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On the History of the Education and Upbringing System for Children with Special Educational Needs in Uzbekistan

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Abstract. This study traces the history of the education and upbringing of children with special educational needs in Uzbekistan, focusing on visual impairment, from the second half of the nineteenth century to 1990. It combines historical-chronological and comparative-historical analysis of normative acts, contemporary ethnographic accounts, scholarly literature, and periodicals with a tabulation of the quantitative data these sources contain. Before the Soviet period, the main institutions that educated visually impaired people in Turkestan were waqf-funded qorikhonas; in 1875, Fergana Province had 235 of them with 1,700 students, an average of 7.2 per institution. Late nineteenth-century charity was limited to small eye hospitals with six to twelve beds. A state-supported system took shape after the decree of October 26, 1920: blind pupils in Tashkent were taught separately from 1929, the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan was founded in 1932, and regional boarding schools were opened between 1953 and 1965. The religious-charitable model of the qorikhona was thus succeeded by a residential, state-managed model oriented toward literacy, vocational skills, and labor integration, while the residential principle itself persisted. Shortages of specialized textbooks and the isolation of some persons with disabilities remained unresolved.

Keywords: Boarding Schools, Gorikhona, Special Educational Needs, Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan, Visual Impairment

1 Introduction

Attention to the education and upbringing of children with special educational needs has always required state support and assistance. For this reason, the question of how persons with disabilities should be educated has been debated throughout history and in different countries. Prominent scholars and humanist educators of their periods consistently emphasized to society and the state that children with disabilities, like all other children, should have access to education.

John Amos Comenius firmly believed that all children with disabilities were capable of receiving education. In his words: “The question arises: is it possible to educate those who have lost their hearing, those who are blind, and those with intellectual disabilities? After all, due to their physical impairments, it is difficult for them to fully absorb knowledge. I answer: no one, except those who are not human, may be excluded from human education.” [1] Schools for persons with disabilities were also established in other European countries during the same period, which indicates that a positive attitude toward persons with disabilities had begun to take shape throughout Western Europe [2]. This development also influenced the states of Eastern Europe, particularly Tsarist Russia, which later ruled Turkestan.

The history of special education has been studied in several traditions. Russian-language scholarship traces the development of special education and defectology in Russia and abroad [1], [3]–[5]. English-language scholarship has examined the theory and institutions of Soviet defectology [6], [7], the place of disability in Soviet society [8]–[10], the deaf and blind communities and their organizations [11], [12], and the post-Soviet transition toward inclusive education [13], [14]. For Turkestan, the educational system before and after the Russian conquest is described in the contemporary accounts of Nalivkin [15] and Ostroumov [16], in Gasprinsky’s writings on school reform [17], in Abdurashidov’s study of Gasprinsky’s links with Turkestan [18], and in later studies of Turkestan’s schools and madrasas [19] and of the history of the region [20]–[22], as well as in studies of Russian colonial rule, Muslim cultural reform, and the making of Soviet Uzbekistan [23]–[26].

However, these works treat children with special educational needs mainly as a part of the general history of Russian defectology or of Turkestan schooling. To the author’s knowledge, a consolidated account that links the pre-Soviet institutions of the region with the Soviet-era system, and shows how specialized boarding schools for blind children appeared in individual regions of Uzbekistan, is still lacking. This article addresses that gap. It asks three questions: (1) What forms of education and care for persons with visual impairments existed in Turkestan before the Soviet period? (2) How did Soviet policy after 1920 turn these activities into a state-supported system, and what was the role of the Society of the Blind? (3) How did specialized boarding schools for blind children spread across the regions of Uzbekistan between the 1950s and 1990, and which problems remained? Although the title refers to children with special educational needs in general, the available sources

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concern mainly persons with visual impairments; the article therefore concentrates on them and mentions deaf children where the sources link them to the same institutions.

The contribution is twofold. Empirically, the article brings together scattered figures on qorikhonas and on boarding schools for blind children in comparable tables and recalculates the averages that the sources only imply. Conceptually, it divides the history into three periods and compares the religious-charitable and the state-managed models of education for persons with visual impairments.

