

SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN “KECHA VA KUNDUZ” AND ITS TRANSFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEK SOCIETY

Ergasheva Bahora Baxtiyorovna, Teacher of the Samarkand state institute of foreign languages

“KECHA VA KUNDUZ” ASARIDA IJTIMOY TENGSIKLIK VA UNING ZAMONAVIY O‘ZBEKISTON JAMIYATIDAGI TRANSFORMATSIYASI

Ergasheva Bahora Bakhtiyorovna, Samarqand davlat chet tillar instituti o‘qituvchisi

СОЦИАЛЬНОЕ НЕРАВЕНСТВО В РОМАНЕ “КЕЧА ВА КУНДУЗ” И ЕГО ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ УЗБЕКСКОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

Эргашева Бахора Бахтиёровна, преподаватель Самаркандского государственного института иностранных языков



<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5710-5249>

e-mail:

bbakhtiyorovna@mail.ru

Abstract: This article explores the theme of social inequality in Abdulla Qodiriy’s novel *Kecha va Kunduz* and examines its transformation in contemporary Uzbek society. By comparing the literary depiction of class, gender, and educational disparities with current sociological data, the study reveals the persistence of structural and symbolic inequality. Employing an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary analysis with the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu and gender studies, the paper argues that the issues highlighted in the novel remain relevant today.

Keywords: “Kecha va Kunduz”, social inequality, gender roles, Uzbek literature, Abdulla Qodiriy, symbolic violence, Bourdieu, post-Soviet transformation, women in society, literary sociology.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola Abdulla Qodiriyning “Kecha va Kunduz” romanidagi ijtimoiy tengsizlik mavzusini hamda uning zamonaviy O‘zbekiston jamiyatidagi ko‘rinishlarini tahlil qiladi. Romandagi sinfiy, gender va ta’limga oid tafovutlar tasvirini bugungi sotsiologik ma’lumotlar bilan solishtirish orqali maqolada tuzilmaviy va ramziy tengsizlikning davom etayotganligi aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot adabiy tahlilni Pyer Burdye nazariyalari va gender tadqiqotlari bilan uyg‘unlashtirgan holda, interdisiplinar yondashuv asosida olib borilgan.

Kalit so‘zlar: “Kecha va Kunduz”, ijtimoiy tengsizlik, gender roli, o‘zbek adabiyoti, Abdulla Qodiriy, ramziy zo‘ravonlik, Burdye, postsovet transformatsiyasi, jamiyatdagi ayol, adabiy sotsiologiya.

Аннотация: Статья посвящена анализу социальной неравенства в романе Абдуллы Кадыри “Kecha va Kunduz” и его трансформации в современной узбекской действительности. Сравнивая литературное изображение классовых, гендерных и образовательных различий с актуальными социологическими данными, автор выявляет устойчивость структурного и символического неравенства. Исследование опирается на междисциплинарный подход, сочетая литературоведческий анализ с теориями Бурдьё и гендерными исследованиями.

Ключевые слова: “Kecha va Kunduz”, социальное неравенство, гендерные роли, узбекская литература, Абдулла Кадыри, символическое насилие, Бурдьё, постсоветская трансформация, женщина в обществе, литературная социология.

INTRODUCTION (KIRISH). Social inequality is a persistent theme across cultures, time periods, and forms of expression. In the case of Uzbek society, literature has long served as a mirror reflecting the social stratification embedded in tradition, religion, and power. Abdulla Qodiriy’s novel “Kecha va Kunduz” (Night and Day), written in the early 20th century, is not only a literary classic but also a historical document that articulates the roots and manifestations of social inequality during the twilight of the Bukhara Emirate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS (ADABIYOTLAR TAHLILI VA METOD). The question of how inequality has evolved in post-Soviet and modern Uzbekistan invites critical inquiry. While the external structures of society have undergone transformation—feudalism giving way to socialism, and later to a market-oriented independence—many foundational issues such as gender bias, unequal access to resources, and regional disparities remain. As Khodjaeva argues, “Qodiriy’s literature bridges history and ethics, making the socio-moral challenges of the past resonate in contemporary discourse”[4].

