8].

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[4] Кашкадарё вилоят паспорти. Қарши, 2017. 25- бет.
[5] Кашкадарё ВХА, 853- фонд, 5- рўйхат, 1- иш, 7- варақ.
[6] Кашкадарё ВХА, 829- фонд, 12- иш, 35- иш, 1-18- вараклар.
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By 2006, the number of general education institutions had reached 1,103. Among them, 8 were primary schools, 480 were incomplete secondary schools, and 569 were full secondary schools. Additionally, 4 gymnasiums, 37 lyceums, and various specialized schools were operating. Of these, 32 were boarding-type schools, and 4 were special schools. That year, the number of students enrolled in educational institutions was 587,200, and the number of teachers was 53,852[9].

Additionally, starting from 2006, based on Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Local State Authority," 10th grades began to be established in certain 9-year schools. These measures were particularly relevant for areas located far from academic lyceums and vocational colleges. For example, according to Order No. 14-f issued by the Kitob district administration on February 3, 2006, 10th grades were introduced in general education schools No. 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, 12, 23, 25, 35, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, and 70, as well as in the 10th general education school based on the branch of school No. 16, starting from the 2005–2006 academic year[10].

In the 2009–2010 academic year, a total of 86 general education schools, 17 preschool institutions, and 4 other types of educational organizations operated in the Qamashi district. That year, 42,125 students were enrolled in 1,700 classes across the district's general education schools[11].

In 2018, the Qarshi district department of public education managed 67 general secondary schools and one "Barkamol Avlod" (Harmoniously Developed Generation) children's center. From March 22 to 24 of that year, an academic knowledge competition among students of general education schools was organized in the district, with the participation of 2,067 students from grades 5 to 8. Based on the results of the competition, 26 students advanced to the regional stage, and 8 of them were among the winners. For example, Madina Turgayeva, an 8th-grade student from School No. 1, won 1st place in English; Setora Qo'zieva from School No. 6 took 1st place in native language and literature; and Sevinch Alieva from School No. 12 secured 1st place in the Uzbek language subject. Additionally, Diyorbek Tursunov from School No. 25 placed 3rd in mathematics, while Laylo Rustamova from School No. 27 and Maxmud Maxmaraimov from School No. 41 both won 3rd place in economics [12].

As of the 2015–2016 academic year, a total of 492.2 thousand students were enrolled in general education institutions in the Kashkadarya region. According to their age distribution: 3.5 thousand were 6 years old, 61.8 thousand were 7 years old, 62.2 thousand were 8 years old, 57.6 thousand were 9 years old, and 54.8 thousand were 10 years old [13].

n 2020, the number of general secondary schools in the region reached 1,155, with a total of 639.6 thousand students enrolled [14].

The shortage of teaching staff remains a persistent issue in general education schools located in various districts of the Kashkadarya region. In 2000, schools in the region required 13,479 teachers in subjects such as mathematics, physics, foreign languages, and primary education. This problem was especially acute in the districts of Nishon, Shahrisabz, Dehqonobod, and Chiroqchi[15].

In addition, during the 2001–2002 academic year, only 68.8 percent of teachers working in general education institutions in the region held higher education degrees. Another pressing issue in schools was the declining number of male teachers. The low salary levels of teachers were cited as the

[9] Қашқадарё вилояти ижтимоий-иқтисодий паспорти. 2004. 22-бет.
[10] Қашқадарё ВҲА, 860-фонд, 17-руйхат, 32-иш, 35-варақ.
[11] Қамаши ҳақиқати", 2015 йил 1-15 сентябрь.
[12] Нахшаб, 2018 йил 28- август.
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[15] Қашқадарё ВҲА, 846-фонд, 10-рўйхат, 98-иш, 14-варақ.

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main reason for this trend. As a response, 12,871 male teachers were brought back into the education system, and a series of measures were implemented to incentivize and support their work[16].

Between 2017 and 2019, teachers' salaries were increased by an average of 2.5 times. During this period, attention to the education sector in the region intensified. Notably, in 2018, the first private school was established, and by 2024, the number of such schools had reached 30. As of 2024, there are 1,230 general education schools operating in the Kashkadarya region. Major construction and renovation works were carried out in 434 of them, creating an additional 83,000 student places. Additionally, 40 percent of all graduates were admitted to higher education institutions [17].

In conclusion, from 1991 to 2024, the infrastructure of general education schools in the Kashkadarya region has undergone gradual development. The increase in the number of schools, renovation and construction works, and the creation of favorable conditions for students have brought the regional education system to a new qualitative level. Enhancing the qualifications of teaching staff, improving their financial incentives, and the emergence of private educational institutions have contributed to the diversification of the education sector in the region. These developments indicate that the regional education system is undergoing steady modernization.

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