

KYRGYZ SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FAMILY AND CULTURAL VALUES

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***Abstract:** Recent research investigated the influence of educational system in Kyrgyzstan to the cultural values of family and community in general. The family is the basic unit of each society and community. Particular attention needs to be spent in examining the strength of the Kyrgyz family, as it is the unit that is going to propel our young people into a meaningful experience in today's world. Having analyzed the last two decade changes which have happened in our country and having observed the system of*

education's influence to our culture, there were found visible changes in the mentality of young people, as in the value of family, so in relationship with parents, tribal, kinship and family clan values.

Key words: *Culture, values, family, system of education*

Система кыргызского образования и его влияние на семью и культурные ценности

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Аннотация: *Недавние исследования показали влияние образовательной системы в Кыргызстане на культурные ценности семьи и сообщества в целом. Семья является основной базой в обществе и сообществе. Особое внимание необходимо уделить на исследование силы кыргызской семьи, так как именно это ячейка будет стимулировать нашу молодежь к осмысленному опыту в сегодняшнем мире. Проанализировав последние два десятилетия и изменения, которые произошли в нашей стране за это время и наблюдая систему влияния образования на нашу культуру, можно увидеть довольно значимые изменения в менталитете молодых людей, также и в ценности семьи и в отношениях с родителями, со своими родственниками из родового клана и племени.*

Ключевые слова: *культура, ценности, семья, система образования*

School became as a main part of the bringing up children program in each Kyrgyz family, it has left from the Soviet time, when the school was considered as an inseparable part of bringing up children in each family, and it was the ideological basis of a future citizen. At present time the mentality of Kyrgyz people works for it, and they are sending their children to school, with hope, that their child would get most of the necessary things for his life in the class and from the school teachers. And it is not a secret, that our children most of their time spend with their mates from school, and sometimes they want to be like as their best teacher and at school they learn what does it mean to communicate well, the elements of social ethics, and at school they usually find their first close friends for the whole life may be. Among Kyrgyz people it is still very popular annual spring meetings of the classmates -school reunion and people like it, as they have spent 10 and during the last decade 11 years at school together.

School is considered as a temple of knowledge. At school children get the knowledge which they cannot get from their parents. And it was so strong idea for the whole last century among Kyrgyz people and schools staff. But it was before and it has changed during the last decade, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kyrgyz people have a huge historical background, and they are considered as the successors of tribal nomadic cultured people who lived in Eurasian part of the continent. They kept tribal relationship; they worship their kinship and family clan system. The diversity to that system was brought by the Soviet time, which had destroyed the existed system of relationship and brought the nuclear family model. And the school was the main source of knowledge, where children were taught that the old type of relationship - kinship, family clans and tribes they interfere to build the Soviet statehood. In anyway, mostly illegally Kyrgyz people kept their own family relationship, tried to live in one village by one big extended family clan and support each family and clan member as financially, so spiritually. The grandparents were trying to teach their grandchildren in their own way at home in the evenings, telling them about their ancestors, about national heroes, about their tribes and achievements of their people.

Kyrgyz people always knew how to worship the person, who could teach, and they were always very respectful to teachers, they honored them and respected them. The educated person among Kyrgyz people was on the level of a saint person, because he knew more than other ordinary and common people. And it was during the last century too, until the market economy came and destroyed all values among people.

This paper will review relevant and positive aspects of the Kyrgyz family and educational system of Kyrgyzstan at present time, highlight the areas that have research findings, and point to areas for further research on the Kyrgyz family.

It is the time to begin the process of identifying the strength that can be passed on to future generation to extend the cultural personal and familial values that have kept the Kyrgyz people in the world. To reach this goal we can only through the education system. And there were no any specialized systematic means of education for Kyrgyz children. All customs and traditions were divinely instituted, and customs which involved the training of the tribal children were scrupulously adhered to and transmitted from our ancestors to us, from one generation to another. In the older times there were no schoolhouses, no books, and no regular school education. Kyrgyz children were trained in natural way - they kept in close contact with their relatives, their grandparents, and as our ancestors kept nomadic way of life and lived in tribes and constantly move from one place to another, they kept in close contact with the surrounding them nature. It was the way of teaching which consist of example and instruction. Children since their childhood could see the example of their entire extended family, and their parents usually gave them sample of their

tribal model, which the children could follow. The oral art of Kyrgyz people was the one of the oral manual for the most of generations of Kyrgyz people – it was epics about Kyrgyz national heroes as *Manas*, *Semetey*, *Seitek* and heroic stories of *Baitik*, *Kojojash*, *Shabdan* and many others. In the historical manuals of the Soviet time there was no any word about the real historical background of Kyrgyz people, only negative information, that Kyrgyz tribes were barbarians, and they had no any type of mentality but only robbing people and caravans, and this type of information was even in each manual. And the Kyrgyz people were persuaded that their national history is nothing, and they should start to live in a new way as Soviet people, educated, civilized- but without their own history, without national and ethnic values, and surely the young generation became to hate their own culture, their own tradition, and they did not value the real family relationship.

The most valuable experience children get from their parents, and all fashionable staff they get from their schools. So the school is the second part of education, after family. But there are started competitions among schools, who could recruit more number of the students because now the studying at school is for payment and the bigger number of students the bigger is the salary of the teacher's staff. And the teachers' staff became as business people work only for earning bigger money and at present time, it seems that teachers have fully forgotten about their exact and main mission at school- teaching.

“Traditionally, every member of the family performs significant tasks that contribute to survival of the whole unit”[1].

