

**JADIDISM AS A FACTOR OF NATIONAL AWAKENING, ENLIGHTENMENT,  
AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN TURKESTAN**

**Khalilova Naima Xudoynazar kizi**

Second-Year Student, Economics, Group 215

Termez State University of Engineering and Agrotechnologies

E-mail: naimaxalilova13@gmail.com

Scientific Supervisor: **Khudoyorova Nigora Nuriddinovna**

Senior Lecturer

Termez State University of Engineering and Agrotechnologies

**Abstract:** This article examines Jadidism as a major intellectual and reformist movement in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Turkestan. It analyzes the historical conditions that shaped the movement, its central commitment to educational renewal, and its broader contribution to national awakening, cultural transformation, and social modernization. Particular attention is given to the Jadids' advocacy of the *usul-i jadid* ("new method") schools, the expansion of print culture, the development of theater and modern literature, and the rethinking of society through the concepts of knowledge, discipline, dignity, and progress. The article also considers the role of leading reformers such as Mahmud Khoja Behbudiy, Munawwar Qari, Sadridin Ayni, and Abdurauf Fitrat in reshaping public discourse in Central Asia. From a contemporary perspective, Jadidism can be understood not only as a cultural and educational movement, but also as an early project of social and socio-economic modernization grounded in human capital, civic awareness, and national self-renewal. The study argues that the legacy of the Jadids remains highly relevant to current debates on education, identity, and development.

**Keywords:** Jadidism, Turkestan, national awakening, enlightenment, reform, *usul-i jadid*, education, Central Asia, Behbudiy, Fitrat, modernity, socio-economic progress

Jadidism occupies a central place in the modern intellectual history of Central Asia. Emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under Russian colonial rule, it developed as a reformist response to political subordination, educational stagnation, and the growing realization that Muslim societies needed new institutions and new forms of knowledge in order to survive in a rapidly changing world. The movement is usually associated with the term *usul-i jadid*, or "new method," which initially referred to reformed pedagogical practice but soon came to signify a much broader cultural and social program. In this sense, Jadidism was not merely a school reform initiative; it was a project of rethinking society itself.

The historical significance of the Jadids lies in the fact that they linked education with national dignity, public morality, and collective progress. Their writings and activities made it clear that ignorance, intellectual isolation, and social passivity were not private shortcomings but civilizational problems. As a result, Jadidism became one of the earliest organized attempts in Turkestan to formulate a modern language of reform while remaining rooted in local Muslim cultural life. UNESCO's historical overview of Central Asia notes that the Jadids advocated secular education, equality, freedom, and human worth, which shows that their reform agenda was ethical and social as well as pedagogical.

**Historical Conditions Behind the Rise of Jadidism**

The rise of Jadidism must be understood within the colonial transformation of Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Russian conquest changed political structures, economic relations, and patterns of communication across Turkestan. According to Adeb Khalid's overview of the field, the region's incorporation into the Russian Empire brought



Central Asia into more direct contact with modern state institutions and new debates about knowledge, society, and reform. In this environment, many Muslim intellectuals concluded that inherited educational forms alone were no longer sufficient for preserving communal strength and cultural continuity.

The very terminology of the movement reflects this historical shift. Encyclopaedia Iranica explains that Jadidism took its name from *usul-i jadid*, the “new method” used in modern schools that reformers promoted in place of the older *qadim* schools and madrasas. Over time, “Jadid” became synonymous with reformer, while “qadimchi” signaled resistance to change. This opposition reveals that Jadidism was not simply a technical debate over teaching method; it was a struggle over authority, worldview, and the future direction of society.

### **Educational Reform as the Core of the Movement**

Education was the principal arena in which the Jadids sought to transform society. Their central insight was that no meaningful national revival was possible without a new type of school. The *usul-i jadid* schools emphasized more efficient literacy instruction, practical subjects, broader intellectual horizons, and a disciplined pedagogical environment. This made them fundamentally different from educational models based almost entirely on rote memorization. The Jadids believed that literacy should open the way to history, geography, science, ethics, and awareness of the wider world.

The movement’s leading figures gave institutional form to these ideas. Britannica identifies major Jadid leaders in different cities of Turkestan, including Munawwar Qari in Tashkent, Mahmud Khoja Behbudiy in Samarkand, and Sadridin Ayni in Bukhara, and notes that they exerted strong influence on education in the early Soviet decades, with their methods and aims reemerging after independence. This is a crucial observation: it suggests that Jadid educational reform was not a temporary episode but a foundational moment in the making of modern Central Asian schooling.

From a modern analytical perspective, Jadid educational reform can also be read as an early theory of human-capital development. By insisting on literacy, teacher training, curricular renewal, and practical learning, the Jadids were creating the conditions for a more capable, productive, and socially mobile population. Although they did not use contemporary economic terminology, their program clearly connected knowledge with collective strength and backwardness with social decline. This interpretation is an inference drawn from their emphasis on schooling, discipline, and the moral value of useful knowledge.

