GCCR
Global Conference on Contemporary Research

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH



CONFERENCE THEME:

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES:
INNOVATION, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION THROUGH CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

INNOVATION | DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION | GLOBAL COLLABORATION | SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

JOURNAL

PEER-REVIEWED PROCEEDINGS

OCTOBER 2026

TORONTO, CANADA

gccr.academy

THE ROLE OF MAHMUDKHOJA BEHBUDIY'S ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS IN NATIONAL AWAKENING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Aziza Kadamboyevna Maksudjonova

Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences and Physical Education,

Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry.

E-mail: angelochik86@mail.ru;

Tel.: +998 90 319 64 46;

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9118-471X

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23724388

Abstract. This article provides a socio-philosophical analysis of the enlightenment ideas of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, one of the prominent representatives of the Jadid movement in Turkestan, and examines their role in the processes of national awakening and social development. It explores the interrelationship between educational reform, the acquisition of modern knowledge, awareness of national identity, spiritual and moral development, and social responsibility in Behbudiy's thought. Furthermore, the significance of new-method schools, the press, journalistic writing, and drama in the development of social consciousness is examined through the example of his play Padarkush and his broader educational and enlightenment activities. The study employs historical, systematic, and comparative analysis, together with the contextual interpretation of historical sources. The findings substantiate the significance of Behbudiy's enlightenment ideas for national awakening, particularly in terms of educational renewal, the formation of public opinion, and the development of the intellectual and spiritual conditions necessary for national progress.

Keywords: Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Jadidism, enlightenment, national awakening, social development, educational reform, national identity, spirituality, social consciousness, Padarkush, the press, modern knowledge.

Introduction. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Turkestan underwent complex transformations in its sociopolitical, cultural, and educational life. The conditions of

colonial rule, problems within the educational system, the growing need for modern knowledge, and questions concerning national development presented intellectuals with new challenges. Emerging under these historical circumstances, the Jadid movement developed as an educational and reformist movement that sought to renew society through enlightenment, improve teaching methods, promote awareness of national identity, and encourage greater social engagement.

One of the leading representatives of this movement was Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, whose activities were closely associated with pedagogy, journalism, dramaturgy, and the development of social thought. Behbudiy placed particular emphasis on educational renewal, the development of new-method schools, the preparation of educational materials, and the dissemination of enlightenment ideas through the press. His activities make it possible to understand national development not as an issue confined to a single sphere, but as a process shaped by the interrelationship between education, spirituality, culture, and public consciousness. Studies devoted to Behbudiy's intellectual legacy likewise regard his contributions to educational reform, the development of the national press, and the advancement of theatre as important components of the Jadid movement in Turkestan [1; 2]. The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that, in the development of contemporary society, one of the key tasks is to cultivate individuals who are knowledgeable, capable of independent thought, aware of national and universal human values, and conscious of their social responsibilities. Studying Behbudiy's intellectual legacy not only provides an opportunity to understand historical experience but also enables a socio-philosophical analysis of the relationships between enlightenment, education, and social engagement.

Literature Review and Methodology. In studying Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's intellectual legacy, his own works, journalistic writings, dramatic works, and scholarly studies devoted to the history of Jadidism serve as important sources. Collections of Behbudiy's Selected Works are among the principal sources for examining his enlightenment-oriented views, his approach to social problems, and his literary and journalistic activities. His play Padarkush (The

Patricide), in particular, provides an opportunity to analyse issues related to education and upbringing, ignorance, family responsibility, and the moral climate of society. The study by D.Alimova and D.Rashidova devoted to Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy and his historical thought is significant for examining the views of this Jadid intellectual in connection with broader historical processes. The article by N.Jabborov and F.Açık, which addresses educational reform in Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's activities, discusses his pedagogical views, his efforts to modernise education, and the aspects of his work associated with the Jadid movement [2; 3].

