

State Policy Aimed at Enhancing Youth Spirituality in Educational Institutions of Surkhandarya Region: Historical Stages and Practical Mechanisms

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Abstract: This article examines state policy aimed at enhancing the spirituality of young people in educational institutions of Surkhandarya Region during the years of independence through the relationship between its legal foundations, pedagogical mechanisms, and historical outcomes. The 2016 Law on State Youth Policy, the 2019 Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education, the Five Important Initiatives, and the 2021 resolution on spiritual and educational activities are analyzed. The growth in the number of students in the region indicates the organizational scale of implementation, but is not interpreted as a measure of educational impact. A model is proposed for linking cooperation among schools, families, mahallas, and youth organizations with student activities. Since regional archives and survey data are unavailable, no causal conclusions are drawn regarding effectiveness at the school level.

Keywords: Surkhandarya, youth policy, spiritual education, continuity, educational institution, regional governance, civic participation, outcomes.

Introduction: The concept of “enhancing youth spirituality” should have a clearly defined meaning in historical research. Equating spirituality with the number of activities attended by students may overlook their personal responsibility, attitudes toward other people, and ability to make reasoned decisions. In this article, spiritual education is understood as a pedagogical relationship among knowledge, moral reasoning, social behavior, and cultural participation. State policy, in turn, is understood as administrative activity that creates conditions for this relationship through legislation, programs, institutions, and financing. The establishment of an organization does not, by itself, indicate that an educational outcome has been achieved.

In Surkhandarya Region, the issue arises within a distinctive historical and regional context. Differences in infrastructure between the city of Termez and the districts, the role of mahalla and family relations in

everyday life, local historical heritage, and the growth of the educational population make it impossible to implement nationwide documents in exactly the same form everywhere. Identifying regional differences is not the same as demonstrating their magnitude. Assessing how effective reading or sports activities have been in particular districts requires school reports, student work, and comparable observations. An open official document cannot substitute for such primary evidence.

The research question is how national-level norms of state policy can be transformed into educational tasks in Surkhandarya educational institutions and which historical outcomes of this process can be confirmed by the available sources. The chronological scope covers 1991–2025. During the initial period of independence, the reconstruction of attitudes toward national values can be observed; in the subsequent stage, youth-related legislation was strengthened; and from 2019

onward, the ideas of continuity and linking different types of activities became increasingly prominent. This periodization is based on the adoption of normative documents and does not mean that pedagogical methods changed simultaneously in every school.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

M. Quronov's work "Milliy Tarbiya" (National Upbringing) frames the relationship between national values and the upbringing of the modern individual as a pedagogical issue. O. Musurmonova's research on family spirituality highlights the roles that family communication and values play in personal development. While these works provide a significant theoretical foundation, they do not directly document the activities of a specific regional school in the period following 2019. They should be utilized as sources for interpreting concepts rather than as indicators of implementation in Surkhandarya. Evidence at the institutional level is required to translate general ideas about upbringing into specific regional historical facts.

The main sources are the 2016 Law "On State Policy Regarding Youth", the Cabinet of Ministers' Decision No. 1059 of December 31, 2019, and the President's Decision No. PQ-5040 of March 26, 2021. The President's official information regarding the five important initiatives of 2019 makes it possible to define the directions of the initiative. To represent the scale of the education system, data from the National Statistics Committee on general education students, broken down by region, was used. Sources answer the question in different ways: the law indicates the legal possibility, the concept points to the stage of upbringing, and statistics show the number of students. None of them directly measures the moral transformation of an individual student.

The methodology comprised historical-chronological comparison, content analysis of documents, and analysis of pedagogical mechanisms. For each regulatory text, the specific task, the institution responsible for its implementation, and the expected student activity were identified separately. The concept of "result" was applied at three levels: the adopted document, the established organization or activity, and the observable change in the student. The first level is verified by documentation; the second requires a record of on-site implementation; and the third demands reliable monitoring and re-evaluation. This distinction mitigates the error of conflating a political objective with a historically achieved result.

