THE REARING AND SOCIAL STATUS OF GIRLS IN THE FAMILY LIFE OF TURKIC PEOPLES (BASED ON THE "DEVONU LUGATI-T-TURK")

Bahridil Ergasheva
Doctoral (PhD) student, Institute of History
of Academy of Science of Uzbekistan
bahridilergasheva5@gmail.com

Annotation: *The eleventh century was a significant period of transition in the lives of the Turkic peoples, and in the way of life of those shaped by existing religions and religious beliefs, a pastoral culture still predominated. In this period, we can also learn about the position and role of women in social life through the family environment and values. Mahmud al-Kashgari's work, "Divanü Lughat-it-Turk", is notable for containing valuable information on the upbringing of daughters in families during this period. It contains numerous terms, phrases, proverbs, and various pieces of information on the way of life of women, through which we can imagine the lives of girls within the family.*

Keywords: *Mahmud al-Kashgari, "Divanü Lughat-it-Turk", role of women.*

Today, as with peoples across the world, the study of gender equality and the changes associated with this process is a pressing issue in Uzbekistan, studying the sources that address these issues helps to understand the roots of gender stereotypes. In particular, the words for "girl", "sister", and "daughter" in the "Devonu Lugati-t-Turk", terms such as "qiz", "egach", "sinil", and "to'n

qiz" show the changes that occur in a girl's life upon reaching adulthood, reflecting the active role and reproductive status of a woman in a patriarchal structure.

The aim of this study is to reconstruct, from an ethnological and anthropological perspective, the attitudes towards girls in Turkic families in the eleventh century, through a systematic analysis of the information concerning girls in the "Devanu Lugati-t-Turk".

As the conception of a child was considered one of the significant stages of thought, emotion and spirit in the beliefs of Turkic peoples[2, 74], and because the infant was considered vulnerable, at the time of birth, other phrases or various totems were used to announce or ask whether the child was a girl or a boy. In particular, this work contains information that when a woman gave birth, she was asked, "Tilkumu tug'du azu bo'rimu?", meaning "is it a girl or a boy?". The fox was used to represent a girl child; firstly, its agility, mystery and beauty were taken into account, and secondly, its cunning and its ability to deceive were also considered [5]. This belief, stemming from our people's totemic and shamanistic worldview, was intended to place the child under the protection of this creature by invoking its name. In our folk, the term "as cunning as a fox" is still used for a girl.

Among the distinctive customs of the Turkic peoples' way of life is the division into age groups namely childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age and the various customs and ceremonies associated with these stages have been preserved to this day [3, 70]. This can also be observed in attitudes towards girls. For example, the word "anach" is used as a term of endearment for young, clever girls[4, 35]. This word is closely related to the phrase "onach" and emphasises a girl's cleverness and intelligence. Even today, the phrase "my

mother's daughter" is often used by fathers and said affectionately to their daughters. Such expressions reflect the important role of girls within the family, highlighting their role as a mother's helper, a homemaker, and a future mother herself. These endearments serve to instil a sense of responsibility in her from an early age. She is also affectionately called "qizqiyam", which means "my little girl" [4, 381]. It can be inferred that this is usually said by her mother.

In families, the firstborn child has always been treated with a sense of responsibility, and this, in turn, has placed a serious burden of responsibility upon them. In the work, the woman's first daughter is referred to as the "to'n qiz". This endows her with special respect and also places on her the responsibility of serving as a role model for her siblings and acting like an adult to assist in the household [4, 375]. This portrays the role of these girls in the family not as secondary, but as individuals who preserve the continuity of family relationships. In Uzbek families, even today, firstborn daughters play key roles both within the family and in managing various customs and ceremonies.

As in all peoples, it is known that young girls played with various toys, particularly dolls. Traditionally, dolls were made from cotton and cloth, and information on this can be found in the "Devonu Lugati-t-Turk". According to it, they were called "qodurchuq" and were mainly played with by girls [4, 198]. Through this toy, girls were prepared for motherhood, and by playing in groups, they also internalised social relationships, simulating kinship, in-law ties, and marriage.

In ancient Turkic families, girls' ages and social statuses were expressed with various terms. For example, words such as "ev qizi", "yenika qiz" and "qapig'liq qiz" indicated their social status. "Ev qizi" denotes a girl who has

reached marriageable age but has not yet married, while “yenika qiz” conveys the same meaning. The term “qapig'liq qiz” indicates that the girl is a virgin and is regarded as a symbol of her family's honour [4, 196]. Considering the terms used for the aforementioned girls, this indicates that they are not only important members of the family but also the custodians of moral and spiritual equilibrium.

In the work, this is conveyed by the verb “o'rguchlandi”, signalling the girls' stage of maturity [4, 129]. The signs of the girls' reaching puberty are also expressed with specific terms, primarily indicating physical changes and features in their appearance. Among Turkic peoples, long hair is recognised as a symbol of maturity and beauty. Long hair gave girls the right to care for their own hair and to adorn themselves. In literary works, long and thick hair is also a distinct theme, and A. Qodiriy, in his novel “O'tgan kunlar”, did not include the phrase “My endless greetings to you, even to every single hair on my head” in Kumush's letter without reason [1, 236].

Likewise, the verb “qiz bo'ksuklandi” is used to mean that a girl's breasts have developed, expressing a direct physical change and the emergence of feminine characteristics [4, 293]. This indicates that the girls are ready for motherhood. The verb “munchaqlandi” (to be adorned with beads) indicates that girls began to wear various beads, pearls and jewels, a sign of their rising social status, and expressed their right to own wealth [4, 293]. These circumstances indicated that the girls' status within the family and society was on the rise.

The role of labour education in preparing girls for family life was particularly significant, and within the family, girls were engaged in chores appropriate to them. Valuable information exists about them engaging in

spinning and embroidery, in addition to cleaning and cooking. For example, the phrase “qiz chegin chegnadi” means that the girl embroidered pictures onto silk garments [4, 425]. This indicates that these girls were taught fine art, good taste, and patience, and received an aesthetic education. The phrases “Qiz anasi birla yip egrishti”, meaning “the girl vied with or assisted her mother in spinning yarn [4, 103]”, indicate the important role of the mother in the girls' lives.

Moreover, the work also contains information about the girls' marital status and social standing. For example, the phrase “qiz egatlandi” meant that the girl had a servant or that she had gone to her bridal home with one. This indicates that she comes from a wealthy family, further enhancing her prestige. In society, this system of respect and protection was not uniform across all social strata. In particular, enslaved women were subjected to the most insidious forms of social inequality. In the work the term “qizlashu” appears, which describes how a slave girl was placed as a hostage when an arrow was shot from a bow, and how the victor would claim her [4, 285]. This situation indicates that attitudes towards girls in society were not uniform.

In conclusion, it can be said that the upbringing of a daughter in families is not merely a family tradition, but a system that reflects the spiritual and social state of society. An analysis of the ethnographic and linguistic data presented in Mahmud al-Kashgari's “Divanü Lughat-it-Turk” shows that the socialisation of girls begins from birth, through various beliefs and systems of protection. Attitudes towards motherhood, wifedom and womanhood have always prevailed. The terms presented demonstrate that views on the upbringing of girls defined their status within the family and their place in society, based on their labour skills and family background. This, in turn, indicates that the historical roots of gender relations in the modern family, the status of

motherhood, and educational traditions are ancient and have been passed down through the centuries.

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