2 Source Analysis

The study draws on four groups of sources. The first group consists of normative and organizational documents: the decree “On the Social Welfare of the Deaf-Mute and the Blind” of October 26, 1920, the decision of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of January 1926 on the Society of the Blind, the charter of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan approved in 1928, the decree of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Uzbek SSR of 1929, and the decree of 1932 on compulsory education for physically disabled children. These documents are cited as they are reported in the literature and periodicals listed below.

The second group consists of contemporary accounts of Turkestan’s educational institutions. Nalivkin’s survey of religious and educational establishments in the Samarkand region [15] and Ostroumov’s ethnographic materials [16] provide descriptions of the maktab, madrasa, and qorikhona and an assessment of Turkestan schools by Russian observers; Gasprinsky’s article on school reform [17] gives a Muslim reformist perspective. Because these authors wrote from within or in relation to the colonial administration, their evaluations are treated as views of their time rather than as neutral facts [24].

The third group is scholarly literature on the history of special education in Russia and the USSR [1], [3]–[5] and on the history of Turkestan and Uzbekistan [19]–[22]. The fourth group consists of periodicals, including the magazine *Fan va Turmush* [27] and the journal *Bir safda – В одном строю*, the official organ of the Central Board of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan, which is discussed in Section 4.1. Statistical data on qorikhonas, institutions, and enrollments are reported as given by these sources and were not independently verified.

3 Method

The study follows a historical design that is complemented by the tabulation of quantitative data found in the sources. It applies the principles of historicity and objectivity, and uses three methods: historical-chronological analysis, which arranges events and institutions in time; the principles of continuity and consistency, which are used to trace what was inherited from one period by the next; and comparative-historical analysis, which compares the Russian background, the pre-Soviet institutions of Turkestan, and the Soviet-era institutions of Uzbekistan.

On this basis the history is divided into three periods: (I) the Tsarist period and the earlier Turkestan tradition, up to 1917; (II) the early Soviet period, from 1917 to the 1930s, when the first decrees, the Society of the Blind, and the first school in Tashkent appeared; and (III) the period of regional expansion, from the 1950s to 1990. The sources contain few data for the 1940s, and this decade is therefore not treated separately.

Figures were entered into tables by institution or district. The totals in Table 2 were recomputed from the district figures and agree with the totals reported by the source (235 institutions and 1,700 students). Averages and percentages were calculated by the author and rounded to one decimal place. Because the data are descriptive and come from different years and sources, no statistical tests were applied.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Table 1 summarizes the main milestones. The development of the system of education and upbringing for children with special educational needs can be divided into three periods, which are described in turn below.

Table 1. Main milestones in the history of education for persons with visual impairments in Turkestan and Uzbekistan.

Date	Event
1806–1807	First experimental school for deaf children (1806, Pavlovsk) and first school for blind children (1807) in Russia [4]
1875	235 qorikhonas with 1,700 qoris in Fergana Province [19]
1888	Turkestan charitable organization for the guardianship of the blind; free eye hospitals with six to

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Date	Event
	twelve beds each [20]
1892 / 1903	Qorikhonas in the Fergana region: 252 (1892); 231 with 1,654 students (1903) [19]
1918	Faculty of Childhood Disabilities at the Institute of Preschool Education, Petrograd [5]
Oct. 26, 1920	Decree "On the Social Welfare of the Deaf-Mute and the Blind"; first school for children with various diseases and disabilities opened in Tashkent
1923	Training of defectologists in typhlopedagogy, education for the deaf, and oligophrenopedagogy begins in Russia [7]
1925–1926	All-Russian Society of the Blind (1925); session of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) calls for a Society of the Blind (Jan. 1926)
1928–1929	Charter of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan approved (1928); organizational bureau under the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare (1929); blind and deaf pupils separated in Tashkent (1929)
1932	Decree on universal compulsory education for physically disabled children; First Congress of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan, June 15
1953–1965	Boarding schools for blind children opened in Bukhara (1953), Khiva (1954), Andijan region (1955), Samarkand region (1961), and Kosonsoy (1965)
1957–1968	Journal *Bir safda – V odnom stroyu* founded (1957), renamed (1964), and issued in Braille (from 1968)

