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Emancipation of Central Asian Women

Throughout the Soviet period (1917-1991), defenders of Soviet regime tried hard to highlight the achievements of Soviet policy towards women; so doing, they concealed the other aspects of this policy, mainly, its serious implications for women even in post-Soviet period. Soon then, in the 1990s, with the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent disintegration of the political and economic framework within which that emancipation and modernization of Central Asian women was accomplished, many aspects of the Soviet legacy came to be re-examined and reassessed. The new estimation helped by the ample information freely flowing forth from non-Soviet sources and pinpointing its negative implications, the worth and validity of Soviet emancipation policy towards Central Asian women is now being openly questioned.

This paper is one humble effort toward s the reappraisal of the implications for Central Asian women of the Soviet women's emancipation policy – a policy considered a pre-requisite step for the establishment of a Socialist state rather than a philanthropic move ¹.

The establishment of Soviet rule in 1917 witnessed an intensive process of Sovietization and modernization throughout the Czarist Empire² including Central Asia. In Central Asia the indigenous population which was entirely Muslim was secularized; Islamic belief and *adats* (local customs) were obliterated; Traditional culture was either destroyed or rendered invisibly confined to the most intimate and private spheres; Legal system was abolished; Educational institutions were abolished and new universal compulsory education underpinned by newly fashioned languages and Western style literature was introduced; Medical and social welfare networks were established thereby improving health standards and raising life expectancy by several years; New national identities were created in the public arena.

Perhaps the most dramatic experiment of Soviet regime was the changes initiated in the life of Central Asian women³. Prior to the revolution, these women were veiled and secluded, confined to their homes, prohibited to play any role in public life; only about 2% of them aged 9-49 were literate, and none of them practically employed in the economy. The advocates of Communism saw them as the worst oppressed section of society, and therefore made it a fundamental pillar of their struggle to liberate them⁴. They did it; the veil was outlawed, women were pushed out into public life, their 99% literacy was achieved, they numbered about one-third of total students in higher and secondary specialist educational establishments, and they soon constituted 47% of Central Asian workers employed in the economy during the Soviet period⁵. Surely, immense success was thus achieved in changing their socio-economic status and thereby their overall position in society.

Indeed, such impressive targets were achieved by various constitutional reforms, which clearly ruled that "All old laws according women unequal status with men have been destroyed to provide her equal rights with men for economic independence; by involving women in social production, by providing a

favourable conditions for combining motherhood with work⁶.” But an impartial study reveals that, despite these reforms, actual equality was never achieved during the entire Soviet period and there were contradictions and inconsistencies in Soviet objectives and policies. The much hyped equality has been challenged on several grounds:

- ✚ Since the Soviet regime abolished the basic concept of private property, equality of men and women turned out in practice to mean the equality of no-rights before the State. As a matter of fact, equality of rights was recognized as entailing equal voting rights in Soviet institutions, equal rights in workplace, and equal rights in family matters. But, the vast majority of people, by traditional cultural setting and upbringing, continued endorsing women’s subordinate status as something natural, majority of men failed to free themselves from the superiority complex over women, and roles and responsibilities of men and women remained predetermined – men were still considered as breadwinners and women as mothers or “hearth guardians⁷.” Many fundamental aspects of women’s daily life thus remained unchanged, and equal rights in family matters remained on papers only. This has been observed that customs and prejudices had taken precedence over law and norms of human rights when it came to the position of women in the family. Research conducted by OSCE⁸ in Uzbekistan reveals that majority of women were treated as second class members even within the family⁹. Their basic rights of choice and freedom were alienated and according to survey report 52% of women do not have the right to choose their husband; 82% of women have no voice in family decisions; 43% of them cannot independently decide on family planning issues; 64% have no access to the family income and 60% of women are deprived of the right to express their opinion on family problems. Therefore, by custom 98% of women experience deprivation of their rights¹⁰ and this discrimination against women in family continued throughout the period under review.
- ✚ The emergence of Central Asian women from seclusion of the 1920s and resulting induction into production process placed additional burdens upon them. This double burden imposed has been lamented by Uzbek women, thus: “For the majority of Uzbek women there was only one destiny: the work in the fields and endless work at homes and little love in their lives. Just like before the revolution, men treated women as an object. Nothing has changed¹¹.”
- ✚ Such observations of contemporary Uzbek women expose the myth that Soviet regime changed the plight of native women. Instead, the regime signified their double exploitation, – that because it failed to abolish women’s domestic responsibilities in a society where the patriarchal traditions remained strong. At home, it still was wife...not husband...who used to perform all domestic chores of washing, cleaning, cooking, feeding children, and over this all bearing her husband’s complaint about dinner being late. The life of rural women was even harder for the absence of facilities like safe water, other municipal facilities, heating, health care, etc. Unpaid household work apart, women had to contribute at community level activity in the preparation of special food for numerous weddings, funerals, and other traditional rituals¹² involving large numbers of people. These tasks consumed much time and income of women, leaving hardly any opportunity for their self-improvement, personal development, or recreation. Such monotonous and unpaid work dampened and deformed women’s individuality. True, these physical and physiological burdens had their reflections on women’s relationships with family

