CULTURAL IDENTITY AS A BASIS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AN EFFECTIVE PLATFORM FOR PROTECTING YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS FROM EXTERNAL THREATS

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Annotation *– This article examines issues related to the preservation of each nation's identity in the context of modernity and the diversity of information, the challenges of maintaining a nation's cultural uniqueness, and the upbringing of the younger generation in the spirit of respect for their national traditions. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of remaining a part of the global community without falling into self-isolation or lagging behind global development trends. Several approaches to addressing this issue are proposed, including the reform of the education system and the introduction of disciplines into academic curricula aimed at conveying the essence and origins of specific cultural traditions of different peoples.*

Keywords *– globalization, awareness, identity, nation, history, uniqueness, migration, education, generation, youth.*

Introduction.

In today's world, where globalization and digitalization are rapidly transforming the socio-cultural landscape, the issue of shaping national identity among youth has gained particular relevance. The ongoing transformation processes within the spiritual and cultural spheres of society often lead to a distortion of the value orientations of the younger generation, which calls for a systematic approach to their correction and development.

The search for effective mechanisms that foster respect for national identity, promote intercultural competence, and preserve cultural diversity becomes especially significant. In the context of increasing social mobility and intercultural interaction, it is crucial to create conditions for the harmonious development of individuals capable of integrating their national affiliation with universal human values.

Every nation must, above all, strive to preserve its identity, as this issue is so critical that neither society nor the state has the moral right to ignore it, postpone it, or relegate it to the background. Any nation that undergoes the deformation of its national mentality will inevitably face the threat of losing its existence. Conversely, a nation's efforts to preserve its identity reflect its determination to maintain its place and continuity in the world.

Methods.

This article is devoted to the analysis of a set of measures aimed at strengthening the spiritual foundation of youth, developing their cultural potential, and fostering respectful attitudes toward the diversity of national traditions and cultures. Special attention is given to practical mechanisms for eliminating negative trends in the

spiritual and cultural spheres, as well as to strategies for enhancing interethnic dialogue and mutual understanding.

Results.

The foreign policy of hegemonic states, aimed at maintaining their global dominance, increasingly regards the concept of "information warfare" as a unified tool that creates conditions for indirect and, at times, direct aggression. Within this policy framework, various tactics are developed to attack the values, customs, and national mentality of other countries from multiple angles, often as part of a long-term strategic plan that involves shifting the methods of conflict and influence. Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate this phenomenon. One notable example is the policy of labor migration.

This area of geopolitics has become a key instrument of influence for hegemonic powers. The process of labor migration raises critical questions: Why do developed countries actively exploit this factor? And how does it potentially threaten the mentality and cultural stability of other nations?

Firstly, labor migration refers to the movement of people from one region to another, either for permanent or temporary residence, with the purpose of engaging in employment. This process, which encompasses living conditions, lifestyle, and family support, naturally generates demand for labor migration.

Secondly, since the majority of labor migrants come from the lower social strata, their capacities—such as language proficiency, legal awareness, and other essential skills—are often limited. As a result, their potential to study and adopt the history and culture of another nation remains unsatisfactory. This creates opportunities to exploit migrants for various purposes, playing into the hands of hegemonic states that pursue modern forms of slavery.

Thirdly, legal labor migration requires a person to possess certain knowledge (basic education and scientific literacy). Unfortunately, migrants lacking such capabilities often attempt to enter foreign countries blindly (illegally) and eventually fall into the hands of third parties. As a result, they endure long-term physical, spiritual, and psychological harm. In such circumstances, individuals may develop a dual mindset, foster a negative attitude toward their homeland, and become inclined to act against it.

Fourthly, as a large portion of migrants belong to the lower segments of society, influencing their self-awareness in order to alter their mentality, culture, and way of life becomes effective. Consequently, the greater the number of migrants from developing countries entering developed nations, the more opportunities the host countries gain to implement geopolitical strategies—exerting external influence on the migrant's home country, intervening in its internal affairs, threatening its material and cultural heritage, national mentality, and, if necessary, even its sovereignty.

Fifthly, migration serves as a unifying factor that facilitates intercultural contact and influences the integration of peoples and nations with different worldviews and mentalities. Therefore, if one seeks to fundamentally transform a person's culture and worldview, accelerating migration processes becomes essential. It must be understood

that the benefits gained by society, the state, and future generations from this policy are minimal, whereas the potential harm caused by such processes is immense.