The Russian background. During the period of Tsarist Russia, specialized societies were established to identify and provide education and upbringing for children with special educational needs. In particular, specialized commissions were set up to study preschool and school-age children, to monitor children with special educational needs and juvenile offenders, and to study children's behavioral characteristics [3], [28]. In Russia and later in the USSR, a special education system for blind, deaf, and intellectually disabled children developed between 1806 and 1930 [4]. In 1806 the first experimental school for deaf children in Russia was opened in Pavlovsk, followed in 1807 by a school for blind children. In 1918 the Faculty of Childhood Disabilities was established at the Institute of Preschool Education in Petrograd [5]. In this period greater emphasis was placed on the treatment of children with special needs than on their education. From 1923 defectologists were trained in several specializations, including typhlopedagogy, education for deaf learners, and oligophrenopedagogy [7]. In 1932 the decree "On the Introduction of Universal Compulsory Education for Physically Disabled Children" was issued. Throughout the twentieth century the system of special (corrective) institutions, primarily boarding schools, continued to develop, and in the USSR and later in Russia the majority of school-age children with disabilities came to be educated in them [13].

Turkestan before the Soviet period. As a consequence of colonial rule by the Russian Empire, the economic conditions of the population remained underdeveloped and marked by poverty. Because of the difficult social conditions in the Turkestan region, children frequently suffered from chronic and severe illnesses, and there was no established system for their continuous monitoring and inpatient treatment. Various diseases were widespread, particularly eye diseases: by the end of the nineteenth century approximately one-third of the population of the Amu Darya Division suffered from eye-related illnesses. In 1888, on the initiative of progressive public circles, the Turkestan charitable organization for the guardianship of the blind was established. With limited funds collected through donations it opened free medical facilities in Tashkent, Verniy (present-day Almaty), Bukhara, Skobelev (present-day Fergana), Samarkand, and Merv (present-day Mary), but each of these hospitals had no more than six to twelve beds [20].

Education in Turkestan before the Russian conquest rested on an effective system that remained largely unchanged for several centuries [17], [18]. According to Nalivkin, the institutions regarded as the principal foundations of Islam were the maktab, dalailkhona, madrasa, and qorikhona [15]. Ostroumov criticized Turkestan schools for giving primary emphasis to religious instruction, for failing to meet hygienic standards, for relying on mosque imams to conduct classes, for operating under constant pressure, and for using punitive methods. He also noted positive aspects: children in Turkestan showed greater patience than Russian children at the dining table, and because the schools were not isolated from society, their graduates integrated into social life more freely [16].

The qorikhona was a combination of an educational institution and a residential facility intended primarily for adults who had completed elementary schooling. Individuals with visual impairments formed the majority of its students. Under the supervision of the qoriboshi (teacher) they memorized the Holy Qur'an. Like the madrasa, the qorikhona was established and maintained through income from waqf endowments [29], [30], and students also earned regular income by reciting the Qur'an for the deceased during Ramadan and similar ceremonies. Its building differed little from that of a madrasa, although it was generally smaller, and qorikhonas were also built adjacent to mosques and shrines. The number of cells (hujras) varied: the qorikhona named after Sulaymon Khoja Eshon in Kokand had three hujras, whereas the Khalif Oltishish qorikhona had eleven. The number of qoris depended on waqf revenues and available cells. The qorikhona in the Boqtosh district of Khujand possessed 20 tanobs of land and two water mills, which produced an annual income of 290 rubles, and

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its six hujras housed 13 qoris aged between 20 and 30. The largest, the "Sultonmurodbek" qorikhona in Kokand, headed by Mulla Bahrom Qori, had 75 qoris and received 2,173 rubles a year from 38 shops, one caravanserai, and several tanobs of land. Annual waqf income therefore amounted to about 22 rubles per qori in Khujand and about 29 rubles per qori in Kokand (calculated from the figures in [19]).

