

Cultural Relations of the Azerbaijan Republic at the Modern Time

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Abstract

Azerbaijan situated in the crossroad between East and West summed up various values of world civilization, moreover, made a major contribution to treasures of world culture, education and science. Furthermore, the ancient national culture of Azerbaijan enhanced through associating with world civilization. This is natural just because culture of all nations couldn't exist without communicating with or isolating from all the other cultures of the world. Therefore, national culture should enrich through the achievements of the world and should be beneficial for whole mankind. Today the geography of Azerbaijani cultural relations is also being expanded, and gets new forms and shapes. Although a lot of works should be done for better introducing our culture to world. It is pity that Azerbaijan is still known for its Oil and Nagorno Karabakh problem, not for our rich cultural heritage. The pearls of our cultural heritage in better way can be considered as a sample of Islam culture and the world community does not get information about the exact possessors of this culture. The worse situation is that Armenians are not satisfy with the occupation of our territory, but also they pretend to possess our cultural and historical monuments, music, poet pearls of Azerbaijan to their own.

The great scientific and technological revolutions of the XX century gave a new impetus for the understanding of the world and relations between nature and humans. Consequently, these revolutions led conflicts between states, so the result of integration process among different nations is getting more profound, and becoming a new impetus for the Development of World Policy.

At the beginning of the 90th of XX century the collapse of Soviet Union has shifted the world's political map. The recently emerged geographical-political units began to integrate actively to world's political system. The South Caucasus was one of the territories which could attract the attention of world policy. The geo-political processes which are going on in this territory directed the attention of world and regional countries to the pressing policy of South Caucasus. The Republic of Azerbaijan is the potential country from its cultural and economic aspects. The leading countries of the world have accepted Azerbaijan as the leader country of South Caucasus. Azerbaijan tries to gain the balanced position in world policy. It has been determined the priorities of world policy by the realization of economic, democratic, social-cultural reforms (Xudiyev, 2011).

Along with the other factors the place and the role of each country in the International Relation system is being determined with the resources of foreign policy. Relying on these resources the states conduct their policy and act in an adequate way in the world arena.

Azerbaijan possesses geographical, economic, military-political, social-democratic resources and rich cultural moral potential. The cultural-ideological potential, the academic and intellectual level of population make our country occupy leading places in the world. The most valuable treasure of each country is its cultural

and moral values.

Through the ages Azerbaijan is situated on the cross roads of East and West. Azerbaijan’s ancient cultural history which summoned the advanced values of world civilization and at the same time made its contribution to world’s cultural, scientific education treasure became richer via the development of contact with world nation’s culture. The main and important duty which stands before Azerbaijan state and nation is to preserve, enrich these national and cultural values and convey them to future generations. With these aims all level of the creative and constructive activities should be propagated, the main importance has to be given to the invention, direction and appreciation of new abilities (Abbasov N., 2009)

Today international cultural relations have become the main field of International Relations and this has led main factor for protection of stability and security in the world, for strengthening the solidarity among nations and mutual trust and confidence.

In 1991 Azerbaijan Republic after getting its independence determined the main priorities of foreign policy, became the subject of International Relations and going on moral processes in the world occupied specific place in the development of our country and decently utilization of moral-cultural power in providing political, economic interests of Azerbaijan in International arena. Today Azerbaijan is the member of more than 30 international and regional organizations (Abbasov N., 2009).

The globalization process intends the relations to become closer between nations and enlarges their cultural relations and also benefits from the success of other countries gained in cultural policy with the condition not to lose their own cultural traditions and characteristics. The International organizations such as UN, UNESCO, and European Council carry out different events to support to forming the international cultural policy and to develop the world culture.

In 2006 the president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed a decree about the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Besides preserving the national cultural values of the nation within the country, the Ministry in accordance with the interstate treaties conducts international cultural programs with Europe, Asia, Latin America, USA and Islamic countries (Abbasov N., 2009). The Azerbaijan Republic became the member of UNESCO on 3 June 1992.

The main step in the development of UNESCO-Azerbaijan relations was achieved during the former president, national leader of Azerbaijan Republic Haydar Aliyev’s official visit paid to France in December 1993 (Mamedaliyeva, 2007).

