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FOLK FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS IN UZBEKISTAN: EDUCATIONAL VALUE, DIDACTIC VALUE AND ROLE IN PRESERVING NATIONAL TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the unique features of folk holidays and festivals in Uzbekistan, emphasising their high educational value, their significance in educational and cultural aspects, and their key role in preserving national traditions and rich cultural heritage. It is also noted that Uzbekistan's folk festivals and holidays play an important role in the formation of national identity and the spiritual unity of society. Through participation in such activities, young people develop a deep understanding of the significance of traditional values, which is particularly important in the context of globalisation and increasing urbanisation, where there is a risk of losing cultural identity. Evidence is given that, along with the development of various spheres of society, Uzbekistan pays close attention to the promotion and support of culture. In the current period of society's development, considerable work is being done to strengthen cultural foundations, popularise national customs and traditions and create conditions for the comprehensive cultural development of the population.

KEYWORDS

Upbringing, education, mass holidays, folk festivals, makhalla, traditions of the people, rituals, civil society, national holiday culture.

INTRODUCTION

The traditions of multi-ethnic Uzbekistan are reflected in mass folk festivals, festivals, music, dance, painting, arts and crafts, language, cuisine and dress. The distinctive Uzbek culture is a quintessence of Central Asian cultures, yet each region of Uzbekistan has its own unique nuances. This is especially evident in the national festive culture. To get acquainted with this richness, it is necessary to travel all over the country, but those who want to see the whole palette of Uzbek culture in one place should visit the festivals of Uzbekistan, which bring together creative groups from all regions of the republic. It is here that one can see the full colour of Uzbek dances, music, applied arts, etc.

Peace and stability and the unity of the multi-ethnic people of Uzbekistan are essential factors in the prosperity and progress of our dynamically developing society. Today, representatives of more than 130 nations and nationalities live in the country, and all conditions have been created for the preservation and development of their distinctive culture, customs and traditions.

Since independence, Uzbekistan has begun to transform its education system, with many teachers and officials trying to revive the traditions of mektebs (Muslim religious schools). The Old Arabic alphabet, on which the Uzbek script was previously based, has been resumed, and curricula have been revised to provide

more comprehensive coverage of Central Asian history, literature and culture.

METHODS

Uzbekistan's folk festivals and holidays occupy a special place in the life of society, fulfilling not only an entertaining but also a profoundly educational function. They unite the people, help to preserve the cultural heritage, maintain the spirit of national identity and pass on traditions from generation to generation. Today, the development of culture in Uzbekistan and the support and popularisation of folk festivals are priorities of State policy, which underlines the importance of their preservation and transmission to young people.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev states: "In our country, along with all spheres and sectors, great attention is paid to the development of culture. Especially in recent years, a great deal of work has been carried out to develop this sphere at a new stage. A number of major projects are being implemented to revive and study the rich cultural heritage of our people. In particular, the Centre for Islamic Culture in Uzbekistan has been established in our capital and the Imam Bukhari International Research Centre in Samarkand. The Centre for the Study of Uzbekistan's Cultural Treasures Abroad and the Centre for the New History of Uzbekistan are also being set up." [1.P.2]

The educational value of folk festivals and holidays is manifested in the formation of moral and cultural qualities in the younger generation. They instil respect for historical and cultural traditions, foster patriotism and a sense of pride in one's country. Holidays such as Nowruz, Mehrjon Sayil, and others are filled with symbols and cultural customs that help young people internalise national values through participation in traditional rituals, songs, dances and other cultural acts.

Festivals, being didactic in nature, help to learn more about the history and culture of a people [2.P.18]. They are often accompanied by master classes, craft exhibitions, theatrical performances and cooking competitions, where participants learn about traditional arts and crafts. Such events contribute not only to the development of aesthetic taste, but also broaden the outlook, instilling in young people an interest in Uzbek folk culture and historical heritage.

RESULTS

Here are examples with facts that illustrate the significance of folk holidays and festivals in Uzbekistan and their impact on cultural and educational spheres:

1. Nowruz, celebrated annually on 21 March, symbolises the beginning of spring and renewal. In 2009, UNESCO included Nowruz in the list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and in 2010 the UN General Assembly recognised it as an international holiday. On

this day, the inhabitants of Uzbekistan hold festive processions, mass festivities, sports and cultural events. Special attention is paid to family values and care for nature. The custom of preparing sumalyak, a dish of sprouted grains, symbolises abundance and prosperity, which is important for fostering in young people respect for nature and understanding the cyclical nature of life.