The qorikhona was less widespread than the dalailkhona. In 1892 there were 252 qorikhonas in the Fergana region; by 1903 their number had fallen to 231, with 1,654 students [19]. The number of students per institution was small, averaging 7.2 in 1903. In the Khiva Khanate there were special qorikhonas for students who lived with their families. Table 2 and Figure 1 show the distribution of the 235 qorikhonas and 1,700 qoris in the Fergana Province in 1875.

Table 2. Qorikhonas and qoris in the districts (uezds) of Fergana Province, 1875.

District (uezd)	Qorikhonas	Qoris	Average qoris per qorikhona
Kokand	106	604	5.7
Namangan	50	305	6.1
Andijan	44	320	7.3
Margilan	21	395	18.8
Osh	14	76	5.4
Total	235	1,700	7.2

Kokand uezd alone had 106 of the 235 institutions (45.1%), whereas Margilan had only 21 institutions but 395 qoris. Its average of 18.8 qoris per institution is more than two and a half times the next highest value (7.3 in Andijan), and this figure should be checked against the original source. Between 1875 and 1903 the number of qorikhonas in the Fergana Province changed little (235 and 231, a decrease of 1.7%) and the number of qoris fell from 1,700 to 1,654 (2.7%); the 1892 figure of 252 suggests that the decline occurred in the last decade of the nineteenth century, although the three figures may not refer to exactly the same territory.

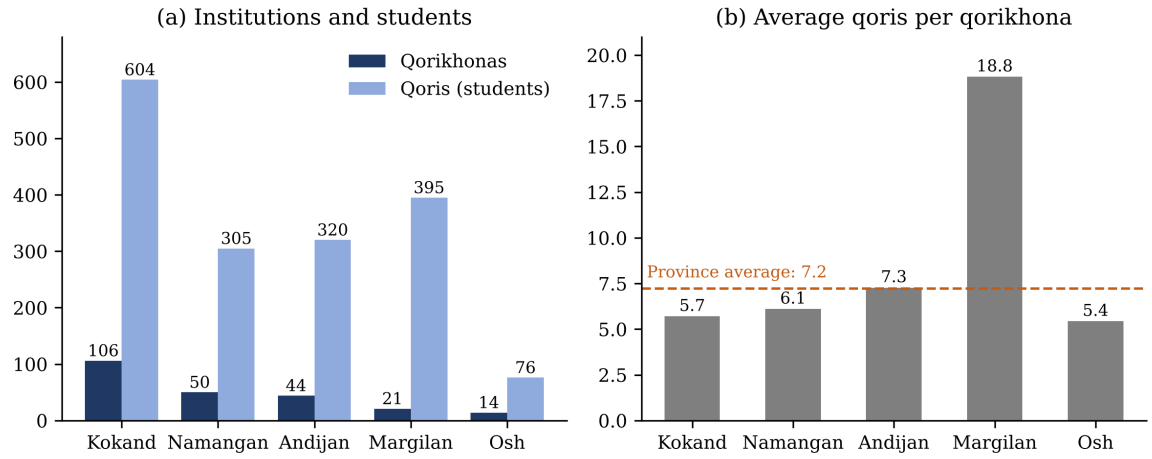


Figure 1. Qorikhonas and qoris by district, Fergana Province, 1875, and average number of qoris per qorikhona. Source: calculated by the author from [19].

The early Soviet period. In 1917 a revolution took place in Tsarist Russia and the Bolsheviks came to power [22]. This also affected Turkestan, which had been a colonial territory of Tsarist Russia [26]. From the beginning the Soviet regime tried to transform the systems it had inherited; in particular, it planned to establish shelters for homeless children and schools for children with special educational needs, including deaf and blind children [3], [31].

The history of attitudes toward visually impaired persons in Soviet Uzbekistan dates back to 1920. On October 26, 1920 the People's Commissariats of Health, Social Welfare, and Education adopted the decree "On the Social Welfare of the Deaf-Mute and the Blind", which became an important document for persons with disabilities. In January 1926, at a specially convened session of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the establishment of a Society of the Blind was considered necessary and party organizations were instructed to assist it; the founding of the All-Russian Society of the Blind in 1925 had already served as an impetus for other republics [10]. In the region, young activists among the visually impaired, such as Z. Ergashev, Yu. Ilyosov, Q. Primqulov, M. Khidirov, S. Shabalin, D. Norxo'jaev, X. Rahmatullaev, V. Abramchaev, M. Zohidov and P. Bryansev, made significant contributions to involving blind persons in socially useful labor and to eliminating illiteracy in Braille among them [27].