H.Boltaboyev's study of Behbudiy and the Jadid movement in Turkestan makes it possible to examine his sociopolitical activities, literary works, and scholarly and enlightenment-oriented views as an integrated whole [1]. Research published in recent years has also analysed Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's legacy in relation to new-method schools, national identity, the modernisation of educational content, and the development of social consciousness [4]. The distinctive feature of the present article, in comparison with existing studies, is its focus on analysing Behbudiy's enlightenment activities not merely within the framework of pedagogy or literary creativity, but from the perspective of the interconnected mechanisms of national awakening and social development.

The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism and objectivity, as well as systematic analysis, comparative analysis, and the hermeneutic approach. The principle of historicism makes it possible to examine Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's views in relation to the sociopolitical and cultural conditions of Turkestan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Systematic analysis is used to identify the relationships between education, enlightenment, national identity, and social engagement. Comparative analysis helps distinguish the general objectives of Jadidism from the distinctive features of Behbudiy's own views. The hermeneutic approach, in turn, enables the interpretation of ideas expressed in his works by taking into account their historical context, artistic expression, and social objectives.

The Historical and Social Foundations of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's Enlightenment

Activities. Understanding the essence of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment activities requires consideration of the social and cultural conditions of the period in which he lived. In the early twentieth century, improving education, acquiring modern scientific knowledge, developing national culture, and increasing public social engagement had become pressing issues in Turkestan society. Jadid intellectuals regarded education and the dissemination of knowledge as essential means of addressing existing problems. A distinctive feature of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment thought was his effort to understand social progress as being intrinsically linked to individuals' level of knowledge and sense of social responsibility. In his activities, enlightenment was not limited to basic literacy or the acquisition of specific knowledge. Rather, it emerged as a factor that develops an individual's ability to understand the surrounding reality, identify the causes of social problems, and participate consciously in public life [5].

From this perspective, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's activities can be analysed in terms of three interconnected areas. The first was the modernisation of education and the dissemination of modern knowledge; the second was the development of national identity and social consciousness; and the third was influencing public opinion through the press, literature, and theatre. These areas complemented one another, transforming enlightenment into a comprehensive endeavour aimed at renewing society.

In Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's views, achieving national progress requires an understanding of the existing state of society, the use of modern knowledge, and an active concern for social problems. Thus, his enlightenment philosophy is based on a new understanding of the relationship between the individual and society, interpreting an individual's knowledge and sense of responsibility as essential conditions for social development. Educational Reform as a Key Factor in National Awakening. One of the principal directions of Behbudiy's activities was the improvement of the education system and the development of new-method schools. The establishment of Jadid schools was intended to modernise educational content and teaching methods, provide students with knowledge of

modern sciences, and broaden their intellectual horizons. Behbudiy regarded education as a means of enhancing the intellectual potential of the nation and creating the conditions necessary for social progress. His pedagogical activities were also associated with the preparation of textbooks, language learning, and the improvement of the educational process [3; 4]. The social significance of educational reform is primarily reflected in its capacity to expand individuals' opportunities to acquire knowledge. A person equipped with modern knowledge can better understand changes in society, analyse various phenomena, and approach practical problems on a well-informed basis. In this respect, Behbudiy viewed education as being connected not only with individual development but also with the overall advancement of society.

New-method schools were significant because, rather than completely rejecting traditional educational experience, they sought to adapt teaching methods to the requirements of the time. Alongside religious knowledge, the study of secular subjects and an emphasis on fields such as languages and geography helped broaden students' intellectual horizons. This process aimed to transform education from a narrowly defined body of knowledge into a more comprehensive means of intellectual development. The socio-philosophical significance of Behbudiy's views lies in his understanding of education as a factor that determines an individual's position and opportunities within society [6]. Knowledge develops an individual's ability to understand reality, broadens the capacity for independent decision-making, and can strengthen social responsibility. Consequently, in Behbudiy's activities, educational reform emerged as a crucial prerequisite for national awakening.

The Interrelationship Between National Identity and Modern Knowledge. The process of national awakening is associated not only with an awareness of a people's history, language, culture, and spiritual heritage, but also with the acquisition of modern knowledge and the ability to adapt to changes in social life. In Behbudiy's enlightenment thought, national identity and the pursuit of modern knowledge can be interpreted not as opposing phenomena, but as complementary dimensions of national progress. An awareness of national identity is

primarily shaped by an individual's knowledge of their historical and cultural roots and their understanding of the connections between society's past and present [7]. However, an understanding of national heritage is not limited to preserving the experience of the past. It also requires the critical examination of historical experience, the integration of its positive aspects into contemporary life, and its interpretation in accordance with the demands of modern development.

In Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's activities, the pursuit of modern knowledge was closely associated with expanding the social opportunities available to the nation. His work in education and the press aimed to familiarise the public with new knowledge, encourage reflection on social issues, and disseminate enlightenment ideas more widely. These activities contributed to integrating an awareness of national identity with a modern worldview. From this perspective, national awakening can be understood not merely as an intensification of national sentiment, but also as a process through which society recognises its own potential, renews its attitude towards knowledge and culture, and develops the intellectual capacity necessary for progress. The Role of the Press and Journalism in the Development of Social Consciousness. The press and journalistic writing occupied a particularly important place in Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment activities. The press expanded opportunities to discuss pressing social problems, disseminate enlightenment ideas, and develop public opinion. For Behbudiy, enlightenment was not confined to schools or educational institutions; it also involved communication with the wider public. The social function of the press extends beyond the provision of information. It can encourage people to reflect on particular issues, compare different perspectives, and express their views on problems affecting society. In this respect, Behbudiy's journalistic activities can be regarded as an endeavour to develop social consciousness and popularise enlightenment. His work in the fields of journalism and literature was closely connected with the broader educational and reformist objectives of Jadidism [1; 2]. From a socio-philosophical perspective, the development of public opinion is associated with the opportunities available to members of society to understand and discuss

social realities. When people have access to information about social problems and opportunities to analyse these issues and exchange views, the conditions necessary for conscious participation in public life begin to emerge. This aspect of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's activities remains relevant today. In contemporary information society, assessing the reliability of information, fostering critical thinking, and developing a culture of responsible communication are important tasks. However, the capabilities of modern media cannot be equated directly with those of the press in Behbudiy's time. The continuing relevance of this historical experience lies not in the similarity of the communication tools, but in the importance of enlightenment, public discussion, and informed engagement for social development.

The Problem of Ignorance and Social Responsibility in the Play Padarkush. Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's play Padarkush (The Patricide) is one of the important works that expresses his enlightenment-oriented views in an artistic form. Through its dramatic events, the play explores ignorance, neglect of education and upbringing, family responsibility, and moral problems. The author draws attention to the relationship between individual behaviour, the family environment, and the social consequences of education and upbringing. The socio-philosophical significance of the work lies in its demonstration that human behaviour should not be explained solely in terms of individual characteristics; the educational and social conditions that influence its formation must also be taken into account. The close relationship between education and upbringing, parental responsibility, and the moral development of the younger generation emerge as central issues in the play. The educational significance of Padarkush is also evident in its encouragement of open discussion of social problems. A literary work does not merely depict reality; it can also prompt readers or spectators to reflect on the causes and consequences of the events portrayed. In this respect, it can be concluded that Behbudiy used drama as a means of promoting enlightenment. When analysing the problems raised in the play in relation to contemporary society, it is essential to take the historical context into account. Although the issues of education, upbringing, and

responsibility explored in the work remain important for society today, the legal, psychological, and pedagogical frameworks of the modern education system have their own distinctive characteristics. Therefore, the contemporary relevance of the play lies not in treating its ideas as unchanging prescriptions, but in developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between education, moral development, and social responsibility.

