

# Ethnographic Researches on Irrigated Agriculture and Collective Land Cultivation of the Uzbek People (In the Example of 20-30s of XX<sup>th</sup> Century)

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**Abstract:** *The article describes the relationship of large-scale economic traditions of the Uzbek people to irrigated agriculture and collective farming. Ethnographic researches which were published in the 1920s and 1930s are analyzed in the aspect of historiography.*

*The relatively low rainfall climate of Uzbekistan has led to the widespread use of irrigated cropland through sophisticated irrigation systems. Folk traditions on irrigation of the foothills and plains of the region provided rich experience in historical development. Therefore, this article describes how these processes attracted many researchers from the Soviet Union. In addition, research on collectivization policies implemented by the Soviet Union during this period was based on the experience of the local population.*

**Keywords :** *irrigation system, irrigated agriculture, collective farming, traditional economic relations.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Researches on Turkestan traditional economy also shows that irrigated agriculture played an important role in the development of all sectors of agriculture in the country. Until the beginning of the 20th century, most of the cultivated area was irrigated. This is evidenced by the author's data from 1916 that in the three major provinces of Turkestan - Syrdarya, Fergana, and Samarkand - the area of cultivated land was 2.5 million acres, two-thirds of which were irrigated and the rest were rain-fed lands [1].

Official documents, statistical materials and historical and ethnographic surveys of the 1920s and 1930s of the 20th century provide valuable information on the agricultural traditions of the country, particularly the economic traditions of the Uzbek people. It is well known that the Soviet government tried to comprehensively study the peculiarities of the country in the implementation of its socio-economic policies. Scientists from various fields, economists, geographers, botanists, irrigators and agronomists were invited to study the economic characteristics of the population, especially land and water and agrarian issues. It is worth noting that most researchers of this period paid much

**Revised Manuscript Received on November 05, 2019.**

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attention to the collection of new scientific materials and research, along with the effective use of the results of many studies conducted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In addition, during the period of the study there were a number of studies showing important ethnographic material on the economic activities of indigenous peoples. Among the issues highlighted by them were the issues of farming, irrigation, land and water relations, traditions of collective cultivation of land, their livelihoods and activities related to the creation of production facilities, collective farms - collective farms. These studies cover almost the entire territory of Uzbekistan, including the ethnographic regions such as the Ferghana Valley, Tashkent, Zarafshan, Khorezm, Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya oasis.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a qualitative research using the content, comparative-historical, characteristic analysis approach. About twenty scientific works on ethnographic researches are used to explain the irrigated agriculture and collective land cultivation of the Uzbek people 20-30s of XX<sup>th</sup> century. Besides that, the researcher had used journals and articles to collect data related to the research.

## III. THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In the 20-30s of the 20th century a number of ethnographic expeditions were launched, which were important for the study of the lifestyle, culture and traditions of the Uzbek people. Specifically, the scientific and statistical collections of "Modern Village of Central Asia", published in Russian as a general essay, collected in 1926 by special commission investigations, included the socio-economic characteristics of agriculture, urban and rural areas, economic budgets, crafts, detailed information on trade and rent, administrative community construction in different regions of the country [2].

Part of this collection, devoted to Ferghana Valley and Tashkent oasis, published in 1926, provides information on farming. On irrigated lands, fall wheat was usually grown, and spring wheat was planted on non-irrigated lands. There were various types of spring and autumn wheat which could be planted in rain-fed and irrigated lands. Varieties such as white wheat with large flat corn, then red wheat, brown wheat, black wheat were planted on irrigated and rain-fed lands. In the Tashkent oasis, wheat varieties called laylak (stork) or tuya tish (camel teeth) were planted. In

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the mountains, a frost-resistant cultivation of wheat, called xivit, is grown. It should be noted that all varieties of local wheat have some added rye. From the beginning of the 20th century, kubanka was sort of russian wheat was planted in the districts of Tashkent and Andijan.

Autumn (tramohi) crops were planted from autumn to winter chill, that is, until December. In the Zarafshan oasis, tramohi was harvested in June after harvesting and left in the sun in the fall. The land plowed in the first month of the autumn (softening) was softened with a barana, a sihk-mola. In some districts of Khorezm and Bukhara, the land was irrigated two or three times for leaching [2]. The book emphasizes the role of population employment in the socio-economic life of the villages. In particular, information on handicrafts included ceramics, leather production, tanning, silk weaving shops, smiths, copper, jewelry, dyeing companies, saddle makers, skull makers, fabric manufacturers, oil manufacturers and other grain processors. Certainly, this research is of great importance in studying the economic history and ethnography of the people of Uzbekistan.