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The question of a republican association of blind persons gradually matured. In 1929, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR, an organizational bureau was established under the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare to coordinate the activities of local district branches. The funds of the branches and primary organizations came from concerts, theatrical performances, and voluntary donations, and assistance funds for the blind were created under the district departments of social welfare. With these resources small craft workshops were opened for blind persons, and on the basis of their experience activists organized employment in specialized production units within cooperatives for persons with disabilities and handicraft cooperatives. As the primary organizations and district branches became stronger, the employment of blind persons gradually became easier [10], [27].

To improve the education and upbringing of children with special educational needs, various societies began to be established in the 1930s. One of them, the Society of the Blind of the Republic of Uzbekistan, was founded in 1932. Its charter had been approved four years earlier, in 1928, by Fayzulla Khodjaev, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR. This should not lead to differing interpretations of the founding date, because the founders recognized June 15, 1932, the date of the first congress, as the official date of establishment, which is confirmed in the historical sources on the Society; the earlier charter nevertheless shows that the establishment of the Society received special attention from the state. At the First Congress, held in Tashkent on that date, S. Z. Korotkov was elected chairman, and the Society obtained a central governing body and the right to operate independently. Further congresses followed in 1939 (II), 1948 (III), 1953 (IV), 1958 (V), 1963 (VI), 1968 (VII), 1973 (VIII), and 1978 (IX), at which questions concerning the life and activities of blind persons were discussed and resolved [20], [27].

Boarding schools for blind children. Outside Tashkent, there were no specialized boarding schools in the region in the first half of the twentieth century, and persons with disabilities studied together with other children in madrasas or in Russian-native schools. Table 3 shows that the regional boarding schools for blind children were opened within a relatively short period, between 1953 and 1965, with an initial enrollment of 25 to 56 pupils [20].

Table 3. Boarding schools for blind children in Uzbekistan: foundation and development to 1990 (n/s = not stated in the sources).

School	Founded	Initiator / first head	Pupils	Later status
Tashkent (Yu. Oxunboboyev)	1920; blind and deaf pupils separated in 1929	K. Horvath (1920); A. A. Nozimova (first director of the school for the blind)	n/s	Parkent Street, building No. 6
Bukhara	1953	n/s	25 in the first year; 202 in 1990	Incomplete secondary boarding school
Khiva	1954	Sa'dulla Masharipov	41 in the first year; 100 in 1990	Specialized secondary school since 1987
Andijan region (Asaka)	April 1955	D. Sodiqova	36 (four classes)	Secondary boarding school in 1967; building for 200 pupils (1968–1974)
Samarkand region (Jomboy)	August 1961	Maryam Roziyeva (initiator)	36 (three classes and one preschool group)	n/s
Kosonsoy	1965	Meli Boboyev (initiator and director)	56	Specialized secondary school in 1977; building for 220 pupils (1968–1977)

Andijan Region Boarding School for Blind Children. In April 1955 an incomplete secondary boarding school for blind children was established in the city of Asaka. It was headed by D. Sodiqova and had four classes with 36 students. E. Qurbonov led the school from 1956 to 1990, and through his efforts it was transformed into a secondary boarding school in 1967; the contribution of Akbarali Uzoqov, another former director, is also noted. Between 1968 and 1974 a modern three-story building for 200 students was constructed in the area of Niyozbotir village. By the early 1970s experienced teachers such as Ya. Melyukov, Ya. Boriev and I. Ahmadjonov had been joined by former students of the school, including M. Madaminov, J. Shamatov, M. Nizomxonova, T. Matqulova, N. Niyozmatova and B. Nasriddinov. Instruction in subject-specific classrooms was introduced and the classrooms were sufficiently equipped with visual teaching aids. Between 1970 and 1990 five students were awarded gold medals, one a silver medal, and dozens received certificates of honor. Considering the students' interest in music, the amateur ensemble "Gulnoz" was created; in November 1990 it won first place in the republican competition "Festival of Art" among blind children [20].

