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THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF NAMANGAN

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Norinov Muzaffar Ramonjonovich

Independent researcher of the “Theory and History of State and Law” Department at Namangan State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of libraries in the cultural life of Namangan. It explores topics such as the development of libraries in the region, the attention given to libraries in Namangan during the years of independence, the growth of book collections, the establishment of district and home libraries by the population, and the inclusion of local and foreign literature in library collections.

KEYWORDS

Cultural life, library, book collection, home libraries, local literature, foreign literature, young readers.

INTRODUCTION

Alongside schools and museums, libraries also play an essential role in the development of culture. The first library in Namangan was established in 1903. In 1918, a public library was opened at an oil factory, with more than 240 locals becoming members. The initial collection comprised 1,400 books, including 540 different titles. By 1923, the number of libraries in the region reached 42, enriched with books in Uzbek and European languages.

In 1940, the region had 99 public libraries with 132,700 books, and by 1950, there were 73 libraries with 155,200 books. The growth continued with 269 libraries holding

1,006,300 books in 1955, increasing to 380 libraries by 1965 with 1,460,000 books. By 1975, the number of libraries rose to 438, holding over 2,354,000 books. In 1990, the 571 libraries in the region collectively held over 6,550,000 books, serving as vital spaces for cultural enrichment.

Since independence, there has been increased attention to libraries. In 1992, 575 libraries were operational in the region, including 129 in urban areas and 446 in rural areas. In 1996, Chartak district alone had 35 public libraries serving 36,000 readers. By 2013, the number of libraries in the region decreased to 208,



with 5,437,200 books and journals. As of 2019, the available resources in the region's 18 libraries numbered 2,405,900.

The Nodirabegim Regional Information Library Center was modernized following the visit of Uzbekistan's President in 2019, who provided 10 billion soums for reconstruction and 1.5 billion soums for landscaping. In 2019, the library re-opened with 600,000 books, 35% of which are in the state language, and the center serves as a methodological hub for other libraries, universities, and educational resource centers. The library now offers access to electronic books from international libraries and provides modern reading spaces for up to 450 readers at a time.

In 2021, a new youth library was built in Davlatobod district, covering 3,610 square meters and capable of serving 1,200 visitors simultaneously, with 120,000 books available. A plan is in place to increase this number to 500,000 within three years.

The Muhammadsharif So'fizoda Regional Children's Library, established in 1933 with 300 literary works, now holds 93,320 books. Furthermore, home libraries have become a tradition in Namangan. For example, a teacher named To'xtaxon Rahimova established the "Istiqlol" home museum in 1991, with a collection exceeding 11,000 books. Another home library was founded in 2021 by Jamoliddin Nizamov in Koroskon village, housing about 2,000 books and periodicals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of libraries and the culture of reading in Namangan continue to grow rapidly. Library collections are regularly enriched, and new modern libraries are being built in districts and villages, fostering a love for reading among rural youth. Traditional reading competitions, such as "The Book I

Love" and "My Favorite Author," are held regularly to engage young readers.

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