Data from the archives of Surkhandarya schools, special questionnaires, or experimental trials were not utilized in this article. Consequently, the practical examples provided are not presented as experiments actually

conducted in real schools; rather, they serve as verifiable models for translating a documented objective into a lesson. Causal pedagogical effects are not derived from statistical figures. Explicitly defining this boundary does not weaken the academic outcome; instead, it clarifies precisely what the source demonstrates.

Historical stages and content of state policy

During the early years of independence, a new nationwide task concerning youth education was formulated. The adoption in 1991 of a law establishing the foundations of state youth policy is also recorded in the legal history of subsequent legislation. At that time, the return to the national language, historical memory, and cultural heritage were factors influencing educational content. However, it cannot be stated that this process occurred in exactly the same form in every educational institution of Surkhandarya. The publication of textbooks, teacher preparation, and local resources determined the pace of change. In examining historical continuity, programs from the 1990s, lesson plans from the 2000s, and student work from subsequent years should be considered as separate sources.

The Law No. O'RQ-406 dated 14 September 2016 provides for the development of state and regional programs to ensure the personal, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of young people. Young people are viewed not merely as a group receiving education but as citizens possessing rights and the capacity for initiative. This places an important requirement on the content of spirituality. If a student who listens to a lecture about responsibility is not given an opportunity at school to express an opinion, choose a social project, and observe the consequences of a decision, the principle of active participation established by the law does not become an educational experience. In a regional school, this mechanism may take the form of student council activities, volunteer projects, or the preparation of reasoned proposals concerning a community problem.

Resolution No. 1059 approving the Concept of Continuous Spiritual Education expresses the principle that education should continue consistently across the developmental stages of a child. Continuity does not mean repeating the same slogan every year. At preschool age, tasks may include developing emotional regulation and care for others; at later school stages, they may include justifying one's views, reaching compromise, and participating responsibly in community activities. A skill learned at one stage is then applied in a more complex situation at the next. Without such links, a collection of separate activities for

different age groups may emerge, but a continuous educational system will not.

The Five Important Initiatives introduced in 2019 covered areas such as art and culture, sports, digital technologies, reading, and women's employment. For schools, their value lies not simply in occupying students' free time. Listening to one another's views in an art club, observing rules and fairness in sports, verifying information during digital activities, and conducting evidence-based discussion in reading activities create educational content. The establishment of a club or registration of members does not prove that these skills have been developed. Each activity requires an observable objective. In particular, if girls' freedom of choice and conditions for safe participation are not taken into account, reports of broad coverage may not reflect actual opportunities.

Presidential Resolution No. PQ-5040 identifies the insufficient establishment of an integrated system and social cooperation in spiritual and educational processes as a problem. The fact that the official document itself recognizes existing shortcomings is analytically significant. The problem is not merely a lack of events, but also the duplication of responsibilities among organizations, weak methodological foundations, and the absence of clearly defined criteria for assessing outcomes. The resolution creates opportunities for coordination; it cannot be interpreted as a ready-made conclusion about effectiveness in regional schools. To establish a historical outcome, implementation of the resolution and subsequent pedagogical change must be studied separately.

The 2020 Law on Education establishes the legal basis for the forms and system of education. Youth policy and education policy intersect within the same institution, but their tasks are not identical. The school curriculum organizes learning outcomes, while educational and developmental activities also seek to influence students' communication, responsibility, and civic experience. If working with sources in subject lessons, cooperation in clubs, and community activities are aligned, the two directions can reinforce each other. It is not sufficient, however, to declare them "integrated" merely on the basis of general wording in official documents.

Practical mechanisms for Surkhandarya educational institutions

In the region, youth spiritual development is simultaneously influenced by family, school, the peer environment, digital information, and the mahalla. The school's role is not to control all these influences, but to provide students with an opportunity to discuss and evaluate messages arising from them and to justify

their own decisions. If a student develops the habit of checking the source of an online message, information culture and personal responsibility are combined within a single task. If a student listens to the views of different generations about the mahalla and proposes a solution to a social problem, the local environment and civic skills become interconnected. Such an approach turns values into subjects of practical reasoning rather than predetermined judgments.

