



## SOCIO –ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT IN THE POETRY OF WOMEN POETS

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the influence of the socio-political environment of Turkestan in the early twentieth century, particularly the Jadid reform movement, on the development of Uzbek women poets' literary creativity. The study analyzes how women poets' works reflected ideas of enlightenment, national consciousness, social justice, education, and the changing role of women in society. Special attention is given to the poetry of Nozimakhonim and Muazzamkhon as representative figures whose works articulate social inequality, colonial oppression, ignorance, and women's social status through poetic expression. The article explores the interaction between traditional poetic forms based on aruz prosody and the emergence of syllabic meter, as well as the transformation of traditional imagery into new social and ideological meanings. Furthermore, the role of periodical press in disseminating women poets' works and shaping public discourse is highlighted.

**Keywords:** Early twentieth-century Uzbek literature, women poets, Jadid movement, social and educational thought, Nozimakhonim, Muazzamkhon, poetry and press, national consciousness, women's status, social justice, literary renewal.

The socio-political environment that emerged in the Turkestan region at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly the reforms associated with the Jadid movement, laid the foundation for renewal in the spheres of spiritual awakening, enlightenment, and literary thought. During this period, ideas such as national self-awareness, liberation of the people from ignorance, and the dissemination of education and knowledge were actively promoted. This historical context also created opportunities for women to demonstrate their intellectual and creative potential in the literary sphere. The increasing participation of women in schools and madrasas, as well as their growing involvement in social life, was reflected in their artistic creativity. From this perspective, the works of women poets of the early twentieth century were formed in harmony with the demands of the time. The inclusion of women's creativity in the poetry of the new era was closely connected with cultural processes, spiritual awakening, and the development of the press.

Women poets of this period reflected not only personal emotions in their poetry but also broader social realities. Themes such as enlightenment, the role of women in social life, calls for education, and protest against social inequality became dominant in their works. For instance, while Muazzamkhon's poems depict women's inner suffering and spiritual awakening, Nozimakhonim's poetry reveals a strong sense of protest against social injustice. These themes contributed to the renewal of

literary thinking and expressed the transformation of women's consciousness and social status through female creativity.

In the works of women poets, alongside traditional poetic forms based on aruz prosody - such as ghazal, ruba'i, mukhammas, and musaddas - syllabic-meter poetry also developed. Traditional poetic images began to acquire new meanings in their verses. For example, images such as "sorrow," "pain," "separation," and "fate" were reinterpreted through a female perspective. Moreover, women poets enriched poetic expression through emotional intensity, dramatism, and internal monologue, thereby introducing unconventional stylistic richness into Uzbek poetry.

The role of the press in bringing women poets' works to a wider audience was invaluable. In particular, publications such as "Yangi Yo'l" which actively covered women's lives, not only published their poems but also expanded the space for social discussion. As a result, poetry became not merely a form of artistic expression but an important factor in shaping social thought. Active participation of women poets in the press presented them to society as independent thinkers and socially conscious individuals.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Uzbek literature - especially poetry - had become a crucial means of reflecting complex social processes. Women poets of this era also promoted ideas of awakening society and liberating the people from ignorance and colonial oppression. Themes of freedom, enlightenment, strengthening women's social position, and calls for education emerged as leading motifs in their poetry. Relying on a realist approach, women poets sought to artistically analyze everyday realities and reveal the problems of their time through images, symbols, and lyrical expressions. Issues such as illiteracy, social inequality, and religious fanaticism occupied a central place in their works.

In this respect, women poets aligned closely with the spirit of Jadidism, advocating the establishment of new-method schools, educational reforms, and the adoption of advanced Western educational systems. The poetry of this period served not to express the personal emotions of the lyrical subject alone, but to articulate social reflections directly related to the fate of the people.

Awakening the nation from negligence, encouraging independent thinking, popularizing reformist ideas, and promoting women's freedom were regarded as primary goals.

From the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, Uzbek poetry was distinguished by its foundation on the principle of populism. Women poets sought to portray the people's way of life and social realities and convey them to a broad audience through artistic imagery. In particular, in the poetry of women poets of this era, the lyrical hero perceives the solution to existing socio-political problems primarily in the education of the younger generation. The idea that positive social change could be achieved by awakening consciousness, promoting education, and teaching secular sciences was actively advanced. Enlightenment and progress gradually became key directions in Uzbek poetry.

