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SERVICES OF HEYDAR ALIYEV IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION SYSTEM IN AZERBAIJAN

Abstract

The great leader Heydar Aliyev always paid attention to the development of education from the time he came to the first leadership in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1969, he regularly communicated with scientists, culture and art figures, and helped to solve a number of serious social problems, starting with their smallest concerns and desires. Heydar Aliyev used the expression "Education is the future of the nation" to express that education has a great role in the future development of the Republic. Heydar Aliyev has done important work in the direction of training educated young personnel and their acquisition of higher education. Since 1993, when he was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev's education policy has been implemented in the country with a new form and content.

Keywords: leader, university, education, teachers, development, decisions, students, law

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Azərbaycanda təhsil sisteminin inkişafında Heydər Əliyevin xidmətləri

Xülasə

Ulu öndər Heydər Əliyev 1969-cu ildə Azərbaycan Respublikasında birinci rəhbərliyə gəldiyi müddətdən başlayaraq təhsilin inkişafına daim diqqət göstərmiş, elm adamları, mədəniyyət və incəsənət xadimləri ilə müntəzəm olaraq ünsiyyətdə olmuş, onların ən kiçik qayğılarından, istəklərindən başlayaraq bir sıra ciddi social problemlərinin həllində köməklik göstərmişdir. Heydər Əliyev "Təhsil millətin gələcəyidir" ifadəsini işlətməklə Respublikanın gələcək inkişafında təhsilin böyük rola malik olduğunu dilə gətirirdi. Heydər Əliyev savadlı gənc kadrların yetişdirilməsi, onların yüksək təhsilə yiyələnməsi istiqamətində mühüm işlər görmüşdür. 1993-cü ildən Azərbaycan Respublikasında Prezident seçildiyi vaxtdan başlayaraq Heydər Əliyevin təhsil siyasəti geniş tərkibdə, yeni forma və məzmunu ilə ölkə ərazisində tətbiq edilmişdir.

Açar sözlər: lider, universitet, təhsil, müəllimlər, inkişaf, qərarlar, tələbələr, hüquq

Introduction

During the first period of Heydar Aliyev's leadership in Azerbaijan, the education reforms implemented laid the groundwork for the development of this field. As early as 1972, decisions were made regarding "completion of general secondary education for youth and further development of secondary schools" and in 1973, "improvement of working conditions in rural secondary schools." As a result of the implementation of these decisions, the secondary school network was expanded throughout the republic, and significant improvements in quality were achieved. Additionally, the issue of providing schools with textbooks was addressed, and starting from 1978, textbooks were provided to students free of charge (Mahmudov, I, 2013: 320). During that period, special attention was also paid to the development of education in school construction. In 1979, the number of general secondary schools increased more than threefold compared to 1965, reaching 2,117, and by 1982, it reached 4,267. The number of students rose from 368,000 in 1970

to 710,000 in 1980. Between 1970 and 1980, 683,100 students were accommodated in 1,191 new school buildings in the republic, which was twice the corresponding figure for the years 1946-1970 (Mahmudov, I, 2013: 325).

During the first period of Heydar Aliyev's leadership in Azerbaijan, the number of vocational schools increased by 1.7 times compared to 1965, and the number of educational institutions increased by 2.5 times. Under his initiative, a strategy was developed for the improvement and development of technical vocational education for the years 1971-1975, and 54 new technical vocational education institutions were established. In the education policy of the visionary leader, particular emphasis was placed on improving the activities of higher education institutions and strengthening their material-technical base. Participating in the grand ceremony dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Azerbaijan State University (now Baku State University) on November 1, 1969, Heydar Aliyev delivered a speech in his native language, addressing the challenges ahead in the field of higher education. This moment was not just a turning point for the university community but for the entire Azerbaijani society, awakening the national spirit towards the development of Azerbaijani science (Mahmudov, II, 2013: 120-122). Highlighting the significant role of the university in the life of the Azerbaijani people and the development of Azerbaijani science, Heydar Aliyev stated: "In 1919, when the issue of opening a university in Azerbaijan was discussed in public circles, some doubted that this would happen, suggesting it would be better to send young people abroad to study at well-known universities" (Qasımlı: 55).

During Heydar Aliyev's leadership in Azerbaijan from 1969 to 1982, five new higher education institutions were established, and the number of students in higher education increased from 70,000 to up to 100,000. If at the end of the 1960s there were 12 higher education institutions with 105 faculties and 450 departments in the republic, providing training in 139 specialties, by 1982, there were already 21 higher education institutions combining 136 faculties and 530 departments (Aliyev, 2013: 400-401).

Thanks to the initiative and support of the Republic's leader, starting from 1970, young people were sent to prestigious higher education institutions of the USSR every year. During the 1970s and 1980s, conditions were created for over 15,000 Azerbaijani youth to receive higher education in more than 250 prestigious higher education institutions in over 50 major cities of the USSR in more than 250 specialties. This played a significant role in strengthening the national human resource potential of the republic (Muradov, 2019: 255-256).