The Impact of Behbudiy's Enlightenment Activities on Social Development. The aspects of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment activities associated with social development can be explained in several ways. First, his work reflects an effort to enhance society's intellectual potential by reforming education and popularising modern knowledge. Second, his activities reveal an aim to promote discussion of social problems, develop public opinion, and disseminate enlightenment ideas through the press and literature. Third, awareness of national identity and a renewed understanding of spiritual and cultural heritage emerge as important components of national progress. The interrelationship between these areas defines the comprehensive nature of Behbudiy's enlightenment activities. Education provides knowledge, the press expands opportunities for public discussion, and literature and drama help people understand social problems through human relationships and moral choices. Their combined influence can contribute to the formation of an enlightenment-oriented environment aimed at developing social consciousness. At the same time, it would be academically inaccurate to present Behbudiy's activities as the sole cause of national awakening and social development. Jadidism was a broad historical process in which other intellectuals, educational initiatives, press publications, and cultural transformations also played important roles. Behbudiy's historical significance should therefore be assessed within this wider process, with particular attention to his activities in education, journalism, and drama, as well as his efforts to translate enlightenment ideas into practice. Thus, the significance of Behbudiy's legacy for social development lies in the intellectual initiatives directed towards renewing society on the basis of knowledge, spirituality, national identity, and social responsibility.

Discussion. The findings indicate that national awakening and social development

emerge as interconnected processes in Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment thought. His activities in educational reform, the press, and drama provide grounds for understanding enlightenment not merely as an individual process of acquiring knowledge, but also as a means of developing society's intellectual and spiritual potential [8]. An important aspect of Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's legacy is that the acquisition of modern knowledge can be interpreted not as a loss of national identity, but as a means of expanding society's opportunities for development. This approach requires the relationship between national values and modern progress to be analysed not as an inherent contradiction, but in light of historical circumstances and social needs.

Another finding of the study is the need to consider the dissemination of enlightenment through various social institutions. While schools provide knowledge and support individuals' intellectual development, the press broadens the space for public discussion, and drama and literature offer opportunities to understand moral and social problems. The interaction of these means reveals the educational and enlightenment-oriented essence of Behbudiy's activities. However, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's views cannot be equated entirely with contemporary theories of education and social development. His ideas emerged under specific historical conditions. Accordingly, their study must take into account the sociopolitical characteristics of the period, the content of the sources, and the distinctive meanings of historical concepts. This approach helps avoid idealising the historical legacy and enables the formulation of scientifically grounded conclusions.

Conclusion. Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's enlightenment ideas are important for understanding the nature of the Jadid movement in Turkestan, the educational foundations of national awakening, and the intellectual aspirations aimed at renewing society. His activities demonstrate the interconnectedness of educational reform, the popularisation of modern knowledge, awareness of national identity, and the development of public opinion. The study has led to the following conclusions. First, in Behbudiy's enlightenment thought, educational reform was associated with enhancing society's intellectual potential and creating the

conditions necessary for national progress. Second, national awakening requires not only an understanding of historical memory and cultural heritage, but also the acquisition of modern knowledge and a conscious approach to social problems. Third, the press, journalism, and drama served as important means of popularising enlightenment ideas and bringing social problems into public discussion. Fourth, the issues of education and upbringing, moral responsibility, and family relationships explored in the play Padarkush demonstrate Behbudiy's endeavour to analyse social problems through artistic expression. Therefore, the in-depth study and critical interpretation of Behbudiy's works on the basis of historical sources constitute an important direction in enriching the history of national spirituality and socio-philosophical thought.

REFERENCES:

1. Boltaboyev H. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi and the Jadid Movement in Turkestan. Philology Matters, 53(3), 2025, pp. 12–21.
2. Jabborov N., Açık F. Behbudi's Activity on Education Reform. European Journal of Literature and Linguistics, 2023, pp. 3–9.
3. Alimova D., Rashidova D. Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy va uning tarixiy tafakkuri [Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy and His Historical Thought]. - Tashkent: Akademiya, 1999.
4. Behbudiy M. Tanlangan asarlar [Selected Works]. 2nd ed. - Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 1999.
5. Behbudiy M. Tanlangan asarlar [Selected Works]. Vol. 1. - Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2018.
6. Behbudiy M. Tanlangan asarlar [Selected Works]. Vol. 2. - Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2018.
7. Abdirashidov Z. Jadidlar. Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy [The Jadids: Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy]. - Tashkent: Yoshlar nashriyot uyi, 2022.

8. Masharipova G. K. The Influence of Jadid Enlightenment Views on Contemporary Socio-Philosophical Development. Scientific Approach to the Modern Education System, 3(6), Tashkent, 2025, pp. 122–130.