

**THE ROLE OF CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL-EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN EDUCATING YOUTH IN THE
SPIRIT OF NATIONAL VALUES: THE CASE OF SURKHANDARYA REGION, 1991–2026**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of cultural and spiritual-educational institutions in educating young people in Surkhandarya Region in the spirit of national values between 1991 and 2026. During the period of independence, museums, theatres, information and library institutions, cultural centers, spiritual-educational structures, historical heritage sites, and public cultural events became important social institutions for strengthening historical memory, national identity, patriotism, and respect for cultural heritage. In 2024, the two operating museums in Surkhandarya received 52.3 thousand visitors, while school pupils and students accounted for 14.7% of all visitors. In the same year, the region's two theatres staged 509 performances and attracted 173 thousand spectators. The 2025–2026 repertoire, including historically and morally oriented productions such as "Imom Termiziy", "Shiroq", and "Tumaris", demonstrates the practical capacity of cultural institutions to communicate national history and ethical ideals through artistic forms. The thesis argues that the educational impact of these institutions can be strengthened through digital communication, interactive museum pedagogy, youth clubs, community-based programs, and systematic cooperation with schools and universities.

Keywords: youth, national values, spiritual education, cultural institutions, museum, theatre, library, Surkhandarya, historical memory, cultural heritage.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu tezisda 1991–2026-yillarda Surxondaryo viloyatida yoshlarni milliy qadriyatlar ruhida tarbiyalashda madaniy-ma'naviy muassasalarning o'рни tahlil qilinadi. Mustaqillikdan keyingi davrda muzeylar, teatrlar, axborot-kutubxona muassasalari, madaniyat markazlari, ma'naviyat va ma'rifat tizimi, tarixiy-madaniy meros obyektlari hamda ommaviy madaniy tadbirlar yosh avlodda tarixiy xotira, milliy o'zlik, vatanparvarlik va madaniy merosga hurmatni shakllantiruvchi muhim ijtimoiy institutlar sifatida faoliyat yuritdi. 2024-yilda Surxondaryo viloyatidagi 2 ta muzeyga 52,3 ming kishi tashrif buyurgan bo'lib, tashrifchilarning 14,7 foizini maktab o'quvchilari hamda oliy va o'rta maxsus ta'lim muassasalari talabalari tashkil etgan. Shu yili viloyatdagi 2 ta teatrdagi 509 ta spektakl namoyish etilib, 173 ming tomoshabin qamrab olingan. 2025–2026-yillardagi "Imom Termiziy", "Shiroq" va "Tumaris" kabi tarixiy-ma'rifiy sahna asarlari madaniy muassasalarning milliy tarix va qadriyatlarni yoshlar ongiga badiiy vositalar orqali yetkazishdagi amaliy imkoniyatlarini ko'rsatadi. Tezisda an'anaviy madaniy-ma'rifiy faoliyatni raqamli kommunikatsiya, yoshlar klublari, interaktiv muzey pedagogikasi va ta'lim muassasalari bilan hamkorlik asosida rivojlantirish zarurligi asoslanadi.

Kalit soʻzlar: yoshlar, milliy qadriyatlar, maʼnaviy tarbiya, madaniyat muassasalari, muzey, teatr, kutubxona, Surxondaryo, tarixiy xotira, madaniy meros.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В тезисе анализируется роль культурных и духовно-просветительских учреждений в воспитании молодежи Сурхандарьинской области в духе национальных ценностей в 1991–2026 гг. В период независимости музеи, театры, информационно-библиотечные учреждения, культурные центры, система духовно-просветительской работы, объекты историко-культурного наследия и массовые культурные мероприятия стали важными социальными институтами формирования исторической памяти, национальной идентичности, патриотизма и уважения к культурному наследию. В 2024 г. два музея области приняли 52,3 тыс. посетителей, 14,7% которых составляли учащиеся школ и студенты. В двух театрах области было показано 509 спектаклей, которые посетили 173 тыс. зрителей. Репертуар 2025–2026 гг., включающий постановки «Имам Термизи», «Ширак» и «Томирис», показывает возможности театра как средства передачи молодежи национальной истории и нравственных ориентиров. Обосновывается необходимость сочетания традиционной культурно-просветительской деятельности с цифровыми коммуникациями, музейной педагогикой, молодежными клубами и системным сотрудничеством с образовательными учреждениями.

Ключевые слова: молодежь, национальные ценности, духовное воспитание, учреждения культуры, музей, театр, библиотека, Сурхандарьинская область, историческая память, культурное наследие.

