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SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN THE SURKHAN-SHERABAD OASIS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the historical-ethnological study of the traditions of collectivism in the social life of the inhabitants of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis in the 20th century. Based on the conceptual analysis of the existing scientific literature, the functional features of the institutions of hashar, neighborly assistance, family rituals, and collective control are revealed. The study provides a differential (differential) analysis of the boundaries and specific aspects of the concepts of collective solidarity and social pressure, traditional mutual assistance, and administrative mobilization.

KEYWORDS

Surkhan-Sherabad oasis, traditions of collectivism, hashar, neighborly assistance, mahalla institute, family rituals, social solidarity, historical ethnology.

Introduction

In studying the social life of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis population in the 20th century, it is important to study the collective relations that regulated everyday life. Along with family and kinship ties, neighborhood, joint labor, and cooperation in rituals can be considered as a social environment that shaped people's relationships. Determining the historical content of these relationships requires not only describing the appearance of traditions, but also explaining what needs they met.

In studies on the topic, hashar, neighborhood management, and neighborly relations in the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis are indicated as important areas of community life. In works devoted to the collective and family rituals of the Surkhan oasis, attention is paid to the classification and educational significance of rituals [1; 2]. The study of these areas in their interrelation allows us to discuss the functions of community traditions in organizing labor, providing assistance, and transmitting social experience.

It is methodologically incorrect to assess the different stages of the 20th century as a single, unchanging traditional environment. In particular, the processes of collectivization and population resettlement in the 1920s–1930s affected the economic and settlement relations of the oasis. O. Isayev’s research, based on archival documents and oral history materials, sheds light on the difficulties of settling, housing, and economic conditions of immigrant families [3]. These circumstances indicate the need to examine community relations in conjunction with political and economic changes.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the main social functions of community traditions on the example of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis and to establish important criteria for studying their changes in the historical context of the 20th century.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
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The study is based on a qualitative analysis of published scientific literature. The sources were divided into two groups. The first group consists of works directly devoted to the public traditions, rituals of Surkhan-Sherabad and Surkhan oasis, as well as social changes in the 20th century. The second group includes comparative studies on the study of neighborhood and territorial community relations in Uzbekistan.

When selecting sources, their relevance to the region, their relevance to the research problem, and the nature of the evidence used were taken into account. Local materials and nationwide conclusions were not accepted at the same evidential level. Studies of other regions were used to formulate analytical questions, not as facts related to the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis.

The study used historicism, problem-chronological analysis, comparison, and a functional approach. The principle of historicism served to assess public traditions in relation to the conditions of a particular period. Through a functional approach, aspects of traditions related to labor, assistance, upbringing, and social control were distinguished.

The article uses the concept of “community traditions” to mean practices that are formed on the basis of kinship, neighborhood, or common living area, implying repeated participation and mutual obligations. The concepts of “neighborhood”, “village community” and “kinship group” are not considered as a single structure.

No new interviews were conducted within the framework of this study, and no archival documents were directly studied. Therefore, the results are presented as an analytical generalization of the existing literature, not as new field data. It is not concluded that all traditions are equally widespread in every village of the oasis or have been preserved unchanged throughout the 20th century.

RESULTS

NATIJALAR Systematization of the literature on the topic allows us to discuss community traditions in four interrelated directions: combining labor, providing assistance in difficult situations, organizing rituals, and regulating everyday behavior. This classification is the analytical model proposed in the article, which requires verification with materials from individual settlements.

The first direction is associated with the mobilization of the strength and time of community members for a common task. The second direction refers to the reliance of the family on the support of relatives and neighbors in situations where its own resources are insufficient. The third direction concerns the distribution of tasks, labor, and expenses during the ritual. The fourth direction covers perceptions of behavior that is approved or condemned in the community.

These directions are not completely separate from each other. For example, helping with a ritual can be a form of labor cooperation, mutual assistance, and a manifestation of belonging to the community at the same time. Therefore, listing traditions only by name does not fully reveal their social content.

Hashar was noted as one of the main manifestations of community traditions in the study of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis [1]. When analyzing it from a historical-ethnological perspective, it is

necessary to determine, along with the work performed, who initiated the work, who participated, and on what basis the participation was organized. According to the analytical approach of this article, three criteria are important for assessing hashar: the scope of use of the work result, the degree of voluntary participation, and the expectation of reciprocity in return for assistance. The social content of assistance provided to a single family and to a shared space may not be the same.

