



Ethnological Classification Of The Customs And Rituals Of The Uzbek People Associated With The Birth Of A Child

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the traditions and rituals of the Uzbek people associated with childbirth from the perspective of historical-ethnographic, sociocultural and transformational processes. The study covers beliefs and prohibitions related to pregnancy, rituals performed during childbirth, and traditional rituals after childbirth based on empirical materials and scientific sources. The results show that these traditions of the Uzbek people are not only a cultural heritage, but also a factor that strengthens social cohesion, family stability, and national identity in modern society. The article was developed in accordance with the requirements of IMRAD and is of theoretical and practical importance for dissertation research.

Keywords:

customs, rituals, childbirth, traditional culture, transformation, Uzbek people.

Introduction

The birth of a child is regarded as one of the most significant and sacred events in human life, and across different cultures, a variety of customs, traditions, and ceremonies associated with this occasion have evolved. In Uzbek culture, the arrival of a child is considered not only a joyous event for the immediate family but also for the entire community, including neighbors and extended relatives. Therefore, this process has, over the centuries, been enriched with specific traditions, beliefs, and ceremonial practices.

In traditional society, customs associated with childbirth have carried not only religious or ritual significance, but have also fulfilled important social, educational, and psychological functions. Through these practices, efforts have been made to strengthen the status of women and mothers within society, reinforce family bonds, and raise the younger generation in the spirit of national values and cultural heritage.

The primary objective of this article is to systematically analyze the customs and rituals

of the Uzbek people associated with childbirth, to identify their origins and meanings, as well as to examine their transformations in the contemporary context. The findings of this research are intended to contribute to and enrich the broader scholarly investigations conducted within the framework of the dissertation.

Methods

In the course of the research, a comprehensive application of qualitative and descriptive research methods was employed. In particular:

- **Historical-ethnographic method** – employed to determine the origins, evolution, and regional characteristics of childbirth-related rituals.
- **Field research component** – oral testimonies and traditional practices recorded in the regions of Surkhandarya, Samarkand, and the Kashkadarya oasis were collected and systematized.
- **Comparative method** – used to analyze both the regional differences and the common features of Uzbek customs.

• **Analysis and synthesis** – general conclusions were drawn based on scholarly literature, folklore texts, and ethnographic observations.

• **Sociocultural approach** – applied to identify the functional transformations of these rituals within contemporary society.

The source base of the study consisted of ethnographic research conducted by Uzbek and foreign scholars, works in the field of folklore studies, as well as field notes and primary field records.

Results

The findings of the study indicate that the childbirth-related customs and rituals of the Uzbek people constitute a systematic and multi-layered cultural phenomenon. Depending on the period of their performance and their sociological significance, these rituals can be classified as follows:

Customs related to the period of pregnancy.

Traditionally, the Uzbek people have accorded special social and moral attention to pregnant women. It has been customary to relieve them of heavy labor, ensure their psychological well-being, offer good wishes, and observe certain prohibitions. These practices have served not only to protect the health of both mother and fetus, but also to elevate the social status of motherhood within the community. Among the pregnancy-related customs and rituals of the Uzbek people are the lighting of a ceremonial lamp (*yo'l chiroq yoqish*), various blessing and incantation practices, rituals performed to protect the mother from the evil eye, and traditional methods intended to predict the sex of the unborn child, along with several other customary observances.

Rituals associated with the process of childbirth.

During labor, the participation of experienced women, the performance of religious and supplicatory practices, and the creation of a positive psychological environment have held particular importance. Until the mid-nineteenth century (the 1850s), traditional midwives (*doya moma*) played a crucial role in this process. According to the findings of the study, these rituals functioned to stabilize the psychological condition of the woman in labor and to provide collective social support. Among the customs practiced during

this period are gently rocking the woman on a carpet if labor progress was difficult, applying oil to the abdomen, and planting a tree in honor of the newborn child.

Rituals Performed After the Birth of the Newborn.

Through these customs, social solidarity, kinship ties, and cultural continuity have been maintained. In terms of their content and significance, these rituals are carried out with religious, educational, and health-related considerations for the child. Examples of such ceremonies include naming the child, placing the infant in a cradle (*beshik to'yi*), observing the *chilla* period, performing the *aqiqa* ritual, and reciting the call to prayer (*adhan*) into the newborn's ear. These rituals and practices represent the initial stage of the child's process of social integration into society.

Discussion

The findings of the study confirm that the childbirth-related customs and rituals of the Uzbek people possess profound social and cultural significance. A comparison with earlier ethnographic research indicates that although these rituals have been preserved throughout various historical periods, they have undergone certain formal transformations under the influence of globalization and urbanization processes.

Moreover, since rituals reflect the religious affiliation and social behavior of a given people, they have received particular attention during certain historical periods, while in others they have been restricted or prohibited. In particular, rituals associated with Islam and the expression of Uzbek cultural identity were suppressed and banned during the Soviet period. Specifically, based on our field ethnographic research conducted in various villages of the Surkhandarya region, the majority of informants emphasized that during the Soviet era, ceremonies such as *aqiqa*, the recitation of the *adhan* into the newborn's ear, and *muchal* celebrations were rarely performed, largely due to the prevailing political policies of that time.

Another aspect identified during the discussion is that rituals and customs tend to adapt to the spirit and normative framework of each historical period. The simplification of traditional ceremonies in different eras does not

diminish their substantive significance; rather, it facilitates their adaptation to contemporary social needs. From this perspective, childbirth-related customs function as an important factor in preserving national identity and strengthening cultural continuity between generations. At present, these customs and rituals continue to undergo transformation under the influence of modern life. In recent years, practices such as birthday parties, welcome parties for newborns, and elaborate hospital discharge ceremonies have become increasingly popular, reflecting the integration of contemporary cultural trends into traditional frameworks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, customs and rituals may be regarded as phenomena that reflect the distinctive spiritual identity of every nation. The childbirth-related customs and ceremonies of the Uzbek people likewise demonstrate our people's deep appreciation and care for the blessing of a child, as well as their commitment to raising children as morally mature individuals and instilling in them a love for and reverence toward their homeland and nation. In this article, the childbirth-related customs and rituals of the Uzbek people were analyzed in accordance with the IMRAD structure. The findings of the study indicate that these traditions occupy a significant place in the spiritual life of society. Their scholarly examination and preservation are of considerable importance for the development and enrichment of national culture.

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