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Bukhara Boarding School for Blind Children. The Bukhara institution was established in 1953 as an incomplete secondary boarding school. In the first academic year 25 students were enrolled, and by 1990 the number had reached 202, an eightfold increase [20].

Kosonsoy Boarding School for Blind Children. The school was established in 1965 on the initiative of Meli Boboyev in the building of the "Chillakhona" mosque on Dilshod Street, where he also served as director. It accommodated 56 blind and partially sighted children from Namangan region and helped them to acquire literacy, learn vocational skills, and take an active part in social life. In 1968–1977, on the initiative of the Central Board of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan, a modern school for 220 students was built in the Mug district of Kosonsoy, and in 1977 it became a specialized secondary boarding school. Although students were well provided with visual teaching aids, textbooks in Uzbek language and literature, mathematics, and chemistry, especially specialized materials for partially sighted children, were still needed [20].

Samarkand Boarding School for Blind Children. To improve the living conditions of blind persons in the Samarkand region, a special boarding school was established in August 1961 in the Jomboy district on the initiative of Maryam Roziyeva. It was located in an adapted building and consisted of three classes and one preschool group, with 36 students in total [20].

Yu. Oxunboboyev Boarding School for Blind Children in Tashkent. The history of the Tashkent school is linked to the beginning of the activities of the People's Commissariat of Education in the region. The military prisoner of war and physician Kalman Horvath was one of its organizers and, in 1920, became the first director of the first school for children with various diseases and disabilities. The founding period was extremely difficult: to organize admissions and to inform parents, the founders had to work over a vast territory stretching from Tashkent to Krasnovodsk. In 1929, with the direct involvement of Yo'ldosh Oxunboboyev, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Uzbekistan, blind and deaf students were separated for specialized instruction, and the history of the boarding school for blind children begins from that year. The school was located in building No. 6 on Parkent Street, together with its dormitory and auxiliary facilities. Antonina Alexandrovna Nozimova was appointed its first director [20].

Khiva Boarding School for Blind Children. The school was opened in 1954 as an incomplete secondary school with 41 students in the first academic year; by 1990 there were 100. Its first director was Sa'dulla Masharipov. Since 1987 the institution has operated as a specialized secondary school. Textbooks were insufficient in that period, but students were fully provided with visual teaching aids, and the school regularly published wall newspapers such as "O'quvchilar ovozi" ("Students' Voice"), "Avangard" and "Qizil galstuk" ("Red Scarf") [20].

Periodicals. To promote the education and upbringing of persons with special educational needs in Uzbekistan, the journals *Bir safda*, *V odnom stroyu* and *Yangi hayot* ("New Life") were published and widely circulated. The socio-political and literary journal *Bir safda – В одном строю* is the official organ of the Central Board of the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan and has been published since September 1957. It first appeared as *O'zbekiston ko'zi ojizlar hayoti* ("The Life of the Blind of Uzbekistan"), with materials in Russian and Uzbek in equal proportions within the same issue; later separate editions in the two languages appeared. In 1964 it was renamed *Bir safda – В одном строю*, which reflected an ideological appeal to readers to move forward together with society, and from 1968 it was also published in Braille in Uzbek and Russian. Within 30 years the monthly journal, issued in four versions, grew from a circulation of 500 to nearly 13,000 copies. This growth was also driven by the expansion of its readership beyond Uzbekistan to other Soviet republics and foreign countries; there is even information that it was sold at newsstands [20].

