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Attitude of the Kazan Gubernia Peasants towards Women's Primary Education: The Second Half of the 19th — Early 20th Century

Abstract

This article focuses on the problem of peasants' attitude towards female education in rural schools of the Kazan gubernia. The author draws on a variety of archival and published sources: documents of management and record keeping of institutions responsible for schools functioning, statistical data, periodicals, etc. In pre-revolutionary Russia, peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. This fully applies to the Kazan gubernia, one of Russian agricultural regions. The specificity of the gubernia was in its multi-ethnic and multi-confessional population structure: the Russians, the Tatars, the Chuvash, the Mari, the Mordvins, the

Udmurt, etc. An important factor in Russian modernization of the second half of the 19th - early 20th century was Zemstvo school, a significant sociocultural institution contributing to spiritual well-being and material welfare of the masses. It promoted basic literacy and, more importantly, inclusion of millions of liberated peasants into civil life. Expansion of the Zemstvo schools network was a step towards universal primary education. Zemstvo also attempted to solve the so-called "women's question." Believing that woman should be full member of the society, Zemstvo delegates sought to make primary education universal. The majority of rural schools in the Kazan gubernia were Zemstvo schools, where children of both sexes were trained, but for a long period of time boys predominated. For a long time it was believed that a woman does not need literacy, it was deemed a luxury. Farmers' views on the education of girls and women changed over time, awareness of the need for their training grew. A noticeable progress occurred in the days of the Russo-Japanese War and World War I.

Keywords

Historical sources, rural school, Zemstvo school, folk school, composition of students, gender composition of students, attitude of peasants towards education, women's education, women's question.

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