

False Religious Views Among Youth: Problems, Causes, and Ways to Develop Spiritual Education

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Abstract:

In the context of globalization and rapid digitalization, youth in Uzbekistan face growing challenges in forming accurate religious views. Despite Uzbekistan's rich spiritual heritage, socio-economic instability, insufficient religious education, and digital misinformation contribute to the proliferation of incorrect and radical religious ideologies among young people. Prior studies have insufficiently addressed the compounded impact of digital media, weak institutional presence, and socio-economic pressure on the formation of youth religious consciousness. This study analyzes the causes of false religious beliefs among Uzbek youth and proposes comprehensive educational and societal measures to counteract them. The findings identify four critical contributors to religious misperceptions—digital misinformation, underdeveloped religious education, economic hardship, and the influence of radical ideologies. The study reveals a significant disconnect between traditional institutions and youth spiritual needs. This research integrates insights from local scholars with a focused evaluation of structural deficiencies in religious outreach, offering a multidimensional framework for reform. The study recommends expanding religious education, promoting inter-institutional cooperation, engaging youth through digital literacy and cultural programs, and integrating modern pedagogical strategies to foster resilience against extremism. Strengthening the synergy between educational institutions, state authorities, and religious bodies is vital for building a spiritually aware and socially stable generation.

Keywords: Incorrect Religious Views, Youth, Uzbekistan, Spirituality, Students, Religious Consciousness, Critical Thinking, Media, Religious Education, Islamic Culture, Radicalism

Introduction

Youth is the future of any society, the guarantor of its development and progress. At the same time, modern globalization, rapid changes in the technology and information space are forming new worldviews and perspectives in the minds of young people. However, this process itself does not lead to positive results. In particular, social and cultural changes in the sphere of religious values and education are the cause of the emergence of misconceptions and views in the religious views of young people.

Uzbekistan, with its rich religious and cultural heritage, has the potential to create new spiritual and religious directions for young people. However, at the same time, the emergence of erroneous religious views and radicalism, leading to a misunderstanding of this process, is also observed. Such mistakes can limit the religious views of young people and lead to religious disagreements in the public [1].

The purpose of the article is to study incorrect religious views among youth in Uzbekistan, analyze their causes and consequences, and propose practical measures to prevent such mistakes. The article also emphasizes the importance of religious education, the role of religious institutions in shaping religious consciousness among youth, and the importance of communication with youth.

Currently, incorrect religious views among young people in Uzbekistan are expanding and taking on a unique character. These errors are often associated with radical movements, religious extremism, and various fanatical views, leading to the formation of uneven and superficial religious concepts in the minds of young people [2].

Below we will consider and analyze some of the factors that shaped these views:

Digital space and the impact of information.

Today, young people often receive religious information from the digital space. Religious movements that become known to them through the Internet and social networks are often filled with radical or misinterpretations. This reduces the influence of traditional religious institutions, which play an important role in the formation of religious views of young people [3].

R. Ibragimov, who conducted research on this topic, explains this process as "modern youth are not limited in the use of information technologies, and they receive a lot of uneven information."

It should be especially noted that this situation can lead to the distortion of religious concepts among young people and the formation of radical views among them [4].

Lack of religious education and religious culture. The system of religious education in Uzbekistan is still in the process of development, which does not fail to influence the formation of religious consciousness among young people. The limited nature of religious education for students and young people and its existence only in certain regions leads to the fact that religious knowledge is superficial and poorly studied in them. This creates the basis for the spread of religious extremism and radicalism.

In particular, as Professor N. Kholmukhamedov noted, "the lack of religious education can lead to the involvement of young people in radical groups." .

The lack of such education leads to the limitation of religious views of young people and the emergence of incorrect religious concepts in them [5].