INTRODUCTION

The education of young people in the spirit of national values is one of the central elements of cultural continuity. National values include historical memory, language, customs and traditions, respect for ancestors, family and community ethics, artistic heritage, religious and secular intellectual traditions, and responsibility toward the homeland. These values do not become part of the worldview of a younger generation automatically; they are transmitted through family, education, community life, media, and specialized cultural and spiritual-educational institutions.

For Surkhandarya Region, this issue has particular significance because the region combines a rich archaeological and historical heritage with living traditions of folklore, handicrafts, music, theatre, local customs, and pilgrimage culture. Termiz and the wider Surkhan oasis are associated with ancient civilizations, Buddhist archaeological sites, Islamic scholarship, traditional crafts, and a distinctive regional cultural environment. This concentration of tangible and intangible heritage gives local cultural institutions considerable educational potential.

After Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, the interpretation of national history, the restoration of cultural memory, and the strengthening of interest in historical personalities and heritage became increasingly important areas of public cultural life. In this context, museums and theatres began to function not only as places for preservation and entertainment, but also as institutions that interpret the past for younger generations. Libraries and cultural centers likewise became spaces for reading, dialogue, exhibitions, literary meetings, commemorative events, and community-based educational work.

By the 2020s, the educational environment had changed substantially. Young people increasingly received information through digital media, short-form video, social networks, and online platforms. As a result,

cultural and spiritual-educational institutions faced a dual task: to preserve authenticity and historical accuracy while presenting national heritage through forms that are attractive and understandable to a digitally oriented generation.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify the main stages and forms of activity of cultural and spiritual-educational institutions in Surkhandarya during 1991–2026, to assess their contribution to the formation of national values among young people, and to outline practical directions for increasing their educational effectiveness.

MAIN PART

1. Transformation of cultural and spiritual-educational work after independence

The first stage, covering the 1990s and early 2000s, was characterized by the revaluation of national history and cultural heritage in the context of independence. Cultural institutions increasingly emphasized local historical figures, traditions, national holidays, folk art, and the preservation of monuments. In Surkhandarya, the educational value of this process was especially visible because the region's identity is closely connected with Termiz, the Surkhan oasis, archaeological heritage, and major religious scholars such as Imam al-Tirmidhi.

The second stage, roughly covering the 2000s and 2010s, was associated with institutional modernization and a wider use of cultural events as a means of youth education. Museums, theatres, libraries, cultural centers, schools, mahallas, and educational institutions increasingly organized joint events, contests, exhibitions, literary evenings, excursions, and commemorative programs. Such formats allowed national values to be communicated not only as abstract concepts, but through objects, stories, performances, music, and direct participation.

The third stage, particularly visible from the late 2010s to 2026, is characterized by efforts to connect cultural heritage with new communication technologies, tourism, youth initiatives, and modern public education. The national program adopted for educating young people in loyalty to national values and patriotism envisages a staged system of national education and emphasizes deeper study of the spiritual heritage of ancestors, responsibility, tolerance, civic awareness, and respect for national values among students and young adults.

2. Museums as institutions of historical memory

Museums have a special role in transmitting national values because they work with authentic material evidence. Archaeological finds, manuscripts, ethnographic objects, works of art, traditional household objects, and historical documents allow young visitors to see national history as a material reality rather than only as textbook information. In this sense, museum pedagogy links knowledge, emotion, visual memory, and personal experience.

Official regional statistics show that in 2024 Surkhandarya had two operating museums, which received 52.3 thousand visitors. School pupils and students of higher and secondary specialized educational institutions accounted for 14.7% of total visitors. This figure is significant because it demonstrates that museum activity already reaches a measurable youth audience; at the same time, it also indicates room for stronger cooperation with schools, colleges, and universities.

Museum excursions can be particularly effective when they are connected with educational assignments, local-history projects, debates, digital storytelling, and student research. For Surkhandarya, the Museum of Archaeology in Termiz and art and cultural collections provide opportunities to connect ancient regional history, national identity, and modern civic responsibility. In 2026, museum visits organized in the region were explicitly presented as a means of increasing interest in historical and cultural heritage and educating the younger generation in respect for national values and patriotism.

3. Theatre and artistic representation of national ideals

Theatre influences value formation through emotional identification. A historical personality, moral conflict, or national story becomes meaningful when the audience observes characters making decisions and experiencing the consequences of those decisions. Therefore, theatre can transform historical and ethical content into personal reflection.