One of the main concerns that preoccupied the visionary leader was the preparation of Azerbaijani youth for military service and their enrolment in military academies. As a result of his initiative and foresight, the Military Lyceum named after Jamshid Nakhchivanski was established in 1971. Thousands of Azerbaijani citizens began their education at this military academy. The Great Leader held great respect for those who dedicated themselves to the military profession and always appreciated their services. The Military Lyceum named after Jamshid Nakhchivanski played an exceptional role in training national military personnel and shaping the formation of our Armed Forces. Even today, the majority of officers serving in our army are graduates of the Military Lyceum named after Jamshid Nakhchivanski. They demonstrated great skill and courage in the battles fought for the liberation of our lands (Qasımlı: 280).

Thus, during the 1970s and 1980s under Heydar Aliyev's leadership, the creation of an extensive network of educational institutions and the establishment of a rich material-technical base, sending Azerbaijani youth to study in foreign higher education institutions, training military personnel, and ensuring the development of fundamental science in the institutes of the National Academy of Sciences laid the necessary intellectual groundwork for future national independence. "Education is the future of the nation," said the Great Leader, who paid special attention to the development of this field during his second term of leadership in Azerbaijan (1993-2003). It should be noted that starting from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, due to Armenia's aggressive policies, the deportation of our compatriots, and the occupation of the mountainous part of Karabakh, more than a million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons, creating additional challenges for Azerbaijani education. Despite the extremely difficult situation in the country,

Heydar Aliyev, upon returning to leadership, not only addressed many problems but also initiated reforms in the education sector to meet the demands of the time (Yusifov, 2008: 86-88). During 1991-1993, the disrupted activities of educational institutions were restored to normal, laying the groundwork for planned reforms. The number of general secondary schools and student enrolment increased significantly. If in the academic year 1993-1994, 1,549,000 students were enrolled in 4,364 general secondary schools in the country, by 2002-2003, more than 1.6 million teenagers continued their education in 4,561 general secondary schools.

Moreover, the material-technical base of the education system was improved, with 200 new school buildings constructed and put into use. More than 700 general secondary schools were established in districts and cities where internally displaced persons were temporarily resettled. In order to develop the abilities of talented children, around 30 lyceums and gymnasiums were established, enrolling approximately 12,000 students (Mahmudov, 2013: 540). "Once we deeply understand the current state of our education system and its problems, priority areas must be identified," said the Great Leader, who undertook significant work to implement an education strategy in Azerbaijan in line with the experience of developed countries. On March 30, 1998, by the President's Decree, the State Commission on Education Reform was established, and the "Education Reform Program of the Republic of Azerbaijan" was prepared and approved on June 15, 1999. The program aimed to determine the strategy for the future development of education and envisaged substantial reforms in the structure, management, content, material-technical base, economy, personnel training, and provision of the education system in stages (Huseinova, 2002: 4).

The decrees issued on June 13, 2000, regarding the improvement of the education system of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on June 18, 2001, regarding the improvement of the implementation of the state language, on August 9, 2001, regarding the establishment of the Azerbaijani Alphabet and Azerbaijani Language Day, and on January 2, 2003, regarding the implementation of the Law on the state language of the Republic of Azerbaijan played a significant role in raising our education system to international standards. Additionally, attention was given to teaching Azerbaijani history, literature, and geography, preparing excellent textbooks, teaching the Azerbaijani language, and especially promoting the state language. Of course, the work done by Heydar Aliyev regarding the Azerbaijani language is a separate topic. It is worth remembering that the inclusion of the Azerbaijani language as the mother tongue in the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR in 1978 and the State Prize awarded to the four-volume "Modern Azerbaijani Language" textbook in those years were clear manifestations of Heydar Aliyev's courage, dedication, and love for the Azerbaijani language [7, p. 246].

The decrees issued on October 4, 2002, regarding the strengthening of the technical base of general secondary schools in the Republic of Azerbaijan and on February 17, 2003, approving the program for the construction of new general secondary schools, major repairs, and provision with modern teaching equipment for the years 2003-2007, provided a reliable basis for the expansion of the general secondary school network and the strengthening of its material-technical base, taking significant steps towards eliminating existing problems (Ahmadov, 2014: 101-102).

The reforms did not only encompass educational institutions but also included substantial efforts to stimulate students' interest in education. The decree issued on September 3, 2001, regarding the establishment of the Presidential scholarship for high school students is a clear example of this. "Our debt to school and teachers is not dependent on our academic degrees, knowledge, or educational level; it is for all our achievements," said the national leader Heydar Aliyev, who valued the efforts of teachers highly throughout all the years he led Azerbaijan, showing great respect and care for education workers' financial well-being and prosperity (Ahmadov, 2014: 118). The Great Leader, speaking at the 11th Congress of Azerbaijani Teachers in 1998, emphasized: "Those who dedicate their lives to teaching are truly devoted and heroic individuals to their people and nation. Teaching is not an easy profession. Some may think that anyone can be a teacher. Sometimes, individuals who are not worthy of teaching become teachers. Such cases exist today and may exist in the future. However, the vast majority of Azerbaijani teachers is deserving. If not

for them, would Azerbaijan have achieved its current scientific, economic, and cultural advancement? We have obtained all these from schools, universities, teachers, and from you” (9) (10).

Conclusion

Heydar Aliyev signed numerous decrees during both periods of his leadership in Azerbaijan to improve the social status of teachers and to reward them with honorary titles and other state awards. All of these actions are a clear manifestation of the value he placed on the work of teachers.

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