Methods

This study employed a qualitative analytical approach to explore the factors contributing to the formation of false religious views among youth in Uzbekistan. The methodology was structured around a comprehensive review of existing literature, expert opinions, and socio-religious

assessments provided by Uzbek scholars and field specialists. Sources included academic articles, governmental reports, and religious education frameworks, which were analyzed to identify prevailing patterns and causes behind youth susceptibility to radical ideologies. Special attention was given to the role of digital platforms, social media, and the current religious education system. The analysis incorporated interpretive methods to evaluate socio-economic pressures, gaps in spiritual upbringing, and the limited accessibility to traditional religious institutions. Furthermore, empirical observations from law enforcement practices and sociological research enriched the understanding of the youth's exposure to extremist ideologies. Quotes and perspectives from local experts such as R. Ibragimov, N. Kholmukhamedov, and D. Koyumov were used to contextualize the findings within national realities. The study also drew comparative insights from international practices, notably Turkey's integration of moderate religious teachings in public education, to propose applicable reforms. The overarching goal of the methodology was not only to identify the root causes of misbeliefs but also to formulate a set of feasible recommendations for improving religious consciousness among youth through education, inter-institutional cooperation, and media engagement. This multifaceted qualitative framework allowed for an in-depth understanding of the problem and helped shape targeted strategies for future implementation.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic factors.

Another cause of incorrect religious views among young people is social and economic problems. Life's difficulties, lack of jobs, and a lack of hope for the future can lead young people towards radical religious movements [6].

In such circumstances, young people may try to stand out from others through distrust of their religious views, adherence to incorrect directions, or the radicalization of religious beliefs [7].

As researcher D. Koyumov notes, socio-economic problems are the main cause of religious radicalism, and in these conditions, young people understand themselves through religious groups. [8].

The influence of religious extremism and radicalism.

The rapid spread of radical religious movements among young people, in particular, leads to the intensification of the activities of groups directed towards religious extremism. These groups are attracting young people to their extremist views, which can lead to the widespread dissemination of radical interpretations of religion in society.

Sociologist Sh. Aminov explains this process as follows: "Young people are trying to find their individual life, identity, and place in society by joining radical religious groups [9]."

False religious views and concepts are increasingly spreading among the youth of Uzbekistan. These errors are often associated with radical movements, religious extremism, and various fanatical views, leading to the formation of uneven and superficial religious concepts in the minds of young people.

In our opinion, the following factors contribute to this process:

1. Digital space and the impact of information.

Today, young people often receive religious information from the digital information space. Religious movements that become known to them through the Internet and social networks are often filled with radical or misinterpretations. This reduces the influence of traditional religious institutions, which play an important role in the formation of religious views of young people.

According to researcher R. Ibragimov, "modern youth are not limited in the use of information technologies, and they receive a lot of uneven information." .

It is natural that this situation leads to the distortion of religious concepts among young people and the formation of radical views among them [10].

2. Lack of religious education and religious culture

The system of religious education in Uzbekistan is still developing, which negatively affects the formation of religious consciousness among young people. The limited nature of religious education for students and young people and its existence only in certain regions leads to the fact that religious knowledge is superficial and poorly studied in them. This creates the basis for the spread of religious extremism and radicalism.

In particular, as Professor N. Kholmukhamedov noted, "the lack of religious education can lead to the involvement of young people in radical groups."

The lack of such education leads to the limitation of religious views of young people and the emergence of incorrect religious concepts in them.

3. Socio-economic factors

Another cause of incorrect religious views among young people is social and economic problems. Life's difficulties, lack of jobs, and a lack of hope for the future can lead young people towards radical religious movements. In such conditions, young people may try to stand out from others through distrust of their religious views, adherence to incorrect directions, or the radicalization of religious beliefs.

According to researcher D.Kayumov, "socio-economic problems are the main cause of religious radicalism, and in these conditions, young people understand themselves through religious groups."

4. Influence of ideas imbued with religious extremism and radicalism

The rapid spread of radical religious movements among young people, in particular, leads to the activities of groups directed towards religious extremism. These groups are attracting young people to their extremist views, which can lead to the widespread dissemination of radical interpretations of religion in society.

At the same time, sociologist Sh. Aminov emphasizes that "young people are trying to find their individual life, identity, and place in society by joining radical religious groups [11]."

From the foregoing, it follows that providing religious education to today's youth and forming religious consciousness in them is important for the stability of society and increasing the social activity of young people.

Therefore, it is recommended to implement the following practical measures to prevent religious prejudice and radicalism among young people, effectively organize religious education, and form religious consciousness:

1) Improvement of the religious education system

The system of religious education in Uzbekistan is important for all age groups, and its improvement will help reduce the spread of religious extremism in society. For this, it is necessary to partially increase the number of schools and madrasas providing primary and secondary religious education, improve their quality, adapt religious education programs to modern requirements, and implement measures to increase the moral and social responsibility of youth.