members also, – who in turn received little care, love, interaction, involvement, and support. And simultaneously was destroyed also the traditional socio-economic supportive mechanism that was available to women, by sharing their domestic responsibilities in large combined families. Now in the new Soviet nuclear family¹³, the responsibilities of wife, mother, domestic and working unit, etc., all together fell on a single woman¹⁴ and these she had but to bear all by herself.

Again, the so-called women's right to work as guaranteed by the Constitution has been challenged on the grounds that practically it did not become any means of economic independence for women¹⁵ but simply a new form of enslavement ensuring their right to exploitation¹⁶. Although land reforms of 1920¹⁷ gave Muslim women a chance to gain economic freedom, and display their initiatives and energies for reviving the agriculture devastated during the civil war, yet with the collectivization process on, they lost their personal liberty and got chained, both economically and physically to the kolkhozes¹⁸. The abolition of the little economic freedom granted during the land reform period hit these traditionally discriminated women hardest, and the principle of equality as proclaimed by the Soviet Constitution proved just a propaganda myth.

The destiny of majority of peasant women living and working in the Soviet period was to work from dawn to dusk in all seasons with no holidays and no respite for pregnancy, childbirth, children's needs, and sickness; relief came only with death. Discrepancy in Soviet policy is at once discovered in the half-hearted supportive mechanism provided to mothers whose prenatal and postnatal leave did not exceed, respectively, one month and 56 days. Any woman leaving her job for looking after her baby was dismissed with no pension benefits, – to earn maximum pension benefits, she had to have a 20-year continuous service in one single phase¹⁹. And upon this, abortion and divorce were banned from 1930s to 1950s, and special privileges and rewards and medals were accorded to mothers getting more children. In fact, these women, themselves constituting about half of able-bodied population engaged as manual labourers²⁰ in collective farms and State farms, were duty bound to also provide the State cheap working hands for collectivization and 'cottonisation'²¹. Thus trapped by the limitations of monoculture, the two generations that grew up from 1930s were unable to raise the level of their education and culture, failed even to meet the low standards of Soviet average, more so in villages, and consequently a major gap emerged between rural and urban living standards as also in their education and culture. Even in 1980s the life of kolkhoz women did not witness any dramatic improvement as claimed by Soviet propaganda²². The myth of young smiling women proudly displaying medals on breasts and collecting cotton is exposed by the award winner cotton pickers revealing the harsh realities of cotton monoculture²³ thus: "Can any women get satisfaction from working under the burning sun, from picking cotton, when her hands swell red with pain, when her back cannot straight, when all she can think about is how to make the day end faster and go to bed earlier, no matter whether it's in a windswept barrack, or a poor kolkhoz home. Millions of our compatriots have just such a life. This is how Soviet state free women from the bonds of domestic slavery²⁴."