The spiritual potential of a nation, its cultural heritage, traditions, and both national and universal human values continue to exist in accordance with the law of vertical development and the tendency toward growth. More precisely, they undergo transformation through the transmission of ways of thinking, upbringing, education, and social attitudes from the older generation to the youth. Therefore, if the middle and older generations think rationally, the younger generation—our future successors—will be brought up within national spiritual and educational traditions and will strive for self-improvement. This raises an important question: to what extent do the thinking, worldview, and lifestyle of the current older generation serve as a model for the youth? To answer this question, a series of roundtable discussions and a sociological survey were conducted in the neighborhood (mahalla) level under the theme: *"What has independence given you?"**

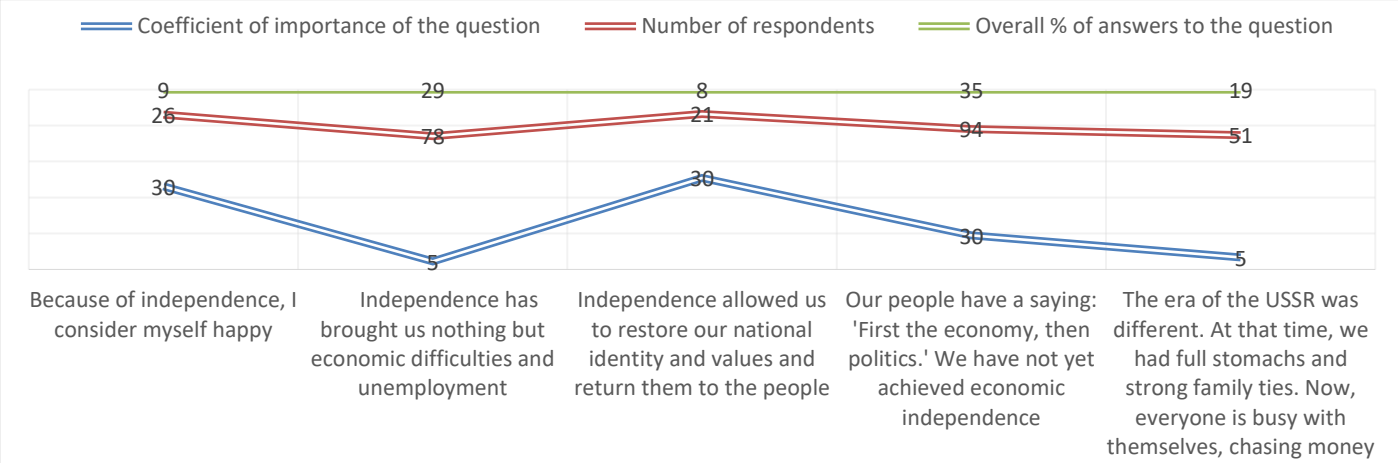
The survey included five statements:

- I consider myself happy because of independence.
- Independence has given us nothing except economic difficulties and unemployment.
- Independence has allowed us to restore our national identity and values and return them to the people.
- There is a saying in our nation: "First the economy, then politics." We have not yet achieved economic independence.
- The Soviet era was different. At that time, we were clothed and fed, and there was unity in families. Now everyone is on their own and immersed in everyday problems.

After reviewing the obtained statistical results from a socio-philosophical perspective and analyzing the correlation between the questions using a comparative-typological method, the following diagram was created.

Diagram 2

* The age of the respondents who participated in this survey ranged from 55 to 75 years. This is because our citizens of this age group belong to a generation that was educated and raised during the late colonial era, exposed to the propaganda of the repressive policies known as communism, and brought up during a time when our history, culture, and spirituality were insulted and distorted. (The study, conducted in the form of roundtable discussions and surveys, took place in 9 neighborhoods of Navoi, Bukhara, and Samarkand regions, with a total of 270 respondents participating).



Thus, the questions posed during the study are divided into three groups:

1. Responses reflecting the goal of the research (questions 1-3);
2. Responses evaluating the worldview, understanding, and social attitude toward independence (questions 2-4);
3. Responses from individuals who have an underdeveloped sense of pride in their national identity, values, traditions, and culture (question 5).

The results of the study based on these surveys show that 29% of our middle-class citizens, who lived and worked during the time of the former Soviet government (during which their consciousness and worldview were formed), have not been able to adapt to the conditions of independence. Furthermore, 35% of the respondents are dissatisfied with their economic situation and believe that the state is the source of their material difficulties, considering material well-being as the solution to all problems. What is concerning is that even 19% of the middle-aged group are skeptical about independence, living with the problem of "making ends meet" and holding a cosmopolitan view on such sacred concepts as national identity, independence, or homeland.