Regional statistics provide a clearer picture of the issue of coverage. According to the official series, the number of students in general education institutions in Surkhandarya increased from 390,224 in 2010 to 572,789 in 2025. This represents an increase of 182,565 students, or approximately 46.8 percent. The figures make it possible to compare the scale of the system between the two years, but they do not indicate an improvement in the quality of spiritual education. Birth rates, age structure, coverage, and changes in registration may affect the series. From a pedagogical perspective, an expanding student population increases the need for reusable quality materials for teachers, adaptable options for remote schools, and simple tools for recording outcomes.

At the institutional level, the appropriate unit is not an isolated mass event but a sequence of activities with defined objectives and observation methods. For example, upper-grade students may identify needs concerning books in a mahalla library through a short anonymous survey. They enter the data into a table and develop a lawful and practical proposal that could be presented to an under-resourced library. At the end of the activity, each student records whose opinion was heard, who

may have been excluded, and what the proposal was based on. This transforms reading from merely listing book titles and civic participation from merely repeating slogans into a verifiable social experience. No results are attributed to a school where the survey was not actually conducted; the example is a methodological model.

In middle grades, a disputed situation following a sports competition can be analyzed. Teams identify which rule was interpreted differently, discuss the referee's decision using evidence, and propose a clear procedure for the next competition. In this way, sports skills are connected with concepts of fairness and respect for others. The number of participants or medals does not measure educational change. A student's adherence to rules and respectful dialogue even after losing is an observable behavioral indicator. If observation is conducted only once, no firm conclusion about its stability should be drawn.

In primary grades, beginning with an abstract definition of spirituality may be ineffective. Short situations involving waiting one's turn, touching another person's belongings with permission, or helping a classmate who has made a mistake can be discussed. The child identifies the consequences of two possible actions and explains why one was chosen. The teacher does not simply mark the "correct answer" but also listens to the child's reasoning. If such small activities continue within the family, the continuity described in the concept can become part of everyday communication. The aim is not to turn the family into an inspector of school assignments, but to develop a shared ethical language.

If school-mahalla cooperation is measured only by the number of joint meetings, responsibility remains unclear. Each project should specify its objective, child-safety requirements, whose data will be processed, and who will assess the outcome. A mahalla representative explains the local issue, the teacher adapts the task to the student's age, and the student develops a proposal based on observations. A youth organization may help identify opportunities or resources, but the student's independent voice should not be replaced by someone else. Forcing a student's opinion into a "correct" political expression would contradict the goal of civic participation.

A single expensive extracurricular model may not be appropriate for all districts of Surkhandarya. Student travel, building capacity, trainer availability, and family schedules should be considered. In a remote school with a small library collection, mobile book exchange or properly attributed electronic texts may be used. Where internet access is weak, offline materials should be prioritized. Where sports facilities are limited, discussions on healthy lifestyles and safe small-group activities can be organized. Although the means may change, the educational objective, voluntary participation, and requirement to verify outcomes should remain.

When designing spiritual education at the school level, it is useful to check the alignment between the objective and the method. If the objective is respectful participation in a debate, merely listening to a lecture is insufficient practice. If the objective is to distinguish evidence in a book, giving a book as a gift alone does not create the skill. When students read two texts in small groups and identify the author's position and supporting evidence, they move from reading as an activity toward reading as knowledge construction. An organizational indicator shows that an activity has begun, whereas a student product shows what it served. Distinguishing these two types of evidence also helps school administrators determine where

resources should be allocated.

Cooperation with families should not assume that all families have identical living conditions. Some parents work shifts, while some households may have limited internet access or no quiet place for study. A general assignment such as "talk to a parent for one hour every day" cannot be completed equally by every child. Instead, students may be invited to have a short conversation at home with any trusted adult about a situation discussed at school or exchange views with a classmate. Education becomes continuous not by imposing mandatory reporting on families, but by helping children understand relationships in their own lives.