Not only in agriculture, these women toiled side by side with men in industrial sector also and did heavy manual tasks. Initially, as a part of Sovietization process, they were induced into production process through cooperative artels. These artels brought handicraftsmen together and soon became prime centres for utilizing the skills of various craftswomen also. The artels assured the supply of raw

materials on credit, guaranteed the sale of the produce, and this made women, working at home, somewhat able to look after their own interests and somewhat independent too. However, the First Five Year Plan (1928-1932) had artels merged into State establishments, and new forms of manufacture in textiles, foodstuffs, and garments began; and here were these women used for heavy manual labour²⁵. And then came, many males leaving for war front during 1930s and 40s, the shortage of male workers that was but to be compensated by female workers²⁶ in all productive sectors and hence had these women to face tough and dangerous working conditions²⁷. Succinctly, the maximum possible output was extracted from them in order to increase productivity and, to catalyse them, fierce competitions were held between similar establishments and winners were bestowed awards, titles, and certificates²⁸. But their working conditions were little improved. This absurd state policy caused irreparable damage to the health of workers who had to work in too long shifts running weeks together; they worked and slept²⁹ in the factory. The State apathy toward these workers is reflected by the harsh reality that, despite sacrificing their whole life in these factories, even champions and award winner women workers were not able to get a flat from the State even after their retirement.

The mockery of equality in Soviet policy is proved by the fact that while women were given equal rights to perform hard physical work in all sectors alongside with men, yet they were all treated as a cheap labour and employed in low skilled jobs with low wages. They were mostly kolkhoz workers performing the lowest paid agricultural works or then doing petty non-mechanized jobs in the *solkhozs*³⁰ (state farms); some were subordinate workers in manufacturing, construction, and transport; yet some were road workers, sanitary workers, sweepers, sales girls, waitresses, librarians, teachers, staff at day care centres, engineers and technicians in planning centres, nurses, and social workers³¹. Table 1 shows the percentage of female work force in Uzbekistan 1928-1989.

Furthermore, these women's wages, on an average, were one-third less than men's wages. And then in 1980s revised pay scales were introduced, yet there was no increase in the salaries of workers. The same discriminatory policy was followed in case of bonus funds as well, – while the administration received a bonus ranging from 75% to 100%, workers received it at only up to 50%³².

Discrimination on gender basis has been prevalent throughout the Soviet period not only in agricultural and industrial sectors³³ but also among the white-collar workers and the intelligentsia³⁴. Take, for instance, 1977: Then, women constituted a little over one-third of the 32000 scientific workers in Uzbekistan; Women constituted more than one-third of the junior scientific workers and assistants, the lowest rung on the academic ladder; Women formed only one-eighth of the *Doktor Nauk*; Women formed only about one-tenth of the professors, members, and correspondent members of the academy of science. Take it another way: According to many Soviet officials, and by various educational enrolment statistics, the medical field has been one of the most popular fields among indigenous women; these women constitute more than three-quarters of the medical personnel, but in 1970 they constituted only 39% of the head doctors³⁵. Table 2 compares the number of women scientific workers with the total number of scientific workers, in Uzbekistan³⁶.

Table 1:
Female Work Force in Uzbekistan 1928-1989

Percentage of total work force		
Sector	1928	1989
Industry	13.0	49.0
Agriculture	15.0	38.0
Forestry	-	23.7
Transport	-	12.7
Communications	30.0	47.7
Construction	-	14.9
Trade	-	47.3
Media & Information	-	72.0
Other Sectors	-	69.4
Health	64.0	73.3
Education	35.0	59.6
Culture	-	54.6
Arts	-	38.1
Science	-	46.1
Finance and Insurance	-	61.7
Administration	19	38.1
TOTAL	18.0	43.4

Source: Marifa Tokhtajkhdehjeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, 1992

Table 2:

Women Scientific Workers in Uzbekistan, by level of Skill (Based on data from the end of 1977)

Degree Level	Total Number of Scientific Workers	Total Number of Women	Women as % of total Scientific Workers
All scientific workers ¹	32.311	11.967	37.0
Whom with the degree of:			
Doktor nauk	867	108	12.5
Kandidat nauk	11.662	2,998	25.7
With the title of:			
Academician, correspondent Member, Professor	635	62	0.8
Assistant professor, And senior scientific Worker	4696	1,066	22.7
Junior scientific Worker and assistant	1,250	565	45.2

Note: Includes scientific-pedagogical staff of institutes of higher education.