In women poets' works, these ideas were closely intertwined with issues of social justice, social responsibility, and the recognition of women's and youth's roles in society. While exposing vices such as ignorance, illiteracy, and oppression, their lyrical heroes presented enlightenment as the primary means of combating these evils. In essence, this approach closely corresponds to the ideological and aesthetic principles of Jadid literature.

Critical social issues such as injustice caused by colonial policy, the impoverishment of the population, and the degraded social status of women occupied an important place in their works. Women poets not only depicted the real conditions of the people, social oppression, and moral stagnation but also proposed ideological paths to overcome these problems. This led to the intensification of artistic expressive devices in their poetry, enabling deeper articulation of ideas through symbolic expressions and lyrical images.

In particular, the strengthening of Russian colonialism from the late nineteenth century and the false promises of the subsequent Soviet regime did not leave Uzbek intellectuals, including women poets, indifferent. In their creative works, they addressed not only personal experiences but also the fate of the nation, its future, and the role of women in society. As a result, the poetry of women poets in the early twentieth century emerged as a literary phenomenon with strong social and educational significance, in addition to its aesthetic value.

In Nozimakhonim's poetry, social awakening, the renewal of national consciousness, and the decisive role of education and science in the destiny of the people are advanced as central ideas. Through the expression "to be without language," the poet criticizes ignorance, linguistic isolation, and intellectual narrowness, emphasizing their negative impact on social development. These lines highlight that scientific knowledge was being articulated in foreign languages. Through this idea, the poet warns that passivity in acquiring knowledge and limiting education to religious learning alone could hinder social progress. This perspective fully aligns with the central Jadid ideal of awakening the nation through enlightenment, particularly significant as voiced by women poets, demonstrating their sense of responsibility toward society.

By emphasizing that new phenomena and scientific achievements were expressed in foreign languages, Nozimakhonim urges her people not to remain excluded from global progress. This call is especially relevant for the youth, who must broaden their worldview and develop modern social consciousness through language learning.

By sharply characterizing linguistic ignorance as a "source of disaster," the poet underscores that indifference to knowledge and modern thinking constitutes the greatest threat to national development.

Overall, this poem illustrates how profoundly and actively social themes were expressed in Nozimakhonim's work. Her poetry prioritizes national consciousness over individual identity, urging society toward awareness, secular education, and foreign language acquisition. Nozimakhonim's poetry occupies an important place in Uzbek literature for its portrayal of social issues through a female perspective. Her verses convey personal tragedy, collective suffering, and social injustice through complex emotional states.

Through these lines, Nozimakhonim connects social hardships with personal tragedy, expressing collective suffering through lyrical means. The phrase "burned in body and soul" indicates that suffering is not only spiritual but also physical. Her critical stance toward her era and social realities is clearly reflected in her poetry.

In her poems, Nozimakhonim keenly analyzes social corruption and portrays contradictions in women's lives. In ghazals such as "Ming Ta'assuf," "Afsus," "Eshon Oyimlar Ta'rifida," "Ayo Mahkumlar," "May-u Xayron Aylama," and "Olam Gulistondur Bu Kun," she exposes the flaws of the social system and highlights social inequality

and injustice. While wealthy individuals live in comfort and luxury, the laboring people struggle endlessly for a piece of bread, residing in ruined dwellings.

At a new stage, changes in the people's socio-philosophical consciousness and spiritual outlook enriched literature with new images and themes reflecting the spirit of the era. Poetry became a primary instrument for expressing the nation's condition, renewing public consciousness, and glorifying freedom and liberation. The lyrical hero was portrayed as an individual engaged in struggle against social vices.

It is important to note that biographical details of women poets reveal that they were born during the period of Tsarist colonial rule and created their works under Soviet oppression. Consequently, Soviet ideological restrictions and political pressures were reflected in the socio-political themes of their poetry. These works serve as valuable sources for understanding previously unknown aspects of that historical period. In women poets' creativity, life events are perceived through the female heart and expressed with feminine delicacy, refinement, and aesthetic sensitivity.

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