Long-term records of institutional activities are also valuable for historical analysis. If, at the end of each year, one high-quality project description, the sources used, anonymous student reflections, and identified difficulties are preserved, five years later it will be possible to see not only how the program changed on paper but also how it was actually learned and implemented. Record-keeping should not burden teachers with excessive tables. A two-page general form and several sample works can often provide more information than hundreds of decorative photographs. Students' names should not be publicly distributed, and appropriate consent should be obtained for interviews or images. Such an archive can enable future evidence-based review of pedagogical solutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Periodic comparison of the documents reveals three identifiable changes in state policy. The 2016 law incorporated young people's rights and social participation into a general legal framework. The 2019 concept encouraged education to be viewed through developmental stages and the school-family relationship. The 2021 resolution formally identified shortcomings in inter-organizational coordination as a policy issue. These are outcomes confirmed by historical documents. The extent to which children's spiritual worldview improved in each school, however, cannot be inferred from these documents. Maintaining this distinction is essential for an objective assessment of state policy.

Theoretically, educational influence emerges through a sequential mechanism. Resources are provided; the student engages in meaningful activity; makes a decision; receives feedback on mistakes; and applies what has been learned in a new situation. If any link in this chain is broken, the final effect is limited. Between the law and resources stand funding and management; between resources and activity stands teacher competence; and between activity and skill stand

reflection and assessment. Therefore, the causal statement “a resolution was adopted, therefore spirituality increased” is scientifically weak. A resolution may strengthen a potential opportunity, but its consequences must be tested through evidence.

The simplest form of educational measurement is to record the basis on which a student makes a judgment in a particular situation. At the beginning of a lesson, the student writes a short response to a controversial message; after analyzing information sources, the student revisits the response; and then applies the same criteria to a message on another topic. Change can be observed through citing sources, fairly restating another person’s view, and correcting an erroneous conclusion. Education cannot be fully represented by a test score alone, but a concrete work sample is more reliable than a general impression. Teachers should assess evidence and communication skills rather than personal beliefs.

The problem begins when the number of activities is accepted as a management-friendly indicator. An annual report may show one hundred discussions, but if their objectives, participant engagement, and subsequent activities are not recorded, it is impossible to know which method worked. Conversely, relying only on individual tests does not capture change in the social environment. The smallest practical solution combines two types of evidence: a coverage record and a qualitative sample of student work. The sample can be stored using consistent criteria without revealing personal identities. In this way, organizational scale and pedagogical content can be examined separately.

The digital environment represents a particular challenge for spiritual education. Students need skills in verifying online claims, distinguishing sources, refraining from sharing discriminatory messages, and protecting personal information. While the digital direction of the Five Important Initiatives aims to expand opportunities to use technological tools, schools should add responsible communication to this opportunity. Having a computer does not prove information literacy. On the contrary, it may also increase the likelihood of rapidly spreading messages without sources. Attempting to solve the problem through a general prohibition deprives students of the opportunity to evaluate information independently. Short practical verification exercises can help reduce this risk.

Social equality should also be included in assessment. If girls and boys have different levels of freedom to participate in clubs, the overall number of participants may conceal differences in opportunity. If a student with a disability is not provided with suitable space,

transportation, or materials, the program remains formal. Family income and distance from school may affect participation in evening activities. There is no separate data to quantify how frequently these issues occur in Surkhandarya. However, project design can record non-participation, carefully inquire about its reasons, and offer remote or nearby alternatives. Indicators should serve equal access to opportunities for all young people.

The value of relying on local heritage lies in creating a connection between historical places and identity. Historical monuments in the region, local scholars, and intergenerational memory provide topics for lessons. However, if the label “our own” replaces evidence, historical understanding becomes superficial. Identifying the date and author of a historical source, comparing different interpretations, and understanding responsibility for preserving cultural heritage connect national heritage with universal scholarly standards. As students learn about local history, developing openness to the heritage of other regions and cultures should also be a pedagogical objective. Whether this has been achieved cannot be determined from photographs of events alone.