2. Every two years, Samarkand hosts the “Sharq Taronalari” (Melodies of the East) international festival, which brings together artists and performers from more than 50 countries. This festival not only popularises Uzbek culture, but also supports intercultural ties, serving as a platform for interaction and exchange of musical traditions. During the festival, young people and tourists can learn about folk music traditions, which helps popularise national art and develop respect for other cultures.

3. The Mehrjon festival, dedicated to the end of the harvest, is a symbol of gratitude to nature and honouring labour. It is celebrated in rural areas with fairs, exhibitions of agricultural products, concerts and folk games. The festival aims to strengthen the link between man and nature by highlighting the importance of the labour of farmers. Young people participating in festivals and events learn to respect agricultural labour and the importance of respecting natural resources.

4. The Bukhara Silk and Spices Festival annually brings together masters of traditional crafts and cookery. The festival includes exhibitions featuring Uzbek fabrics, ceramics, carpets and other works of arts and crafts. Masters share the secrets of weaving, embroidery and working with ceramics, as well as hold master classes for young people and tourists. This festival not only contributes to the preservation and popularisation of ancient crafts, but also strengthens the continuity of generations by involving young people in the study of traditional arts and crafts.

5. The Plov Festival is another colourful event held in Tashkent that attracts tourists from all over the world. This cultural event brings together pilaf masters from different regions of Uzbekistan to demonstrate their unique recipes. The festival introduces participants to the culture of Uzbek cuisine, emphasising the importance of family traditions and unity. This event not only promotes the popularisation of Uzbek culinary culture, but also strengthens family and social ties.

6. The city of Kokand, known for its handicraft traditions, hosts an international festival of folk crafts that attracts craftsmen and artisans from different countries. In 2019, this festival attracted more than 600 participants from 78 countries, which emphasises its status as a significant cultural event. The festival supports the development of folk crafts such as stamping, woodcarving, carpet weaving and ceramics,

passing on these skills to young people and helping to preserve and promote them internationally.

DISCUSSIONS

The preservation of cultural heritage is one of the main thrusts of modern State policy in Uzbekistan. Folk festivals and holidays help to maintain national traditions, strengthen national identity and preserve the country's cultural diversity. They are a powerful means of transmitting oral knowledge and musical and artistic traditions, since the customs and rituals accompanying these festivals form a cultural consciousness and a link with ancestors.

The State pays particular attention to the development of the cultural sphere, creating conditions for supporting folk art, holding holidays and festivals, and strengthening cultural ties within and outside the country. In recent years, Uzbekistan has opened cultural centres and organised educational programmes to support and promote folk art and cultural traditions.

The government supports the creation of cultural platforms where young people can get acquainted with the national cultural heritage, take part in folk festivals, and learn crafts and traditions. Thanks to this, culture becomes accessible not only in large cities, but also in rural regions, where traditions are more preserved and passed on from generation to generation.

Summarizing the above, folk holidays and festivals play an important role in strengthening intercultural relations not only within the country, but also in the international arena. Uzbekistan, being a country with a rich cultural heritage, actively promotes its culture on the world stage by participating in international cultural exchanges and festivals. These events contribute to the establishment of mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples, which is especially important in the context of globalization and cultural interaction [3.P. 17].

Participation in international festivals allows you to demonstrate the cultural wealth of Uzbekistan, its unique traditions and customs, inspiring and drawing attention to the ancient cultural heritage of the country. Thus, national holidays and festivals become a bridge connecting people of different cultures and a way for the world to learn and appreciate the cultural achievements of Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

Folk holidays and festivals of Uzbekistan are an integral part of the cultural and social development of the country. They perform an important educational function, contribute to the preservation of national identity and strengthen cultural traditions. State support for the cultural sphere creates opportunities for the preservation and development of these traditions, which makes it possible to transfer cultural

heritage to young people and promote it internationally. As a result, national holidays become not only a holiday for the soul, but also an important factor in shaping future generations and maintaining the cultural diversity of Uzbekistan.

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