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EVOLUTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS NETWORK IN THE UZBEK SSR (1946 – 1991)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the growth in the number of preschool educational institutions established in Uzbekistan during the Second World War and the post-war period, their types, and the conditions in which they operated. The study is based on scientific and historical literature and sources, as well as personal recollections.

Keywords

preschool educational institutions, kindergartens, “sanatorium kindergartens for children with tuberculosis”, “preschool institutions for children with hearing impairments”, “preschool institutions for deaf and hard-of-hearing children”, “preschool institutions for children with speech disorders”, activities.

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INTRODUCTION

In the years following the Second World War, a number of reforms were also carried out in the preschool education system, alongside reforms in many other spheres. As noted above, the development of this sphere was important not only socially, but also politically and economically. Therefore, even before the war had ended, several decisions aimed at developing this sphere were adopted. In particular, these included the decisions of 9 January 1944 “On measures to expand the network of kindergartens and improve their work” and of 10 November of the same year “On measures to expand the network of children’s institutions and improve medical and household services for women and children”. According to these decisions, the number of kindergartens and the number of children covered by them were to be increased. In addition, round-the-clock care for the children of single mothers in preschool educational institutions was introduced.[4, p. 5] The main purpose of implementing such regulations was to replace, through women’s labour, the industrial workforce of men who had gone to the front.

In the initial post-war period, preschool educational institutions were mainly organized within two systems: nurseries and kindergartens. Children from two months to three years of age were admitted to nursery groups, while children from three to seven years of age were admitted to kindergartens. Beginning in the post-war years, separate types of preschool educational institutions began to be established for children requiring special attention. These included “sanatorium kindergartens for children with tuberculosis”, “preschool institutions for children with hearing impairments”, “preschool institutions for deaf and hard-of-hearing children”,

“preschool institutions for children with speech disorders”, and “preschool institutions for children with normal intellectual development who stuttered, were unable to speak, or had markedly impaired speech”.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The study of preschool education in the Uzbek SSR draws on works that address the development of the preschool system, educational practice, and the organization of individual institution types. M. Badalova’s dissertation abstract examines the development of preschool education in the Uzbek SSR during 1946–1965 and provides a historical basis for considering the post-war expansion of the network.[2] The Handbook of Preschool Education and I. Tukhтaxujayeva’s work on educating children in kindergartens according to the new programme provide information on institutional practice and the pedagogical framework of preschool education.[3, 4]

Research devoted to particular forms of preschool provision complements these general works. I. Tishaboyeva’s article focuses on seasonal kindergartens in Uzbekistan in 1945–1970, making it relevant to the study of preschool services organized in response to the seasonal character of rural agricultural work.[6] N. Tosheva’s work on the organization of preschool education and upbringing offers a further reference for understanding the institutional and educational dimensions of this system.[7] Taken together, these publications illuminate the development and organization of preschool institutions, while the archival fonds listed in the references make it possible to examine their operation at the regional and local levels.

The article uses a historical-descriptive approach to examine the evolution and classification of preschool educational institutions in the Uzbek SSR during 1946–1991. The analysis is based on published scholarly and reference literature, including works on the history and organization of preschool education, and on archival materials identified in the Fergana regional and city fonds listed in the references.[2 – 4, 6 – 16] normative documents cited in the article are considered as evidence of the official organization and intended functions of specialized preschool institutions. The materials are compared by institution type, age group, purpose, and organizational setting. This approach makes it possible to distinguish general preschool institutions from specialized, medical-sanatorium, and seasonal forms of provision. The article is limited to the materials and references presented in the source text, no quantitative estimates beyond those documented there are introduced.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sanatorium kindergartens for children with tuberculosis. A regulation entitled “On sanatorium kindergartens for children who contracted tuberculosis infection at an early age and suffer from small, subsiding forms of tuberculosis” was adopted by the USSR Ministry of Health on 21 September 1961 to organize the work of such kindergartens.[5, p. 8] The regulation provided basic guidelines for their organization. According to it, sanatorium kindergartens for children with tuberculosis were intended for children who had contracted tuberculosis infection at an early age and suffered from small, subsiding forms of tuberculosis. They were established to prevent the development of tuberculosis in infected children and to provide care and education for children suffering from small and subsiding forms of the disease during the period of clinical treatment until complete recovery. Along with medical and preventive work, the sanatorium kindergartens were also required to conduct educational activities.

Preschool educational institutions for children with hearing impairments were organized in accordance with the Model Regulation “On groups of preschool educational institutions for children with hearing impairments”, approved by the USSR Ministry of Education on 31 December 1968. According to the regulation, groups of preschool institutions for children with hearing impairments were state institutions providing social education for deaf and hard-of-hearing children aged from two to seven. Their purpose was to ensure the comprehensive development and education of these children, teach them to speak, and prepare them for school.[3]

Preschool educational institutions and groups for children with speech disorders were organized in accordance with the Model Regulation “On preschool educational institutions and groups for children with speech disorders”, approved by the USSR Ministry of Education on 20 May 1970 in coordination with the USSR Ministry of Health. These institutions were state institutions providing social education for preschool children with

significant speech difficulties, including children who could not pronounce certain sounds or pronounced them incorrectly, stuttered, or had markedly impaired speech.[4]

Seasonal kindergartens. In rural areas, the volume of agricultural work usually increased sharply in spring, summer, and autumn. Such work was often performed by women collective-farm workers who had preschool-aged children. Therefore, during this period, seasonal preschool educational institutions were established at collective and state farms. Seasonal preschool educational institutions were opened by a decision of the general meeting of the management members of a collective or state farm. This decision had to be coordinated with the executive committees of rural and district Councils of People’s Deputies. Local health authorities monitored the health and physical development of the children attending these institutions. Public education authorities were responsible for the state of educational work in seasonal preschool institutions, the selection and training of personnel, and their professional development.[5]

The classification presented in the results shows that the preschool network in the Uzbek SSR was not limited to the conventional division between nurseries and kindergartens. Alongside institutions serving children by age, the system included specialized provision for children requiring medical, hearing, or speech-related support, as well as seasonal institutions connected with rural labor patterns. This diversity indicates that the network responded to several social and administrative needs at once: early childhood care, education, health-related support, and the organization of childcare during periods of intensive agricultural work. The regulations cited for sanatorium, hearing-impaired, and speech-disorder institutions also demonstrate that these forms were governed by distinct official frameworks.[5, 8; 9; 10] At the same time, the conclusion in the original article points to a gap between the existence of institutions and the planned level of children’s enrollment, especially in remote rural areas. Thus, institutional diversification should not be interpreted as evidence of universal access. The available literature and archival references support an assessment of both the expansion of institutional forms and the limitations of their reach.

CONCLUSION

Although several types of preschool educational institutions existed during the Soviet period, the scale of children’s enrollment in these institutions did not reach the planned level. In particular, the enrollment of children in remote rural areas was very low, which can be explained by the specific mentality of rural communities and the conditions available in kindergartens.

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