4.2 Discussion

The results show two different models of education for persons with visual impairments. The qorikhona was a religious-charitable institution. It served mainly adults who had completed elementary schooling, as the ages of 20 to 30 at Khujand suggest; its curriculum was the memorization of the Holy Qur'an; it was financed from waqf income [29], supplemented by what the qoris earned from recitation; and it was small, with fewer than ten students on average. The Soviet institutions, in contrast, were intended for children, taught literacy, Braille, and vocational skills, and were supported by the state and by the Society of the Blind, which financed its activities from concerts, performances, and donations. At the same time there was a notable continuity in form: the qorikhona already combined teaching and residence under one roof, and the boarding school, which became the main institution of the Soviet period, preserved this residential principle, which remained characteristic of special education in the USSR until its end [11], [13].

The Soviet period also changed the purpose of education. Whereas in Russia in the early twentieth century, according to the sources, greater emphasis was placed on the treatment of children with special needs than on their education, the activities of the Society of the Blind linked the life of blind persons to employment: workshops, cooperatives and, in the boarding schools, paid work after lessons, which is associated with higher motivation to study. This orientation reflects the broader Soviet approach, in which the social worth of persons

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with disabilities was measured largely by their capacity to work [8], [10]. The orientation toward labor integration is therefore visible both in the organization of the Society and in the practice of the schools.

Table 3 suggests that the expansion of boarding schools in the regions was gradual and that individual initiative played a part in it. The schools in Bukhara, Khiva, and Asaka opened in 1953–1955, those in Jomboy and Kosonsoy in 1961 and 1965, and some of them began with initiatives of individuals, such as Maryam Roziyeva and Meli Boboyev, while the Central Board of the Society of the Blind financed the construction of new buildings, as in Kosonsoy. Growth was uneven: the Bukhara school grew eightfold between 1953 and 1990, whereas the Khiva school grew about 2.4 times. A recurring problem was the lack of textbooks, noted in Kosonsoy and Khiva.

The analysis has limitations. First, it concentrates on visual impairment; the education of deaf children and of children with intellectual disabilities is mentioned only where the sources link it to the same institutions. Second, it covers six boarding schools and does not include all regions of Uzbekistan. Third, many figures are reported by a small number of sources and refer to different years and territories, so the comparison between 1875, 1892, and 1903 is approximate. Fourth, the 1940s are poorly documented in the sources used. Future studies could add the education of deaf children and of children with intellectual disabilities, extend the regional coverage, and verify the data against archival documents.

5 Conclusion

The history of education and upbringing for children with special educational needs in Uzbekistan can be divided into three periods. Before the Soviet period, persons with visual impairments studied mainly in small waqf-funded qorikhonas, which in the Fergana Province of 1875 averaged 7.2 students per institution, while charitable organizations created under Tsarist rule offered medical help in hospitals with only six to twelve beds. In the early Soviet period, beginning with the decree of October 26, 1920, the state and the Society of the Blind of Uzbekistan (1932) created the first institutions and linked the education of blind persons to socially useful labor. From 1953 to 1965 specialized boarding schools for blind children were opened in the regions, and by 1990 the schools in Bukhara and Khiva alone enrolled 302 pupils. In the Soviet period boarding schools played a special role in the education of blind children, and paid work alongside lessons increased students' motivation to study.

Two recommendations follow from this review, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" [32], [33]. First, today's boarding schools do not offer students paid work after lessons, and it is necessary to provide them with suitable vocational training and legally compliant, age-appropriate employment opportunities. Second, in some regions of the republic persons with disabilities still live in isolation from society. Commissions should be established to identify them; these commissions should visit the regions, identify persons with disabilities and, according to their age, place them in appropriate specialized boarding schools or inclusive classes of local schools, or help them to find employment, drawing on the experience of other post-Soviet countries in moving from special to inclusive schooling [14].

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Conflict of Interest

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Author Contributions

O.T.F.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used Claude (Anthropic) for language editing into US English, formatting to the journal template, identifying additional scholarly references and checking their metadata against Crossref, and conversion of references to IEEE style. All AI-assisted output and the cited

sources were reviewed and verified by the author, who takes full responsibility for the content of this publication.

Data Availability Statement

All data analyzed in this study are taken from the published sources listed in the references and are reproduced in Tables 1–3. No new data were created.

Ethics Statement

Ethical approval was not required because this study is a historical analysis of published sources and did not involve human participants or personal data.

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