Source: Nancy Lubin: *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 33, 1981

The professional growth of lady scientists was often obstructed so as to squeeze more out of them. A successful career during Soviet regime being dependent not on individual professional abilities but on the unquestioning loyalty towards the communist regime³⁷, the lady scientists' knowledge and research capabilities were often appropriated and exploited by their dominating male supervisors³⁸. Discrimination was not limited to the distribution of powers and resources only but exhibited in the salaries of men and women also. A field survey conducted by a sociologist in three major planning institutes of Tashkent in 1997 reveals that every second woman earns 30-40% less than a man with similar qualifications and experience³⁹. Statistical studies reveal that the disparities in skill levels between sexes were even more pronounced with regard to nationality. Despite the impressive educational attainments among indigenous women, non-indigenous or Slavic women dominated the high-skill positions in industrial and certain other key sectors where women were employed⁴⁰. However, some experts believe that these disparities do not necessarily imply discrimination against indigenous women; for, many indigenous women with relatively high educational attainments and higher skills preferred low-skill jobs, – they did so with certain conditions in mind such as working nearer home, having shorter working days⁴¹, etc.

The next discrepancy in the Soviet system is reflected in its quota system, which theoretically guaranteed the representation and participation of local nationalities in general and women in particular. This façade of social gesture was expected to exhibit and substantiate the complete emancipation and equality as practically achieved by women. However, facts reveal that Soviet State was not sincere in implementing its declared policies to promote the real participation of women in governing the state. Except in few cases, women were not appointed to top decision-making positions in the government; as a result, women in lower ranks far outnumbered those in the higher. Throughout Soviet history only two women were appointed, at all union levels, to the position of minister, and that too in the departments of culture and health. The Communist Party tactfully restrained the involvement of women in powerful executive positions and assigned them secondary positions everywhere – in council of ministers, line ministers, and party committees at territorial levels⁴². Yadgar Nasrettdinova, an exceptional woman from Uzbekistan, was able to achieve the highest levels of power in Soviet system from 1940s to 70s and held, at various times, Chair of the Supreme Soviet in Uzbek SSR and Chair of the Upper Chamber of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR⁴³.

Such women as entered the corridors of power and formed part of power structure were subjected to the vetting system like social origin⁴⁴ and their loyalty to the proclaimed Soviet ideals; such were the main criteria – not the actual capabilities and talents of women including their educational and professional abilities – for the selection of delegates and deputies of the Soviet ruling elite. Such lapses often resulted in less qualified and non-professional women being promoted to the positions of power and the few patronized by the government occupying a visible but often decorative place in public offices. These dubious policies projected a pseudo-image of women politicians; women were broadly deemed lacking decision-making qualities, and this mutilated their essence and image.

May it not be taken to mean, however, that there were no women ruling and loved by the people. Indeed, there were exceptional women who, believing that educated women could influence the destiny of their people, pursued freedom consciously and vigorously. These women remained a product of the local Muslim culture with its traditional quest for spirituality; and they regarded modern knowledge and modern professions like medicine, teaching, art, etc., also as essential for their people. However, there was a quick sharp decline in the proportion of women involved in both local and central governmental bodies at all levels, late 1980s, when the quota system for women was abolished.

Significantly again, despite some impressive achievements in the areas of education and social welfare and employment, equality of sexes remained but illusionary and latent discrimination continued to persist. It found its reflection in gender disparities and unequal gender roles; for instance, women had a disproportionate burden of responsibilities and men were almost exempted from the household sphere. No doubt women were better educated and contributed much more to the economic life in an organized manner than they did in the past, but utilization of women specifically to attain a more rational distribution of labour and to contribute to the most balanced development of the economy as a whole has had its drawbacks.

Moreover, the path towards freedom for Central Asian women undoubtedly was quite bloody; their majority who experienced this forced liberation, which introduced the compulsory form of equality, had to face much bitterness, misunderstanding, and resentment. This was an agonizing historical process which gave premature birth to a puny form of freedom, infirm and defective, whose impact is being felt

even today by all women in newly independent states of Central Asia. There was quiet resistance too by the basic core of population – the main reason being that women’s emancipation in Central Asia was linked to destroying Muslim traditions and institutions like polygamy, *kalym* (bride-price), forced marriage of underage children, seclusion of women, and the veil. The Soviets were determined to struggle against such traditions considered backward all in the name of modernization and secularization of the country. They intended to use women to destroy the Muslim patriarchal family, to break the blood and tribal ties that were the very basis of Central Asian society, and to establish new social bonds on a socialist basis. And to attain their goal, certainly, Central Asian women were their instrument for change, – “the surrogate of the proletariat” in total absence of a working class⁴⁵.