The activities of the first scientific expeditions in Khujand, Kattakurghan, Jizzakh districts of Samarkand region at the initiative of Turkestan People's Commissariat were very important in the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, a large number of statistical and ethnographic data were collected during the ethnographic expeditions led by M.S. Andreev to the Kyzylkum Desert and under the leadership of I.I. Zarubin to Samarkand regions [4].

Nevertheless, many traditions and values became an integral part of the people's life, as well as at the time when this process contributed to the economic development of the population. One of the economic and cultural features of the Uzbek people was the collective cultivation of the land. This is because artificial irrigation required collective use of land and water. For example, rural community played a major role in the construction of large irrigation networks through hashar, its seasonal cleaning and harvesting. Such traditions played an important role not only in the economic activity of the population, but also in the implementation of Soviet agricultural reforms. That is why during the Soviet years much attention was paid to the scientific study of the peculiarities of the Central Asian people, the ancient traditions of farming, irrigation, livestock and crafts. Similar research was carried out in connection with the implementation of the "socialist construction plan" of the Uzbek people [5].

During this period, the study of the history and ethnography of the people of the region played an important role in the organization and activities of the Khorezm complex archeological and ethnographic expedition, which was established in 1936 under the direction of S. Tolstov and T. Zhdanko. The Khorezm expedition's research allowed not only to study the history, lifestyle and traditions of the people of the region, but also to collect rich material on issues such as past, farming, irrigation systems and farming practices [6]. Of course, the expedition was active in the 1940-50s and beyond.

Despite the ideological pressures and limitations of the Soviets, during that time, there were a number of studies that featured rich ethnographic materials on the economic activities of indigenous people. Among the topics of discussion were agriculture, irrigation traditions, land and water relations, collective cultivation traditions, production

tools, and life and activities of collective farms.

In the study of economic life of the people of the country, it is worth pointing out a special study of the Soviet policy on economic zoning and national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia. This is because they contained the first scientific observations, materials on economic features, irrigation systems, water sources according to the climatic conditions of the country [7]. This series contains important statistical and ethnographic data on the economic characteristics of the population in Turkestan, Bukharan People's Soviet Republic and Khorezm People's Soviet Republic in the 20th century, along with the ethnic composition of the population. The first book of the Central Asian Regional Commission contains valuable materials on hydrography and irrigation that are of vital importance to the economic life of the region. It provides information on irrigation networks from the Zarafshan River - Shahabad, Tas, Karamana, Turkestan, Kalkan, Ata, Konimeh, Khanim, Kasaba, Aksoy, Shahrobot, Shofirkon, Sultan-rovot. There is also a lot of information on the role of agriculture in the rivers of the Amu Darya - Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya and the canals from them [7] and a range of information on irrigation system can be found [8].

It includes the geographical location, the hydrography of the oasis, the system of canals from the Amudarya river (Ulu-kengli, Ak-alan, Kichik-kenglik, Sayat, Manghit, Seit, Sheikh, Arna, Shahabad) and water use systems, labor responsibilities of the population (hashar, the cleaning of canals, drilling) [9].

Another similar edition was published in 1926. It was called "Materials on the Subcontracting of Uzbekistan" and it was devoted on collection of administrative and economic zoning [10]. It provides information about the territory of the new administrative units of Uzbekistan (Khorezm, Bukhara, Middle Zarafshan, Samarkand, Tashkent, Kokand, Andijan, Khujand, etc.) and their climatic, soil, irrigation and agriculture systems. The paper notes that Uzbekistan's agriculture was largely dependent on its natural conditions, including access to land, climate, and water. On the one hand, there were irrigated farming areas and on the other, pure livestock areas such as livestock and even Konimex (Komimex). Areas of Cattle and Livestock include Kashkadarya (Tangi Haram) and all districts of Surkhandarya. Horticulture and viticulture are highly profitable sectors of agriculture and are grown in Khujand, Samarkand and Tashkent districts. and many products are supplied to Union markets [10].

The total area under crops in Uzbekistan for the same period was 1,428,000 deciles, of which 79.1% were irrigated, and 20.9% were rain-fed lands. Irrigated lands account for 40-50% in the Middle Zarafshan, Samarkand, Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions. Overall, 84.7% of the rain-fed lands in Uzbekistan consist of these four districts [10].

