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THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL HISTORY WORK AT THE FERGANA REGIONAL LIBRARY (1956–1977)

Muhiddin Komilov Baxriddin o`g`li
Researcher
E-mail: komilovmuhiddin028@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper examines the development of local history activities at the Fergana Regional Library from 1956 to 1977, the growth of its book collection, the systematization of bibliographic information, and significant changes in the library's work. It also highlights the library's move to a new building in 1970 and the place of the 1977 mudflow in its history.

Keywords: Fergana Region, library history, local history studies, book collection, bibliographic card catalogue, public library, cultural heritage.

Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, public libraries in Uzbekistan played an important role in meeting the population's reading needs, disseminating knowledge, and organizing cultural and educational activities. Among regional libraries, the Fergana Regional Library also worked to expand its collection, gather materials on local history, and provide readers with bibliographic services.[1]

Studying the history of the Fergana Regional Library makes it possible to identify how library services developed in the region, how the book collection was formed, and how information related to local history was systematized. Local history work, in particular, deserves attention as an important aspect of the library's history, since it involves collecting and preserving information about the region's historical and cultural heritage and organizing access to it.

The relevance of this topic stems from the need to study the library not merely as an institution that stores books, but also as a cultural center that gathers historical information and passes it on to future generations. It is also important to analyze together the growth of the collection, the physical capacity of the library building, and the effects of natural disasters on the institution's work.

Recent studies devoted to the establishment and activities of the earliest libraries in Fergana Region also provide a scholarly basis for studying the history of librarianship in the area.[2] However, the development of local history work, changes in collection composition, and problems related to book preservation during 1956–1991 require further joint analysis.

The aim of the study is to examine, on the basis of published sources, the historical processes associated with the development of local history activities, the growth of the book collection, and its preservation at the Fergana Regional Library during 1956–1991.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted by examining published library-science literature and scholarly articles on the history of libraries in Fergana Region. The main sources selected were information about the Fergana Regional Library in Z. Berdiyeva's textbook Library Science and M. Mahmudova's article on the history of the earliest libraries in the region. O. G. Qosimova's works on the history of librarianship were also used to establish the broader historical and theoretical context of the topic. The study employed historical analysis, comparative analysis, and data systematization. The historical method made it possible to examine changes in the library's activities within a specific period. Comparative analysis was used to assess the consistency of information presented in different publications and its relevance to the research topic. Systematization made it possible to classify

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information on local history activities, collection statistics, the history of the building, and the natural disaster into separate areas.

Results

1. Library-science literature notes that, beginning in 1956, the Fergana Regional Library established work to collect and promote publications about the region's history, economy, culture, and prominent figures. A local history card catalogue was also created during this period.[3]

The local history card catalogue was an important tool for systematizing information on local topics, locating regional materials published in different sources, and providing readers with bibliographic services. This work expanded the library's role beyond book storage to include organizing access to the information contained in its holdings. A later study of the history of libraries in Fergana Region likewise states that the collection of local history materials began in 1956.[2] This indicates the importance of that date in studying the region's library history. However, detailed conclusions about the catalogue's composition over the years, the number of bibliographic records it contained, and the number of readers who used it require further documentary research.

2. One quantitative indicator of library activity is the size of its book collection. According to information in Z. Berdiyeva's textbook Library Science, the Fergana Regional Library's collection reached 100,000 items in 1959. In 1961, it comprised 107,908 items, of which 16,755 were publications in Uzbek. By 1967, the collection had exceeded 138,000 items.[3] These figures indicate quantitative growth in the library's holdings between 1959 and 1967. The 1961 data also provide a baseline for assessing the collection's language composition. However, the available figures alone do not explain all changes in the collection. Detailed statistical data are needed to establish the subjects and publication dates of the materials, their sources of acquisition, and how well they met readers' needs.

3. One of the major organizational and infrastructural changes in the library's history was its move to a new building in 1970. The textbook notes that the library was housed in a purpose-built, three-storey building designed to accommodate a collection of 500,000 volumes.[3]

The new building provided important physical facilities for housing the collection, arranging reading rooms, and organizing the work of the library's various departments.

4. One significant event in the history of the Fergana Regional Library was the 1977 mudflow. The library-science textbook states that, as a result of the natural disaster, the lower floor containing the library's main book repository was flooded.[3] This event demonstrates the need to include collection-preservation conditions and protection against natural disasters in the historical analysis. The location of the library building, the distribution of the collection across floors, and preparedness for emergencies are directly related to the long-term preservation of books.

Discussion

The information examined indicates that local history activities, quantitative growth in the collection, changes in physical facilities, and problems of book preservation were interconnected in the history of the Fergana Regional Library. The establishment of local history work in 1956 reflects increased attention to collecting and systematizing information about the region's past. The collection figures for 1959–1967, meanwhile, show quantitative growth in the library's resources.[3]

The move to a new building in 1970 was an important stage that expanded the library's physical capacity, while the 1977 mudflow provides grounds for considering the protection of the collection as a distinct issue. These two events show that the library's history should be assessed not only through indicators of development but also through the preservation of existing resources and the provision of safety.

Conclusion

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Studying the activities of the Fergana Regional Library during 1956–1991 makes it possible to analyze the emergence of local history work, the growth of the book collection, and the challenges of preserving cultural assets as interconnected processes. Published sources contain information about the launch of local history activities in 1956, the quantitative growth of the collection in 1959–1967, the move to a new building in 1970, and the 1977 mudflow. However, a comprehensive assessment of the library's activities through 1991 requires the study of statistical records and archival documents from the later period as well. Introducing primary sources into scholarly circulation would make it possible to present the library's history more precisely, systematically, and on a stronger evidentiary basis.

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