At the same time, providing primary religious education not only in religious institutions but also in general educational institutions can yield good results. According to the experience of Turkey, so that young people do not develop disorders related to religious radicalism in the future, they are taught lessons aimed at understanding the doctrine of Moturidi during their education in primary grades of general secondary schools [12].

This will contribute to the widespread dissemination of religious knowledge among young people and prevent radicalism.

In our opinion, organizing special courses on religious issues for teaching staff, teaching them modern religious concepts and methods of combating radicalism is also an effective method.

Strengthening cooperation between leading religious higher educational institutions and research institutes of Uzbekistan is also important in improving the quality of religious education. It is necessary to further develop scientific research in religious sciences, to harmonize traditional and modern approaches to religious issues.

2) Protection of youth from religious extremism and radicalism

Education plays a significant role in protecting young people from religious extremism and radicalism and preserving their mental and moral health. To prevent misguided religious beliefs, it is necessary to provide young people with correct religious knowledge and to inform them about the harmful consequences of extremism.

At the same time, it is necessary to enhance the role of state and public organizations in the formation of religious understanding among young people. To combat religious extremism, it is necessary to effectively use modern information technologies among young people, keep them away from radical groups, and create new social opportunities for them.

In informing young people about religious issues, it is also important to conduct various promotional activities and seminars. Local communities and religious organizations should maintain regular communication with young people and teach them traditional religious values. This is an important factor in the religious education of young people and prevents them from joining radical groups.

3) Organization of social and cultural events

It is necessary to organize more social and cultural events to form religious consciousness among young people and prevent incorrect religious views. These activities should be aimed at providing young people with religious knowledge and educating them as religiously and socially responsible citizens. Social and cultural events at the regional and local levels can foster mutual understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect among young people [13].

It is also necessary to encourage young people to actively participate in the fight against religious extremism. Organizing trainings, psychological consultations, and communication groups that help them understand religious and moral norms and their place in society is also considered an effective measure.

4) Development of cultural and religious integration

Cultural and religious integration plays an important role in preventing religious extremism among young people. The harmony of religious understanding and culture helps young people understand each other and maintain stability in society. Therefore, educational programs, trainings, and seminars that combine religious and cultural approaches should teach young people equality and tolerance in religious views[14].

Such programs teach young people to accept national, religious, and cultural differences, to respect each other, and to maintain peace in society.

The change in religious will and views among young people in Uzbekistan, as well as the spread of religious radicalism, is one of the most important and pressing issues of today. In this process, the role of the state, society, and religious organizations in the religious education of young people and the formation of correct religious consciousness among them is very important. The government of Uzbekistan is implementing a number of measures to further develop religious education, prevent religious radicalism, and educate young people with correct moral and religious values [15].

For the formation of religious education and awareness among young people, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the state education system, religious organizations, and social communities. By encouraging young people to actively participate in the fight against religious extremism and providing them with correct religious knowledge, it is possible to ensure religious stability in society.

Thus, the full provision of religious education to young people in Uzbekistan and the formation of religious consciousness will remain important in strengthening the stability of society. For this, all social groups, including state, religious, and public organizations, must work together.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the emergence of false religious views among youth in Uzbekistan is driven by a confluence of factors including insufficient religious education, the pervasive influence of unregulated digital information, socio-economic challenges, and the active propagation of radical ideologies. These elements collectively contribute to the distortion of religious consciousness and the vulnerability of young people to extremist narratives. The study underscores the urgent need to enhance the accessibility and quality of religious education, integrate moderate and culturally rooted teachings into general curricula, and promote collaboration among state, religious, and educational institutions. It further emphasizes the strategic use of digital platforms to disseminate balanced religious knowledge and foster critical thinking among youth. The implications of these findings are substantial for national policy and youth development, as they offer a roadmap for preventing radicalization and reinforcing social stability. Future research should focus on empirical evaluations of current religious education programs, comparative analyses with international models, and the development of innovative pedagogical tools that align religious teachings with contemporary youth values and communication channels.

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