In other words, the total number of individuals who responded positively to the stated goal of the research does not exceed 8-9%, which indicates pressing issues. Therefore, if the youth are considered a class in need of education and upbringing, then elderly people (80 years and older) are those who require attention and care. Thus, in both cases, if we say that middle-aged individuals (55-75 years) are important drivers in society's management and in family relationships, we make an accurate assessment. The problem is that the research results show that most of the representatives of this group (middle-aged) have diverse views on concepts such as national mentality, pride, patriotism, Eastern mentality, and at times even need educational support themselves.

Overall, based on the conclusions of the study, it can be said that there is a need to strengthen the ideological immunity against the spiritual and cultural deformation of an informed society, to increase respect for national identity and self-awareness, not only among the youth but also among all layers of our society. How to achieve this? What practical work is feasible? What pragmatic mechanisms should be developed to strengthen propagandist technologies? Experts in this field have the following views on such questions:

Researcher S. Madumarova argues that education is a primary factor in shaping national spiritual values in the consciousness of the youth, through which social dialogue occurs. It is during the educational process that various members of society develop a certain value form of interaction with each other, assimilating and advancing knowledge characteristic of the past nation. Therefore, by proposing the idea that the educational and upbringing environment is a unique tool for promoting national identity, "the opportunity arises to increase intercultural communication in the education system, moving based on principles such as:

Firstly, 1) tolerance; 2) pluralism; 3) cognitive humility; 4) formless individuality.

Secondly, the existence of differences between people is not disregarded, and the acceptance and awareness of different viewpoints occurs based on a certain system. From this perspective, it is noted that rapidly developing artificial intelligence plays a transformative role in intercultural education, as it adapts education to the cultural identity of different people, ensuring influence through individualization.

Thirdly, to prevent various information transformation processes from fundamentally changing the individual's relationship with national cultural heritage, it is essential to avoid the situation where the theory of intercultural education—inclusive education in its form—is not directed against each other. For this, from a philosophical point of view, all aspects of education must be adapted to an environment focused on cultural heritage [7, p.169]. In asserting the above, the researcher presents a philosophical reflection on the transformation of traditions based on education. According to the researcher, this discipline, being the fundamental methodology of education and pedagogy, is considered a mechanism of ideological prevention, especially when external calls and threats from today's world intensify every day.

According to Sh. Akhrorova, when implementing social policy in society, it is important and necessary to rely on national values. This is because, in order for modern social institutions to integrate into another institutional system, they must take into account each other's national and spiritual characteristics. Firstly, although there are such institutions in different countries, and they have the same status and perform the same functions, due to national culture, they differ from one another in national-spiritual properties; Secondly, the introduction of democratic principles in reforms of various directions calls for this (national-cultural values). Here, it is appropriate to recognize the following ideas of the researcher about national values: Any society is built on its own principles, values, and national elements. This is because the subjects of society - social institutions — are also organized according to national criteria;

Every person has habits, skills, and constant behaviors that have developed throughout their life, as well as behavioral rules formed over a certain period of time. Additionally, people, observing the surrounding world and the changes occurring in it, as well as observing and participating in different social relationships, will evaluate them based on their worldview. These habits are formed within the system of national moral values.

A person distances themselves from something useless and strives towards a valuable object or protects it. This careful attitude eventually becomes constant and,

for a particular people, it forms as a tradition. If this tradition serves the interests of not only an individual but the entire nation, its significance increases, and based on its ethnic component and qualities, it transforms into a national tradition. That is, among the peoples of the world, regardless of whether a nation is large or small, traditions are formed that will be important for the peoples, each having its own place [9, p. 78-81]. In addition, the ideas of Sh. Akhrorova can be supplemented with the following:

- through national spiritual values, the natural, historical, and social mentality of a particular society is formed, and various customs appear in the life of the nation in different ways;
- social relationships manifesting in cultural traits, such as customs and traditions, form elements of spiritual satisfaction.

By improving the material, spiritual, economic, or political knowledge of the people, significant changes in society's life can be achieved. To do this, it is necessary first to identify indicators related to the national mentality. For example, achievements in various sectors depend on attention to science, i.e., by investing financial resources and gradually forming a moral environment, this process can be realized.

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