It is also not enough to automatically call any work performed together a traditional hashar. It is necessary to distinguish between work organized on the basis of an administrative assignment and assistance provided by agreement of community members. This distinction serves as an important research criterion, especially when interpreting materials from the Soviet era.

In explaining community relations, it is necessary to take into account not only kinship, but also belonging to a common residential area. T. Dadabayev, studying the memories of the Soviet-era mahalla in Uzbekistan, emphasizes that a collective identity based on living in one place can unite representatives of different ethnic and religious groups [5]. This conclusion is not a ready-made argument for the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis, but rather a comparative approach that helps to examine local materials. From this point of view, the question of whether the scope of assistance in studying neighborhood relations in the oasis is limited only to relatives or whether it also includes other households is important. The integration of immigrant families into the local community can also be examined using this criterion. O. Isayev's study contains materials on the settlement of immigrant families in the oasis and their entry into economic activity [3]. However, based on these materials, it is not possible to confirm that they integrated into all local communities in the same order. This requires specific evidence of marriage, neighborliness, mutual assistance, and joint participation in rituals.

In R. Buriev’s study, the collective and family rituals of the Surkhan oasis population and their educational significance were identified as a separate subject of study [2]. This direction allows us to examine the connection between family events and wider community participation.

According to the interpretation proposed in the article, the collective content of the ritual is manifested, first of all, in the distribution of tasks. It should be determined who performed organizational work, who provided material assistance, who waited for guests, or participated in other tasks. Such an analysis better reveals the connection between the ritual and social relations than describing it only as a sequence of images and rituals.

It is also appropriate to examine the educational aspect of participation in rituals through specific practices. The observation of the activities of adults by young people, the fulfillment of tasks, and the acquisition of the order of behavior are possible mechanisms for the intergenerational transmission of experience. Their regional characteristics must be confirmed by field materials.

DISCUSSION

MUHOKAMA One of the main issues in the analysis of community traditions is to explain their stability and historical variability together. The preservation of the name of the tradition does not mean that its content has not changed. If the initiators, participants, tasks performed, or the form of assistance change, an outwardly ongoing practice can acquire a new social meaning.

This aspect is especially important when studying materials from the 1920s–1930s of the 20th century. Kh. Qabilov’s study of collectivization in the Surkhandarya district highlights the changes in property relations, the processes of earmarking and repression [4]. This historical context shows that it is not enough to imagine cooperation in local communities solely as the result of free agreement. However,

in order to determine exactly which tradition has changed and how, in addition to evidence from general political history, sources related to everyday life are also needed.

When assessing the social impact of community traditions, attention should also be paid to the relationship between solidarity and obligation. Providing assistance can alleviate the family's difficult situation. At the same time, there is a possibility that the expectation of a return or the concern about the community's assessment may be an additional burden for the participant. This article does not present this situation as a proven general fact for the oasis, but as an analytical problem to be investigated.

The possibility of a community providing mutual assistance and the equal treatment of all its members are not exactly the same concept. In historical research, the possibilities of receiving assistance, participation in decision-making, and the distribution of ritual labor should be studied separately. In particular, measuring the contribution of women and youth to community life only by participating in formal meetings may ignore their daily organizational work.

The limits of territorial generalization are also an important issue. Describing different settlements within the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis on the basis of a single standard will lose local differences. In further research, it is advisable to compare irrigated farming areas, foothill villages, and settlements formed in different periods. In this case, the connection between economic conditions and the spread of traditions should be verified through sources, without assuming in advance.

To strengthen the conclusions regarding the second half of the 20th century and the 1990s, local press, documents from community gatherings, family records, and oral history materials are needed. When using memories, it is necessary to distinguish between the period in which the event occurred and the period in which it was narrated. Memory formed under the influence of the values of a later period may not reflect all aspects of historical practice with the same accuracy.

CONCLUSION
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An analysis of the published literature shows that it is fruitful to study the community traditions of the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis in relation to mutual assistance, labor cooperation, ceremonial participation, and social regulation. These areas complement each other and serve to reveal various aspects of collective relations in everyday life.

The main analytical conclusion of the article is that noting the existence of a tradition and explaining its function in a particular historical period are separate research stages. When assessing hashar, neighborly assistance, or ceremonial cooperation, initiative, participation, mutual obligations, and distribution of benefits should be determined.

Political and economic changes in the 20th century constitute a necessary historical condition for the study of community relations. However, it is not sufficiently justified to propose a single model of change for all regions of the oasis and the entire century based on available sources. To develop the research, it is necessary to conduct a comparative study of documents and oral history materials in individual villages.

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