Nevertheless, these facts well reveal that the secularization of a society cannot be achieved through proclamations and slogans only. Europe, for example, in the evolutionary process of social development, its improved communications, increased mobility, emergence of secular culture embodying the conditions under which religion gradually diminished its role as the inter-regulator of people’s interrelationships, and the consequent new forms of social interactions emerging, still consumed more than two centuries toward practical secularization. None of these conditions obtained in Central Asia in 1920s; contrarily, religious norms formed a characteristic feature of life during the Soviet period. Although Sovietization of society promoted new forms of social interaction, nevertheless, in essence, these remained grounded in ideology – that is, the ideology of new communist religion. Society remained religious; but, in contrast with the pre-revolutionary period, it became bi-religious – that is, the internal religion of Islam got cloaked in the outer communist religion, and under such conditions could neither develop nor reform. Under such a complex situation, Central Asian women became most vulnerable and were caught in the dilemma which continues even in post-Soviet period in the wake of fresh articulation of nation building and reinstatement of Islamic values as guiding principles for post-Soviet society.

Summing up, the often-claimed overall impact of Sovietization of Central Asia was that Muslim society along with its position of women was transformed, its gender segregation was liquidated in principle, women were no longer veiled, walked alone on streets, and did spend a lot of time outside their homes. However, the claim is only superficially true. ‘Attitudes and perceptions are always slower to change’ and good many of these women preferred to work segregated from males, those with higher education and good jobs too observed traditional etiquette even within home, and many sought female enclaves when forced into public life⁴⁶. In fact, actual exact equality was never achieved as there was no social base for a wider and real growth for the self-realization of women, both in society and family. Precisely, Central Asian women’s life during Soviet times was regulated by both State and family, with numerous hidden and invisible checks and barriers. And these, discrimination restricting their right to work growing, they had to confront and overcome all by themselves, even in post-Soviet period. Leaving aside the negative consequences of women’s involvement in the production process, undeniably, work bestows satisfaction to women, economic independence, and the possibility of self-realization. The only thing required is a change in social attitudes towards them besides sound economic incentives backed and safeguarded by the State. Then definitely they can play a leading role in the modernization of their country.

References:

1. Shirin Akner: "Between tradition and modernity: the dilemma facing contemporary Central Asian women," in *Post-Soviet Women from the Baltic to Central Asia*, p. 268, edited: Mary Buckley, Cambridge University Press, 1977
2. The Czarist Empire included more than 100 nationalities and comprised the Volga region, Poland, Finland, Baltic areas, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia.
3. M.A.Tolmcheva, "The Muslim Women in Soviet Central Asia" *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 12(4), p.539, Great Britain,1993.
4. Suad Joseph (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, Vol. 2, p.19, Brill, Boston, 2005.
5. M.A.Tolmcheva, "The Muslim Women in Soviet Central Asia" *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 12(4), p.539, Great Britain, 1993.
6. The advocates of Soviet regime claimed that "No State and no other legislation has even done half of what Soviet State did for women," *Lenin and Women*, Pratima Asthana, PMG Publishers, India, 1992.
7. Dono Abdurazakova: "Household forms and composition in Central Asia," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, (edited) Suad Joseph, Vol. ii, p. 237, Leiden, 2005
8. OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) was held in Tashkent in 2001.
9. A Kadorova, "The discriminatory influence of certain customs and prejudices of women in the family", proceedings of the conference on Overcoming of Gender Stereotypes held by OSCE ,Tashkent, 2001.
10. A.K. Karasaev, "The Kyrgyz community. The tradition of violence against women", Bishkek, 1996, viewed from *Encyclopaedia of women and Islamic cultures*, Vol.2, p. 117, Leiden, 2005.
11. Marufa Tokhtakhodjeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, (translated by Sufian Asim), p. 86, Shirkat Gah, Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan, 1995
12. For involvement of women in the community rituals see Dnizkandiyoti and Nadira Azimova," *The communal and the sacred: Women's world of rituals in Uzbekistan*", Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol.10 (2), London, 2004; M.A. Tolmcheva, "The Muslim Women in Soviet Central Asia", Vol. 12(4), p.535,