Discussing complex situations is particularly important in teacher preparation. For example, if two students express opposing views about a cultural custom, the teacher should not end the discussion by silencing one of them. Instead, the students distinguish evidence from opinion, avoid disrespectful language, and continue the discussion according to a common rule. This does not require substantial financial expenditure, but it requires teachers to possess dialogue-management skills. In professional development, testing alternative solutions to real situations may have greater practical value than relying on ready-made celebration scripts.

For future research monitoring policy implementation in the region, it would be appropriate to collect four types of evidence. School work plans and reports show what was organized. Club schedules and attendance records reveal the regularity of opportunities. Anonymous samples of student work reflect task quality. Careful interviews with parents, teachers, and students explain how the program was perceived. If institutions from Termez and remote districts are compared using the same age and task criteria, regional differences can be identified. Until such research is conducted, quantifying the impact at the regional level lacks a sufficient scientific basis.

In describing historical stages at the regional level, equal attention should be paid to policy continuity and change. The legal opportunity initiated by a law may be

transformed by a concept into educational tasks for different developmental stages. However, in moving from a concept to a school diary, lesson time, staff competence, and conditions for voluntary participation become decisive. When teachers attempt to combine every assigned topic into a single activity, the content becomes diluted. Given limited time, a more appropriate approach is to identify two or three specific skills and practice them in different situations throughout the year. This small change can bring documentary requirements closer to the actual capacity of the classroom.

Higher and professional education institutions in the region can also establish links with schools without relying solely on ceremonial meetings. Under the supervision of teachers, pedagogy students can prepare short methodological materials for schools on verifying information sources or working with local history. A university teacher checks scientific accuracy, while a school teacher checks age appropriateness. After students complete the task, they can indicate which questions were unclear. This feedback introduces a small but verifiable improvement into the program. A separate agreement or lesson record would be required to claim that such cooperation has actually been established; here it is presented as a possible method.

When assessing outcomes, a student's behavior should not be written as a judgment about their entire personality. If a child who responds rudely in one situation is labeled "spiritually deficient," assessment ceases to function as an educational tool. The teacher should describe the specific action, ask about the situation, listen to the affected party, and provide an opportunity to choose a different course of action next time. This process gives the student experience in correcting mistakes. Spiritual development is manifested not only in providing predetermined correct answers, but also in the ability to recognize the consequences of a mistake and reconstruct one's response. School reports should not replace this nuanced process with labels attached to individuals.

Overall, the next step in historical assessment is to examine why the same program produces different outcomes under different conditions. In selected schools, student age, class size, access to books and the internet, teacher experience, and actual links with the mahalla should be recorded separately. If activity levels are high in one institution, the reason may not be solely the adoption of a particular resolution. A teacher's personal initiative, parental support, or a long-standing club tradition may also influence the outcome. If these factors are ignored, the contribution of state policy may be overestimated. The purpose of comparison is not to

punish or rank schools, but to determine under which conditions particular methods create genuine opportunities for children.

Future data collection should preserve not only successful experiences but also those that did not work. If only successful exhibitions and competitions are documented, the historical picture becomes one-sided. For example, it is necessary to ask whether a poorly attended club had an inconvenient schedule, age-inappropriate content, or a change in leadership. Explaining unsuccessful experiences provides clear lessons for new projects. Therefore, a reporting culture should serve the improvement of decisions rather than the decoration of achievements.

CONCLUSION

During 1991–2025, state policy concerning youth spirituality developed directions related to legal guarantees, continuous education, meaningful use of free time, and coordinated spiritual and educational activities. For schools in Surkhandarya, the practical value of this policy lies in the opportunity to help students practice historical memory, fair interaction, source verification, and responsibility in community activities as interconnected skills. The substantial increase in the number of students in the region has strengthened the task of making educational activities accessible to more children. This increase is not evidence that a spiritual transformation has occurred.

For practical development, school–mahalla projects should jointly define a clear learning objective, resources appropriate to different ages and conditions, consideration of students who do not participate, and criteria for assessing subsequent skills. Reports should distinguish between activity coverage and observable evidence concerning students' thinking and behavior. Only after regional archives and school-based observations have been collected will it be possible to draw firmer conclusions about the historical pedagogical effectiveness of state policy in a particular district.

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