The relevance of this research lies not only in re-evaluating a canonical Uzbek novel, but also in illuminating the ongoing implications of social stratification in the 21st century. As Mukhiddinova notes, “Qodiriy was one of the first Uzbek writers to integrate social criticism with personal psychology”, a combination that remains critical for analyzing present conditions[6].

Studies such as those by Dadaboev and Akhmedov, which discuss post-independence social structures, provide an essential contemporary counterpoint to Qodiriy’s historical vision[3].

The study also applies a comparative literary framework, drawing parallels between the characters and social dynamics in Qodiriy’s work and real-life social trends in modern Uzbekistan. The triangulation of literary data with empirical and theoretical materials ensures analytical rigor and mitigates the limitations of interpretive subjectivity[7].

In terms of theoretical grounding, the research draws on the works of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his concepts of “symbolic capital” and

“habitus”, to interpret how social status and internalized norms affect agency in both the novel and society [2]. Gender theory from feminist scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty is also employed to analyze the depiction of female characters in Qodiriy’s novel and their relevance to contemporary gender discourse [5].

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS (MUHOKAMA VA NATIJALAR). The literary analysis of “Kecha va Kunduz” reveals a deeply entrenched system of inequality, where access to power, freedom, and dignity is determined primarily by birth and gender. Otabek, as a progressive reformer, constantly struggles against the limitations imposed by conservative religious authorities, patriarchal norms, and traditional hierarchies. His attempts at reforming business practices and advocating for women’s rights are met with resistance, highlighting how deeply societal norms are internalized by individuals and institutions [6].

Kumush’s character represents the idealized woman—pious, loyal, and graceful—yet she remains confined within the boundaries of domestic life and suffers from decisions made by others. Zaynab, by contrast, embodies rebellion but is ultimately punished for stepping outside the acceptable moral and social framework. Their tragic trajectories illustrate how women’s roles were limited to narrow moral archetypes, a theme still relevant in Uzbekistan today[4].

Contemporary sociological data reflects the persistence of inequality, albeit in new forms. For instance, despite legal advancements, women in Uzbekistan remain underrepresented in leadership roles and often experience wage disparities and employment discrimination[3]. Rural-urban divides continue to shape access to quality education, healthcare, and social mobility. Moreover, corruption and informal patronage networks often determine career success more than merit, echoing the arbitrary power dynamics depicted in “Kecha va Kunduz”.

In both the novel and modern life, inequality is maintained not only through laws or economic systems but through cultural expectations and internalized hierarchies. Bourdieu’s concept of

“symbolic violence” is useful here: many of the restrictions in the novel are not forcibly imposed but quietly accepted by the characters, much like how many citizens in modern Uzbekistan adapt to systemic limitations without overt resistance [2].

- *Gender Inequality Persists Despite Legal Progress.*

Recent World Bank and UN Women data show a significant gender gap in employment and earnings [9]:

The gender labor force participation gap in Uzbekistan reaches 28 percentage points - well above the regional average (19 p.p).

The share of NEET (youth not in employment, education, or training) women is 42%, compared to 8,8% for men.

Women earn on average 34% less than men - far above the global average gender wage gap (~20%).

If women earned as much as men, Uzbekistan's per capita income could increase by 29%, lifting over 700,000 people out of poverty.

- *Gender Inequality in Politics and Education.*

Despite some improvements, women remain underrepresented:

Women hold 32% of seats in the Legislative Chamber and 25% in the Senate (2023).

Only 4.8% of ministerial posts are held by women (as of 2024).

In higher education, women make up 37% of Ph.D. candidates, 31.5% of associate professors, 24.3% of doctoral scientists, and only 22.7% of full professors.