Great Britain,1993

13. To uproot the pillars of joint family system based on traditional and Islamic values, Soviet regime encouraged the development of nuclear households by building apartments fit for small families. Colette Harris: *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, Vol. II, p. 251, Leiden, 2005
14. Marufa Tokhtajkhodehjeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 68
15. Since basic issue i.e. the control over the money earned by a women was not actually addressed by the Soviet authorities. Several descriptions on extended family reveals that husbands mother still controlled entire treasure of the family.M.A.Tolmcheva; "The Muslim Women in Soviet Central"Central Asian Survey, Vol. 12 (4), P 536, Great Britain., 1993.
16. The induction of women into the production process was motivated by economic considerations apart from ideological transformation. Prior to the revolution Central Asia served as one main source of raw cotton for Russian textiles. However, during the years of Civil War there was a drastic curtailment in cotton production due to large scale peasant movements and their shift to grain cultivation. To achieve self-sufficiency in cotton, Soviet regime brought new lands under cotton cultivation for which they needed working force and such working hands were found among women who were hard working, patient, and skilful.
17. During the land reforms period, women heading households were legally acknowledged as the heads of their families and, by virtue of this status, agricultural lands along with equipment and seed were allotted to women. Just in four regions of Uzbekistan 706 women received land and achieved economic equality. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 54
18. During 1930s a ban was proclaimed on job changes. No kolkhoz worker could find a job anywhere without producing the passport from previous administrator. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 54
19. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 105
20. According to a 1970 survey, women constituted only about 2% (out of 21,680) of the mechanized agricultural workers whereas about 98% were engaged as manual labourers. Nancy Lubin: "Women in Soviet Central Asia, Progress and Contradictions," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 182-203, 1981

21. As 1930s were all years of collectivization, 1960s and 1970s were the years of 'cottonisation,' which involved over half of the female rural population in age group 15-50 in one way or another in cotton production.

22. The portraying of cotton-gathering women as truly happy, and some happier being rewarded by the leaders in Soviet style, was used to hypnotize the Soviet people and the world outside into accepting the mythical freedom of Soviet Central Asian women. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 115

23. The tyranny of cotton monoculture is hurtfully expressed here in a folk-song:

Ruling over us from time immemorial white cotton black day!

Heaven beyond the grave, but for now,

All we get is work, while others grow rich!

The white cotton grows tall, but our wage packet is small.

God is in heaven, but for now

All we get is work, while others grow rich!

Honey is sweet but the bee stings

There we shall be rewarded, but for now

All we do is sweat while others grow rich!

Still ruling over us from time immemorial;

White cotton, black days.

M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 115

24. Women of Uzbekistan have narrated numerous agonies which they have experienced during the Soviet period and the heavy price they paid for the success of Soviet policies. For details see M. Tokhtakhdejeava's *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*