In Uzbek farming, various types of grains have played an important role since ancient times. At the beginning of the 20th century, local farmers cultivated wheat, barley, rice, moss, peas, corn, maize, beans in their own fields. In 1915, 1.4 million acres out of 2.7 million acres of land in Turkestan, wheat. was planted. In planting grains, Sirdarya was in the first place, Samarkand - the second, Fergana - the third. The mountainous and foothill areas of the Syrdarya region and partly of the Samarkand region were naturally favorable for the



production of rain-fed wheat. In the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khiva Khanate, 3/2 of the land was sown with wheat. It is noteworthy that in these areas grain crops were mainly cultivated on irrigated land and planted three varieties of wheat adapted to local conditions. Wheat was not only for individual consumption, but also used as goods. In the semi-arid regions of the Syrdarya and Samarkand oblasts, barley was most commonly planted.

The Soviet government engaged scholars to study the traditions of land cultivation on a collective basis in the implementation of agricultural reforms in the country. For example, in the 20-30s of the 20th century - during the land-water reform and agricultural collectivization policy, D.Basov and V.A.Polozov [11] discussed the economic activity of the population in the southern regions of Uzbekistan, its irrigation traditions and its social strata and published important information on them.

In the publications of D.Basov and V.A. Polozov, they noted that the use of land and water in low-lying areas of southern Uzbekistan has been followed by collective land use until the early 20th century in the Sherabad district of Surkhandarya region and Kasan and Karshi districts of Kashkadarya region. This was particularly important in the rational use of land and water, equal distribution of water, excavation and repair of cisterns by collective hashar [11]. The ground-water neighbor team, which has played a key role in the development of irrigated agriculture for many centuries, was called the top (ball) in the Tashkent oasis, the (ketmon) hoe in Fergana, the qo'sh (adjacent) in Zarafshan Valley, jabdi in Khorezm and paykal (basins) in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya. Traditional collective farming was well preserved in the mountainous, piedmont or semi-steppe regions of Uzbekistan (the oasis of Sherabad and Karshi). At the beginning of the 20th century, Turkestan, Khiva Khanate and Bukhara Emirate had specific distinctions on collective land-use traditions. In Uzbekistan and in the whole Central Asian region, specific forms of irrigated agriculture - land-water neighborliness communities were widely developed [11].

The traditions of collective use of land were characterized by local collective character in the Tashkent and Fergana oasis, with the tribal-collective character in the oasis of Karshi, Surkhon and Khorezm. According to D.Basov, the use of arable land on the basis of collective redistribution was maintained for a long time mainly among the tribal population. In the Sherabad oasis there was a collective form of land use and private farming. However, with the increase in the level of trade in agricultural products, the transition from collective land use to private farming began. When D.Basov observed the historical development of land use, He noted that the private farming was an ancient form of land using. He mentioned that that "the land use system had changed in recent times and again had become a form of private farming. But it was not the opposite" [11]. Of course, the author's comments were right. Because, by the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such factors as population growth and the increasing density of irrigated land, increasing demand for agricultural products and increasing the process of grazing by some ethnic groups of livestock affected the land use patterns. This began to break down the foundations of the collective tribe-based system. As a result, the importance of tribal elements declined and the process of assimilation and socio-cultural rapprochement increased [12]. It should be

noted that the Soviet government endorsed the collective use of land, the study and promotion of traditions and customs related to community life. In particular, paykal, qosh, jabdi were supported by Soviet Union, because such traditions were considered to be in keeping with Soviet collectivization policies.

Collection of articles on kolkhozes and agriculture of Uzbekistan may also be included in the historical-ethnographic literature of 1920-30. They reflect the lifestyle and living of the villagers [13]. A number of works on the development of cotton and cotton industry in the country also showed the economic characteristics of Uzbeks. For example, A. Novikov [14] and V. Yuferev's works [15] provide an important ethnographic material on the state of cotton production in the country, the prospects, and the size of the cotton fields. For example, V. Yuferev touched upon the issues of cotton fields and provision of cotton-growing population in the Ferghana Valley [15]. In the works of such authors as N. Vavilov [16], S.K. Kondrashev [17], materials on the development of cotton growing in the country, agro-technical processing of plants, irrigated agriculture and the life of farmers were described.

In particular, N.Vavilov outlined the area and crop structure of the Khorezm oasis and presented them with color maps showing areas of farming. The book reflects the types of crops and areas cultivated from 1926 to 1927. Also, many ethnographic materials on irrigation techniques of the Khiva oasis, irrigation techniques of "ditch" irrigation, cleaning process of rivers and canals are described. The work specifically mentions corn, which is an agricultural crop. It also provides information on wheat, rye, millet, rice, barley, legumes, oilseeds, flax, cotton, cannabis and other vegetables [16].

S.K. Kondrashev's work provides comparative information on the rational use of water in the Caucasus and Turkestan irrigation systems in the southern and southeastern provinces of Europe, and on the characteristics of irrigated agriculture [17].

