

Educating the Perfect Individual Through the Pedagogical Heritage of Sadriddin Ayni

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Abstract: This article examines the pedagogical views reflected in the literary and publicistic works of Sadriddin Ayni. As a prominent writer, educator, and public intellectual of Central Asia, Ayni articulated a coherent vision of enlightenment, moral upbringing, social justice, and national awakening through education. The study analyzes his key works and highlights their contribution to the development of modern pedagogical thought in the region.

Keywords: Sadriddin Ayni, pedagogy, enlightenment, moral education, national identity, Central Asian literature.

Introduction: 1. Historical and Pedagogical Context. Sadriddin Ayni (1878–1954) was a prominent Central Asian enlightener, writer, and public intellectual whose pedagogical views were formed during the Jadid reform movement. The Jadids advocated for modern education, critical thinking, and social reform in response to the stagnation of traditional maktab and madrasa systems. Ayni critically examined outdated educational practices and supported the introduction of the “new method” (usul-i jadid) schools, which emphasized literacy, secular sciences, and methodological innovation.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Ayni’s Pedagogical Views

a) Enlightenment and Education as Social Progress

Ayni considered education the primary driver of societal development. He argued that ignorance and illiteracy were the main causes of social backwardness. In his view, education should not merely transmit knowledge but cultivate conscious, socially responsible individuals capable of independent thought.

This approach aligns with modern humanistic and progressive educational theories, where education is understood as a tool for both personal and social transformation.

b) Moral Education as the Core of Personality Formation

Ayni emphasized that knowledge without morality is incomplete. According to him, the formation of a “perfect individual” (kamil inson) requires the integration of intellectual development and moral education. Key virtues in his pedagogical conception include:

- Honesty
- Justice
- Diligence
- Patriotism
- Social responsibility

Thus, moral upbringing occupies a central position in his educational philosophy.

c) Development of Critical Thinking

Through his literary and journalistic works, Ayni encouraged learners to question injustice, resist oppression, and think independently. He criticized dogmatism in traditional education and promoted analytical reasoning and awareness.

From a modern pedagogical perspective, this corresponds to competence-based education and critical pedagogy, which prioritize analytical skills and civic consciousness.

d) National and Universal Values

Ayni advocated for the preservation of national

identity, language, and cultural traditions while simultaneously promoting universal human values such as equality, justice, and human dignity.

This synthesis reflects a balanced educational model that integrates cultural heritage with global humanistic principles.

3. Pedagogical Ideas Reflected in His Works

Ayni's literary works function not only as artistic texts but also as pedagogical instruments. In his memoirs and social novels, he critically depicted the shortcomings of the old educational system, highlighting issues such as:

- Mechanical memorization
- Authoritarian teaching methods
- Lack of practical knowledge
- Social inequality in access to education

Through these depictions, he implicitly proposed educational reform based on rationality, accessibility, and moral integrity.

4. Concept of the "Perfect Individual"

In Ayni's pedagogical thought, the "perfect individual" is characterized by:

1. Intellectual competence and literacy
2. Moral integrity
3. National consciousness
4. Civic responsibility
5. Commitment to social justice

This concept resonates with the broader Eastern philosophical tradition while incorporating modern reformist ideals.

5. Contemporary Relevance

From the standpoint of modern educational science, Ayni's pedagogical heritage remains relevant because:

- It supports learner-centered education.
- It integrates moral and civic education with academic instruction.
- It promotes critical thinking and social awareness.
- It aligns with competence-based educational frameworks.

Therefore, Sadridin Ayni's pedagogical legacy can be regarded as a significant methodological resource for

contemporary educational theory and practice, especially in the context of forming ethically grounded and socially active individuals.

"Tahzib us-sibyon" shows the duties of teachers and students. For example, if the beginning of the book mentions the teacher, the article entitled "Ikhtar" describes the role of the teacher as follows: "Mr. Second, read for the children themselves and share their mistakes. When the student has had a chance to review and summarize the lesson, move on to the next lesson. Focus on understanding the benefits of each lesson. If the student is in second grade, they should also be able to solve the vocabulary." Today's educational process considers it necessary to adhere to these requirements, and therefore the requirements of Ayni are still valuable today. The chapters "Children's education", "Children's manners", "Father and mother", "Teacher-teacher", "School", "Thank you Ahmadjoni" are remarkable for their simple expression. The story of a boy named Yoldosh is written under the "Story" column. It is said that a boy named Yoldosh went to school and studied "Alifbe". He was a liar. In class, he broke his pen, blackened his notebook, and blamed his classmates. The teacher warned Yoldosh about his misbehavior two or three times, but to no avail. In the end, Yoldosh was expelled from school. In a short time, his disciplined classmates became literate. Some became teachers and some became merchants. But the illiterate Yoldash remained in the throes of hard labor. It can be seen that the writer has created interesting scenes with high educational value by expressing the images affecting the spiritual world of children in simple children's language. His pedagogical ideas emerged at the intersection of national awakening, social transformation, and educational reform. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by profound socio-cultural transformations in Central Asia. Within this context, Sadridin Ayni emerged not only as a founder of modern Tajik literature but also as a thinker deeply concerned with issues of education and moral reform. His works reflect the intellectual currents of the reformist and enlightenment movements, emphasizing the transformative power of knowledge and schooling in overcoming ignorance and social stagnation. Ayni regarded education as the principal instrument for