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25. By a decree of 1931, Central Asian Bureau of Trade Unions removed the restrictions on the induction of female workers in production process and legalized women's right to perform heavy physical labour. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 118
 26. By one estimate, in 1931, Tashkent leather industry had 9800 workers 5800 of them females, textile industry had 7000 women workers 3000 of them from local nationalities, and silk factory had 1107 workers 514 of them females. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 118
 27. "There was a low mechanization and non-existence of safety measures which often caused casualties to the workers. In certain factories temperature used to be very high which caused humidity and a dreadful smell especially in summer." Such were the many comments of factory workers working in the industrial sector during Soviet period, as viewed from M. Tokhtakhdejeava's *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 121
 28. *Shock-worker* and *Stakhanovite* awards were conferred upon those workers who exceeded the targeted quota of production.
 29. Instead of protecting the interests of workers, trade unions became a party to administration in exploiting the labour. In stitching and shoemaking factories, production quotas were raised so high that even highly skilled cobblers were unable to complete quota without extra shifts. Reports go that job-related illness among textile workers had increased five times in late 80s, which led to increase in skin and bone diseases besides muscular and digestive problems. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 122 ..
 30. Their predominance in unskilled positions is borne out by 1970s when women constituted only 2.4% of 21680 mechanized agricultural workers: against this, women formed 98.9% of manual labourers on state farms. Very few women were enrolled in agricultural studies; by one estimate, out of 10,104 students in agricultural mechanization schools only 292 or 2.9% were women; in some oblasts no women were enrolled. Nancy Lubin: "Women in Soviet Central Asia," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. XXXIII, No 2, Taylor and Francis, 1981.
 31. In metallurgical and woodwork industries of Uzbekistan, for instance, only 15% of the total 10000 workers were women. Similarly, women constituted 50% of the workforce doing other heavy physical and manual works like driving tractors, etc.
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32. Even in textile industry, which was superficially prosperous, the average wages remained only 30% higher than the country's official minimum. A massive income generated by workers was spent on running the establishments and their overstuffed managements, and workers had no say in policy matters. M. Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, p. 123
 33. The disproportionate representation of women in industrial sector as manual labourers is proved by the fact that in 1972 53.5% workers were employed in manual labour of whom about half were women even though their proportion in total labour force was only about 46%. Nancy Lubin, "women in Soviet Central Asia" p 184, *Soviet Studies*, Vol XXXIII, no 2, 1981.
 34. Although in 1930's to 1960's women made remarkable strides in every field like doctors, lawyers, orientalists, scientists, philologists, professors and philosophers yet after the period of stagnation has set in which roughly is considered from the 1960's till beginning of perestroika in 1985 and only few women stood out of entailing numberless compromises with their individuality. The tragic stories unfolded by a Sociologist about the career of working women in Soviet period substantiates the fact that even those women who held power positions were caught by dichotomy between their supposed position of power and the reality resulting pain and agony at the end of their career. For details see M. Tokhtakhdejeava *Between the Slogans of Communism and the laws of Islam* P 134-157
 35. M. Tokhtakhdejeava *Between the Slogans of Communism and the laws of Islam* p 126
 36. Nancy Lubin, "women in Soviet Central Asia" ., *Soviet Studies*, Vol XXXIII, no 2, 1981.
 37. During this period, the universally accepted criteria, like professional abilities and skill to do concrete tasks in specific fields, were of secondary importance.
 38. The various experiences of intellectual workers and scientists, as narrated by a sociologist, reveal the frustration which women scientists were confronting during Soviet period. Often, new ideas originated from women but were exploited by their men supervisors. For details see Marfua Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, pp. 126-129
 39. The salaries of women working in intellectual fields were less than the minimum wages of women labourers. For details of women's dramatic struggle against the totalitarian system, see Marufa Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, pp. 139-142
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40. In one of the clothing factories of Fergana valley, for instance, out of 2743 women workers, the Uzbek were 2737 and 90% of them concentrated in the lowest skill jobs: Slavic women constituted 70% of female engineering, technical, and white-collar workforce. Nancy Lubin: *Women in Soviet Central Asia, Progress and Contradictions*, p. 185
41. Nancy Lubin: *Women in Soviet Central Asia, Progress and Contradictions*, p. 186; M.A.Tolmacheva, *The Muslim Women in Soviet Central Asia*, p.535, Great Britain, 1993.
42. Usually, women were assigned subordinate roles like Secretary of a district or a city committee, even when they composed one-third to one-fifth of the legislative, party, and *komsomol* bodies. But the official data claimed that the quotas of representation, as reserved for women within government and party organs, had been achieved in 1970s. *Encyclopaedia of Women*, Vol. II, year 2005.
43. For details of her dramatic struggle against the totalitarian system, see Marufa Tokhtakhdejeava: *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, pp. 139-142
44. It is noteworthy that women who emerged 1930s-40s did not come from the traditional background, – so because social attitudes rejected those who openly broke away from traditional concepts regarding the position and role of women. These female cadres came mostly from the de-classed, where women’s traditional dependence including economic dependence had weakened as a result of their life circumstances or political conviction. These included young women who had lost their parents and relatives and were brought up in boarding schools run by the state women’s department.
45. G. Masell: *The Surrogate Proletariat Muslim Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia – 1919-1929*, Princeton, 1974.
46. For the role of central Asian Women in preserving the traditional values see habiba; “Women Clerics of Central Asian Islam,” *Central Asian Survey*, vol,16[1]P38,1993.