Teaching of the children should start in the family, and in each group of people it is so and parents are responsible for their children until they would get mature age, usually it was 18. Kyrgyz people also make a lot to give their children better education, and during the Soviet times the schools were opened in each village and rural of the country, and the level of the educated people is still very high even among the Central Asian countries- it is 99.9% of population of the age between 18-55 years old, 67% of them have university diploma[2].

This fact shows that Kyrgyz people are eager to study and get good education, and may be it is the reason of opening 41 universities in Kyrgyzstan during last 20 years. But opening of the universities does not show us the exact and real situation of the educational level in all those universities. The number of secondary schools has also increased, for example in the capital of Kyrgyzstan , Bishkek, with a population around 750.000 in 1985, had 64 secondary schools, and now the number of secondary and private school is around 110, twice bigger, even population has increased only for 250.00 people [3]. The growth of schools and number of school-children is good, but the level of quality in these schools is much more desired.

The school which was a supportive part of the family, starts to be the part which is not always reliable at present, and people do not trust it anymore as it was before and nowadays we can see the returning of the old fashioned education which was given to our grandparents, people try to teach their children at home in the family, which is much more reliable than to send their child to the elite school, and demand from them better quality of education.

Children nowadays attend schools only and mostly to get a certificate, as quick as possible and then to enter any college or university, and to find better job. And the previous desire of children to spend more time at school with their mates has disappeared ,in the family they decide how long to attend the school, and when it better to leave it.

Table 1 The number of children in KR since 1989 to 2009 in:

	1989	1999	2009
kindergartens	30 000	<u>6000</u>	76000
Secondary schools	92 200	99 500	1 036 800
Colleges	36 700	37 500	59 600
universities	13 100	29 800	233 600

But now we have the layer of population, who cannot pay the school fees and buy books, and their children just do not attend school, but work in the local markets as porters, as shoe cleaners, as helpers in the cafes etc. So the necessity gives the birth to a demand, the loss of the trust to schools gave a birth to

the idea that our parents, and big extended family was also a good for our children, instead of fighting with bureaucracy for the place in the kindergarten is better to invite your relatives and leave the child with them, and they can do it even free, only for a place to live in a big city.

The wheel of the life brings us to the place where we have been before⁶ but we left it only⁶ for finding the better place⁶ but after some time it brings us to that place again, and we are here, we need the help of our family, much more⁶ and the “too much civilized” life under the Soviet time was a temporary type of living, and we return back to the sources of our life before the Soviet time, and it is better for our people now to live in an extended big family, and teach our children the things which are inseparable from our culture and mentality.

The system of Kyrgyz education needs more support, than it has it now, first of all support from family at present, as we want to keep our children’s mentality and support them psychologically and only then financially.

Children always need parental control, but they do not want to show it, they need support at any of their actions, they need moral support too. Teaching at home it has been disappearing and modern parents think that the school and other educational institutions are responsible for their child’s education, and they are fully forgetting that they have their own responsibility too. If they want to have a child, they should be ready to give the child worthy formation, as the number of primary education and kindergartens has fallen down.

The children of the *time of perestroika* we can call them “*lost generation*”, because there was no exact type of education, and each school experimenting with their own idea, and new method of teaching, and each teacher immediately at that time became a great creator of a new method of teaching, and it was as getting crazy for parents, which school to choose, and which one is better... And of course the mentality had played its role which was more expensive, that would be better! People think that the more expensive education it is much better, may be in a highly developed states and countries, but in the country which has just got independence (even already 25 years), it was quite impossible, as to find the best teacher or instructor even for big money.

I, myself have gone through that period of time, as my children have grown up together with the independence of our country. My children have attended each two three schools, because it was difficult to choose the school, after choosing the school we have to be sure that it was the exact school for my children, but after a few week we were realizing that it was only an advertisement which was good, that the system was the same, and the methods were the same, but in a “new frame”. My children were lucky to have rather educated parents and grandmother, who helped them a lot at home, she was talking with them in the Kyrgyz language, even both of them had to study in the Russian schools, and my children were the first in our extended family who used Kyrgyz “*Apa and Ata*” instead of Russian “*Mama and Papa*”, it was as an achievement, after being forbidden to use our own language. And my children could both reading in two languages well? As in the Kyrgyz so in the Russian languages, as for me I had learned to read and write in my own native language only after graduation of university, I have got only communicational level of my native language.

The children attending school they are influenced in anyway by the school system, and most of our contemporary families try to survive in our instable state’s life, they try to support their children financially, and most of the parents after seeing and comparing the Kyrgyz system of education, they try to send their child to somewhere, but not in our country. Of course it is possible not for all our citizens, but I am sure 90% of parents even once thought about it. Financially capable parents already sent their children to abroad and whether they will return or not, nobody knows. As for poor parents they are taking away their children after the secondary school, and send them to study into different technical colleges, or just to work at different markets as sellers, porters and etc. Some children do not want to attend school, and just going nowhere instead of attending the class, they usually go to computer and internet game clubs and killing time there. And there a lot of samples when children just lost, may be they joined some religious organizations, or criminals, or just travelling around the country. Families are not always following their kid’s ideas and just let him/her to do what they want, and it is becoming a great problem. Children being only by their own, they are usually psychologically hurt ones.

So the family and education are inseparable, they have to together to keep our language, our culture, our customs and traditions for the next generation. The mental health of the society first of all depends on the mental health of the family, of each family member. The strengths of the society are in its roots, in the roots of the family values, in the roots of family trees, in their entire kinship and tribal life. Nevertheless the some modern scholars try to criticize the family clan and tribal relationship, each nation in its ancient root was a small tribe, but civilized world had swallowed all those types of relationship and

especially now, we are going to a one globalized world, where we all would be unified, would be of one type and even size may be, which would be one huge technosized world and no uniqueness of the national and ethnic group, but it is so boring.

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