### **Press, Literature, and Theater as Instruments of Reform**

The Jadids did not limit their work to classrooms. They understood that social transformation required a public sphere in which ideas could circulate, be debated, and reach broader audiences. Journals, newspapers, essays, and literary texts therefore became indispensable tools of reform. Encyclopaedia Iranica treats Jadidism as a movement among Muslim intellectuals and points toward the importance of their written interventions in politics, society, and culture. In practice, the press allowed the Jadids to criticize ignorance, discuss reform, and redefine the responsibilities of the educated person.

Modern literature and theater played an equally strategic role. Britannica notes that Abdurauf Fitrat gained prominence through prose and poetic dialogues such as *Munazara* (1909), while Mahmud Khoja Behbudiy became known for the stage tragedy *Padarkush* (1913). These facts matter because they show that Jadidism operated through aesthetic forms as well as through polemical prose. Drama and literature made reform emotionally legible: they translated abstract arguments about ignorance, morality, and progress into characters, conflicts, and public performance. In that sense, Jadid culture was didactic, but it was not dry; it aimed to persuade society through imagination as well as reason.



## **Jadidism and National Awakening**

One of the most enduring achievements of Jadidism was its role in shaping national consciousness. The movement did not begin as a fully developed political nationalism in the modern sense, but it did create the intellectual foundations for national awakening. By calling for new schools, new reading habits, linguistic renewal, and a morally serious public life, the Jadids invited the people of Turkestan to see themselves not merely as subjects of empire, but as a community capable of self-improvement and historical agency. Khalid's work is especially important here because it frames Jadidism as a movement of Muslim cultural reform that emerged directly out of debates over modernity, identity, and collective survival.

Individual Jadid figures embody this shift from enlightenment to wider social vision. Behbudiy is recognized by Britannica as an influential Muslim educator, while Fitrat became one of the major authors and public intellectuals of modern Central Asia. Iranica further notes that Fitrat joined the reform movement under the influence of Behbudiy, illustrating the continuity of Jadid intellectual networks. Their work demonstrates that education, literature, social criticism, and national consciousness were not separate fields but mutually reinforcing dimensions of one reformist worldview.

## **The Socio-Economic Meaning of Jadid Reform**

Although Jadidism is usually studied through the lenses of education, literature, and political thought, it also had a socio-economic dimension. Any movement that seeks to expand literacy, rationalize schooling, widen access to knowledge, and cultivate personal discipline is also intervening in the structure of labor, productivity, and public responsibility. Jadid reformers wanted a society that valued time, learning, useful work, and institutional competence. These ideals are deeply connected to socio-economic modernization, even when they are expressed in ethical or pedagogical rather than economic language. This reading is supported indirectly by the movement's consistent emphasis on practical knowledge and social renewal.

Seen from this angle, Jadidism was an early developmental project. It aimed to produce not only educated individuals, but also a more organized society: one better able to communicate, govern, teach, publish, and participate in broader currents of modern life. For students in economics and social sciences, this dimension is especially important. The Jadids understood that sustainable progress requires investments in intellectual infrastructure. Their schools, texts, and public campaigns were therefore not only cultural artifacts; they were instruments for building social capacity. This is an interpretive conclusion, but it is consistent with the movement's documented concern with reforming institutions and creating a modern, self-aware public.

## **Contemporary Relevance**

The relevance of Jadidism has not disappeared. Britannica notes that the methods and aims of the Jadids reemerged after independence, which suggests that their reformist vision continues to speak to contemporary Central Asian societies. In the present era, when education quality, civic identity, technological adaptation, and cultural confidence remain decisive for national development, the Jadid legacy offers a powerful historical resource. It reminds us that reform is most effective when it unites intellectual openness with moral seriousness and national responsibility.

For modern Uzbekistan and for the wider study of Central Asia, the Jadids remain exemplary because they refused both passive traditionalism and rootless imitation. Their goal was not to abandon local culture, but to renew it through knowledge. That balance between continuity and reform is one of the main reasons their ideas remain intellectually productive today.



In conclusion, Jadidism was one of the most important reform movements in the history of Turkestan. It emerged from the pressures of colonial transformation and the internal need for educational and cultural renewal. Beginning with the “new method” school, it expanded into journalism, literature, theater, ethics, and national self-reflection. Through these interconnected efforts, the Jadids laid the foundations for national awakening and opened new possibilities for social modernization.

Its historical importance lies not only in what it opposed—ignorance, stagnation, and passivity—but also in what it created: a new image of the educated individual, a new vision of society, and a new relationship between knowledge and progress. For that reason, Jadidism should be studied not only as a literary or educational phenomenon, but also as a formative chapter in the intellectual, civic, and socio-economic development of Central Asia.

#### References

1. Khalid, Adeeb. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. University of California Press, 1998.
2. Encyclopaedia Iranica. “Jadidism.”
3. UNESCO. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. VI; and Silk Roads historical materials on intellectual and political ferment.
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Mahmud Khoja Behbudiy.”
5. Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Abdalrauf Fitrat.”
6. Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Uzbekistan: Education / Cultural Life / Government and Society.”
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Ismail Gasprinski.”