The author's work, published in 1931, is rich in ethnographic material on the traditions of irrigated agriculture in the Khorezm oasis and consists of six chapters. In the introductory chapter of the work, the author commented on the material contained in the book, arguing that this study was the basis of his own expeditions (unpublished) in 1914 and 1915-16 in the Lower Amu Darya, which were then supplemented and published [17].

The book developed a unique way of delivering materials. The emphasis was on the intensity of farming by calculating water consumption and productivity levels in a specific area of the farm. For example, in the second chapter of the work, a comparative analysis of the list of farms and their land area, the impact of water availability on vegetation and the fertility rate of the Khiva khanate in general were compared with other regions. [17].

The third chapter of the work described topographic plans of farms. It contains important ethnographic data on the boundaries of cultivated areas, the percentage of arable land, the coefficient of irrigated land and sown areas, the density of irrigation networks, the form of irrigated areas, and most importantly, their structure and types [17].



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Also, In another study by S.K.Kondrashev published in 1931, many ethnographic materials on the natural conditions of the Turkestan region, labor force, and mechanization of cotton processing were presented [17].

In 1927 the first issue of the journal "Herald of Irrigation" published an article by KL Pokrovsky on the development of water use rights in Central Asia [18]. According to the author, in the second half of the 19th century, the development of land issues in the Tashkent oasis and the division of labor responsibilities among the population was important, as well as conventional farming - the two oxen (along with plow and other weapons) [18]. It should be noted that "Herald of Irrigation" magazine, along with projects aimed at building new irrigation networks in the country, published a number of articles on ancient traditional water structures of indigenous people. For example, article by B.N. Kastalsky contains important information about ancient water structures in the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis - canals and canals, their water volume and irrigation potential[19].

V.Tsinzerling studied the irrigation of the Khorezm oasis and created a number of his works on irrigation in the Amudarya river basin [20]. In his time VV Bartold also expressed positive attitude towards V. Tsinzerling's research[21].

Other scientific studies on the history of irrigation were also conducted during this period, many of which covered the state of the irrigation system, the problems and the development of new lands [22].

### IV. DISCUSSION

Irrigated agriculture required hard work and considerable resources from producers. Large irrigation systems and their occasional cleaning and maintenance required not only material costs but also the organization of many manpower. This was especially relevant for the Khorezm oasis. Most irrigation systems would be quickly filled with sand and mud and would require constant maintenance. Large irrigation canals and irrigation ditches were cleaned by central authorities, and smaller local irrigation networks were cleaned by farmers through collective hashar. Mountain and mountainous irrigated agriculture of Uzbekistan differs from plain irrigation systems and is characterized by low irrigation system. Mountain irrigated agriculture is known as a fountain in the scientific literature.

Much progress has been made in the development of the ethnography of Uzbekistan in the 1920-30s on the basis of the scientific development of the Soviet Union. Ethnographic research during this period was inextricably linked to the practice of economic and cultural construction [23]. According to Historian A.Kh. Doniyorov, no other social science is as closely related to economic and cultural construction practices as ethnography [24].

During the 1920s and 1930s, the local periodicals carried out a great deal of work to cover the agricultural life of the country. In particular, they published articles about the work, work done, best practices and practices of the representatives of the agricultural sector. In particular, the monthly journal of agriculture in Uzbekistan published a number of articles related to the sector [25].

In addition, a number of periodicals - newspapers, magazines and periodicals - contained articles covering various aspects of economic activity of the people of this

chronological period. Several articles were published in "Agricultural life" ( 1922), in "Turkestan law" (1922-1924), in 1921-1922 "Turkestan economic life", "Turkestan statements", in 1919-1934 "Economic life", in 1931, 1934 "The collective farm road". Although most of the articles in these journals were politically and ideologically relevant, many of the authors' ideas on the economic life of the peoples of the period were available. The purpose of this process was to inform the public about the reforms in the country and to illustrate the successful implementation of the plans of "socialist construction" in agriculture.

### V. CONCLUSION

In the 1920-30s, economic researches in Uzbekistan were carried out under the Soviet plan for socialist construction. However, much progress was made in scientific research.

It is particularly important that a number of ethnographic studies highlighted traditional economic characteristics of the people of the region. It should be noted that next-generation scholars expanded the scope of scientific work on the basis of studies of this period. They enriched the success of their predecessors and continued to do so.

Most importantly, the basis for the development of ethnography as an independent branch of science in the form of an integral and integral part of the historical knowledge system was formed. However, the results of this ethnographic study did not analyze the traditional economy of the Uzbek people.

Only a few studies have covered aspects of traditional Uzbek economy. In the local press, only Soviet-era reforms are covered. However, the concept of traditionalism was recognized as a ruse.

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