In 2024, two theatres operated in Surkhandarya Region. They staged 509 performances and attracted 173 thousand spectators. These figures indicate that theatre remains one of the region's most visible cultural institutions. The educational dimension is especially evident in productions based on historical memory and moral themes.

The Surkhandarya Musical Drama Theatre's 2025 repertoire included the production "Imom Termiziy", and the theatre opened its 90th season with this work. The regional puppet theatre presented "Shiroq" during the Independence Day open-house program, while the 2026 schedule of the musical drama theatre included the historical drama "Tumaris" as well as repeated performances of "Imom Termiziy". These examples show that stage art can connect young audiences with national history through emotionally engaging narratives rather than only through formal instruction.

4. Libraries, cultural centers, and public educational spaces

Libraries and information-resource institutions contribute to national education through reading culture, access to historical and literary sources, book exhibitions, meetings with writers and scholars, and local-history collections. Their educational importance is particularly high because reading develops reflective engagement with values. Unlike short digital content, books and archival materials create conditions for sustained attention and critical understanding.

Cultural centers and local cultural institutions have another advantage: they connect national values with living practice. Folk songs, traditional instruments, dance, crafts, national clothing, oral history, festivals, and family customs can be transmitted through clubs, master classes, exhibitions, and public events. The 2025 "Khan Atlas" initiatives in Surkhandarya emphasized that national clothing embodies historical traditions and cultural identity and explicitly linked such cultural promotion with educating the younger generation in the spirit of national values.

At the district level, similar initiatives continued in 2026. In Sariosiyo District, National Clothing Day activities were presented as a way of connecting young people with cultural memory and national identity. Such events are most educationally valuable when they move beyond ceremonial participation and include explanation of symbols, production techniques, regional differences, and the historical meanings of cultural forms.

5. Educational mechanisms and current challenges

The educational influence of cultural institutions operates through several mechanisms. First, they provide historical knowledge and credible sources. Second, they create emotional identification with historical figures and cultural symbols. Third, they provide social participation through clubs, performances, exhibitions, volunteering, and festivals. Fourth, they offer intergenerational communication by bringing young people together with artists, historians, craftsmen, veterans, researchers, and elders.

Nevertheless, the period up to 2026 also reveals several challenges. Formalism can reduce a cultural event to attendance rather than learning. Young people may visit a museum or theatre without subsequent discussion or interpretation. Some institutions may have limited digital content, weak social-media communication, or insufficient interactive programs. Rural youth can face unequal access to major cultural institutions concentrated in Termiz. In addition, cultural education must compete with a large flow of global entertainment content that is often faster, more visual, and algorithmically personalized.

These challenges require a transition from event-based cultural work to continuous educational ecosystems. Museums should develop youth guides, interactive quests, QR-based multilingual explanations, mobile exhibitions, and student research programs. Theatres can organize post-performance discussions and educational packages for schools. Libraries can create local-history clubs, oral-history archives, reading challenges, and digital collections. Cultural centers can integrate traditional crafts with entrepreneurship, design, tourism, and creative industries so that national heritage is perceived not as a static past but as a living resource for contemporary development.

The most effective model for Surkhandarya is institutional cooperation. A museum excursion should be connected with a school lesson; a theatrical production should be followed by discussion; a library exhibition can support a university research assignment; a cultural-center master class can involve local artisans and youth organizations. Such cooperation turns national-value education from isolated propaganda into sustained cultural experience.

CONCLUSION

Between 1991 and 2026, cultural and spiritual-educational institutions in Surkhandarya evolved from primarily preservational and ceremonial organizations into increasingly active platforms for historical interpretation, cultural participation, and youth education. Museums, theatres, libraries, cultural centers, heritage sites, and spiritual-educational programs collectively contributed to the transmission of historical memory, national identity, patriotism, ethical norms, and respect for cultural heritage.

The regional statistics for 2024 demonstrate that these institutions have a substantial audience: museums attracted 52.3 thousand visitors and theatres 173 thousand spectators. Historically oriented productions such as “Imom Termiziy”, “Shiroq”, and “Tumaris” show that artistic institutions can translate national history into emotionally meaningful experiences for young people.

At the same time, the effectiveness of national-value education depends not on the number of events alone, but on the depth of youth participation. The priority for the next stage should be to strengthen museum pedagogy, digital communication, youth clubs, mobile cultural programs, educational partnerships, and systematic evaluation of learning outcomes. In this way, Surkhandarya’s cultural heritage can function not only as a preserved legacy, but as an active resource for forming historically aware, culturally confident, and socially responsible young citizens.

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