- *Cultural Norms and Gender Roles.*

Cultural traditions continue to limit women's opportunities:

80% of the population supports the model of male breadwinner/female homemaker.

Women spend twice as much time on unpaid domestic labor compared to men.

In rural areas, 75% of unemployed women cite caregiving and housework as the main reasons for not seeking work.

Preschool access is limited—only 42% of rural children attend preschool versus 51% in cities (2022).

- *Psychological and Social Consequences.*

A 2022 UNICEF study showed alarming trends in adolescent mental health:

16.7% of schoolchildren feel lonely, 15.4% experience anxiety, and 9.8% show signs of depression.

Girls are more affected than boys, reflecting the emotional burden of social constraints.

- *Real-Life Testimonies.*

Examples from Reddit forums illustrate persistent issues:

“In my research team, I’m the only woman. My male colleagues talk down to me... I cried from humiliation today.”

“In some rural communities... brides become servants, married off young and deprived of freedom”.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while the structural and ideological frameworks of Uzbek society have changed significantly since the early 20th century, many core aspects of inequality remain resilient. The transition from imperial to Soviet and then independent governance has introduced new institutions and discourses, but the legacy of hierarchical thinking persists. Qodiriy's portrayal of moral complexity and societal inertia offers critical insights into how individuals internalize social roles and navigate systems of power [7]. As Mohanty (2003) emphasizes, postcolonial societies often reproduce gender hierarchies under the guise of cultural authenticity [5].

Literature, therefore, remains a critical medium for both reflecting and challenging social norms. “Kecha va Kunduz” continues to serve as a pedagogical tool in Uzbek schools, and its enduring popularity suggests a deep cultural resonance. Yet, as Khodjaeva notes, “its radical message is often softened in public discourse, reducing a critique of inequality to a tale of romance and tradition”. For the novel's full power to be felt, it must be read not only as heritage but as a prompt for ethical and social introspection[4].

CONCLUSION (XULOSA). This study has explored the representation of social inequality in Abdulla Qodiriy's “Kecha va Kunduz” and examined how the themes illustrated in the novel have transformed-or, in some cases, persisted-in contemporary Uzbek society. By applying a multidisciplinary methodology that draws from literary theory, gender studies, and sociological data, we have established that many of the structures critiqued in Qodiriy's work-patriarchy, class

hierarchy, and unequal access to education-continue to shape societal outcomes in present-day Uzbekistan.

Data from the World Bank, UNICEF, and national statistics demonstrate that while legal reforms have introduced gender quotas and expanded access to education, inequalities in income, regional opportunity, and leadership remain stark. The symbolic violence theorized by Bourdieu remains an apt framework to understand why social progress does not always translate into empowerment, particularly for women[8].

LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. Bourdieu P. Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Harvard University Press. 1984.
2. Bourdieu P. Language and Symbolic Power. Polity Press. 1991.
3. Dadaboev N., Akhmedov R. Socio-economic inequalities in Uzbekistan: Trends and policy challenges. Central Asian Review of Development, 4(2), 2021. - P. 25–42.
4. Khodjaeva S. Social Criticism and Gender Representation in Qodiriy's Novels. Uzbek Literary Studies Journal, 10(1), 2022. – P. 35–49.
5. Mohanty C.T. Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity. Duke University Press. 2003.
6. Mukhiddinova Z. The Role of Historical Novels in National Consciousness: A Case Study of Abdulla Qodiriy. Turan Scientific Journal, 85(2), 2020. – P. 112–118.
7. Qodiriy A. Kecha va Kunduz. Tashkent: Akademnashr. 1926/2021.
8. UNICEF Uzbekistan. Child Wellbeing and Mental Health in Uzbekistan: National Assessment Report. <https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan>. 2022.
9. World Bank. Gender Equality in Uzbekistan: Progress and Challenges. <https://www.worldbank.org/uzbekistan>. 2023.