individual and societal progress. Through his literary narratives and memoirs, he expressed a systematic pedagogical philosophy grounded in enlightenment ideals, ethical responsibility, and social consciousness. Ayni consistently portrayed education as a path toward liberation from oppression and backwardness. In his autobiographical work, *Yoddoshtho*, he critically describes the traditional *maktab* and *madrasa* systems, pointing to outdated teaching methods based on rote memorization and rigid discipline. These depictions are not merely descriptive but pedagogically evaluative. Ayni advocates for reform in teaching methodology, emphasizing comprehension, critical thinking, and practical knowledge. For Ayni, education was inseparable from enlightenment (*ma'rifat*). He believed that the spread of literacy and scientific knowledge would awaken social consciousness and foster civic responsibility. His literary works function as didactic tools, guiding readers toward ethical reflection and intellectual growth. Ayni's pedagogical thought places strong emphasis on moral education. In works such as *Odina* and *Dokhunda*, he presents characters whose lives illustrate the consequences of ignorance, injustice, and moral decline. Through these narratives, Ayni underlines virtues such as honesty, perseverance, respect for labor, and social solidarity. He viewed the formation of character as a central aim of education. According to Ayni, schooling should cultivate not only intellectual competence but also ethical responsibility. The teacher, therefore, bears a moral duty to serve as a model of integrity and enlightenment.

Ayni's works contain a sharp critique of conservative educational institutions that resisted reform. He exposed corporal punishment, authoritarian teaching styles, and the suppression of independent thought. By portraying the psychological impact of such methods on students, Ayni implicitly proposed a more humane and student-centered pedagogy. His educational ideals resonate with broader reformist movements in the Muslim world during the early twentieth century, which called for modernization of curricula and integration of secular sciences. Ayni supported the introduction of new-method (*usul-i jadid*) schools that promoted phonetic literacy, structured curricula, and modern subjects. One of the distinctive features of Ayni's pedagogical vision is its strong social dimension. He considered education a means of combating

inequality and empowering marginalized groups. Many of his protagonists are drawn from impoverished backgrounds, demonstrating how access to knowledge can transform destiny. Ayni believed that education should serve society by fostering active, socially responsible citizens. In this regard, his thought integrates pedagogical, ethical, and socio-political elements into a unified framework.

CONCLUSION

The pedagogical views of Sadriddin Ayni constitute an important component of Central Asian intellectual history. Through literary creativity and public engagement, he developed a comprehensive vision of education grounded in enlightenment, moral formation, and social reform. His critique of outdated teaching methods and advocacy for modern schooling contributed to the transformation of educational thought in the region. Ayni's legacy remains relevant today, as contemporary educational reforms continue to address issues of quality, inclusivity, and moral development. His works demonstrate that literature can serve not only as artistic expression but also as a powerful instrument of pedagogical and social transformation. *Pedagogical and Educational Insights in Sadriddin Ayni's Yoddoshtho (Esdaliklar)* Sadriddin Ayni's memoir, *Yoddoshtho (Esdaliklar)*, contains a wealth of pedagogical and educational insights, reflecting his deep concern for the moral and intellectual upbringing of young people. In this work, Ayni combines personal recollections, social observation, and reflections on education to provide a holistic vision of teaching and learning. Ayni emphasizes the importance of early education and parental guidance. He recalls how children in traditional families were taught respect, honesty, and diligence from a very young age. He stresses that parents and elders serve as primary educators, shaping both the moral and practical skills of children. In *Yoddoshtho*, Ayni critiques outdated educational practices in *madrastas* and *maktabs*, such as rote memorization and authoritarian discipline. He observes that such methods often limit intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. He advocates for methods that encourage understanding, reflection, and active participation. Ayni consistently links education with moral development. Through personal anecdotes and descriptions of village and city life, he illustrates how

ethical principles—honesty, perseverance, social responsibility—should be integrated into formal and informal learning. Education, in his view, is not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the cultivation of virtue. Teachers are portrayed as moral exemplars. Ayni believes that successful education requires educators to possess integrity, wisdom, and empathy. He stresses that the character and behavior of the teacher influence the development of students' values and attitudes. Ayni highlights the social dimension of education, emphasizing that schooling should promote awareness of societal inequalities and the importance of justice. By educating the youth, society can cultivate informed, responsible, and capable citizens, capable of contributing to communal progress. Besides intellectual and moral education, Ayni advocates for practical skills and real-world knowledge. He underscores that education should prepare students for productive life, linking schooling to everyday tasks, vocational training, and social participation.

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