In 1994 Haydar Aliyev issued a decree about the formation of UNESCO National Commission in Azerbaijan within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Commission consists of 25 members and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic is the head of this Commission. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic – Elmar Mammadyarov is the head of this Commission. Actually, the National Commission defines the main dimensions of policy on UNESCO of Azerbaijan Republic (Mamedaliyeva, 2007)

The daily activities of Azerbaijan – UNESCO relation are conducted by the Standing Secretary of National Commission within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic and by the Standing representative of Azerbaijan at UNESCO in Paris. At the result of Azerbaijan-UNESCO relations the ancient and rich heritage of Azerbaijan Republic became the part of world heritage.

The first lady of Azerbaijan Republic, the Head of Heydar Aliyev Foundation – Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva played great role in the improvement and development of UNESCO-Azerbaijan ties. In 2004 Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva was declared the goodwill ambassador of UNESCO on the field of folk art and music traditions because of her support for the development of traditional music, literature and poetry, her works done in the field of exchanges in education, music and world culture and also her devoutness to the ideas of UNESCO.

Since 1995 Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva has organized festivities, exhibitions, cultural programs and concerts through the organization of “Friends of Azerbaijani Cultural Found” and so she had an active part in the propaganda of our cultural heritage, and in its preservation in national and regional base. By Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva’s initiative there was created the International Mugham Center in Baku (Abbasov, 2009). In 2003 Mugham was included in the list of “Masterpiece of humankind and non-material heritage”.

Azerbaijan Republic has joined to the conventions of UNESCO “The preservation of cultural values and heritage”, “The recognition of specialties in higher education, diplomas and degrees”, “The preservation of non-material cultural heritage” and so on. In the framework of UNESCO more than 70 concerts, jubilees, scientific seminars and symposiums, conferences and congresses, meetings and festivities as “1300 anniversary of Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”, “500 anniversary of Muhammad Fizuli”, “900 anniversary of Nasraddin Tusi”, “200 anniversary of Mirza Kazimbey”, “100 anniversary of Mir Jalal Pashayev” have been organized till the August 2010 (Mamedaliyeva, 2007).

Mainly, the National art is a key element in the development of cultural-humanitarian ties. The language of music, dance and ballet is universal. Our professional artists, singers, actors and actresses, dancers do their best for making Azerbaijan national art worldwide known. Our well-known khanandas, dancing and ballet groups, outstanding artist, sculptures take part at the international events and represent our country, culture and nation very well. Alim Gasimov, Aziza Mustafazade, Mensim Ibrahimov and others are well-known all over the world.

Azerbaijan has been represented in different art festivals and music competitions. During last four years our young singers represented our country in the Eurovision song contest too.

Nowadays one of the forms of cultural relations of Azerbaijan Republic is organizing cultural days of different countries. After getting its independence there was organized cultural days more than of 50 countries in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani cultural days also was organized in different countries.

Actually, Azerbaijan is not a religious, but a secular state. However, the Islamic values are highly valued in Azerbaijan too. According to the Azerbaijan Constitution all citizens are equal regardless their religion or faith. Azerbaijan might be a good example in the field of tolerance to most countries of the world. Taking into account all above mentioned facts Azerbaijan was declared “Centre of Islamic culture” in 2009. During this year a lot of cultural events took place in our country. Azerbaijan also has been taking an active part in all events organized by ISESKO since 1992.

The experiment of XX century proved that the development of regional economic integration on the basis of geographical and cultural unity has been ensured. In fact, the XXI century is a globalization century and regionalization is a cornerstone of globalization process. This process opened new possibilities and challenges for Turkic countries. Geographical and economic condition of Turkic countries give opportunities to increase Social Welfare level of people by using modern economic, transportation and cultural integration mechanism. Turkic countries forms geopolitical and social - cultural enclave among European Union and rapidly growing Asian countries. Turkic peoples’ gained achievements who have special place in world culture and history can’t be denied. The heritage presented to world civilization by Turkic people is very valuable. During last centuries important historical events happened in the world, it ended in Turkic people’s separation from one-another and weakened their positions. At the integrating process of big countries, there is a great need for unity of Turkic world in the spheres of culture, science, economy and politics.

TURKSOY (Joint Administration of Turkic Arts and Culture) is for instance, one of such organizations of Turkic countries which organized to protect, improve and preserve the common material and moral heritage of Turkic people. The headquarters of this international organization created by Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey and Turkmenistan in 1993 is located in Ankara. However, the name of this organization was

changed to International Organization of Turkic Culture during XXVI meeting Ministries of Culture of Turkic countries in 2009.

The organization tries to fulfil various joint projects for developing and strengthening cooperation of Turkic countries in the field of art and culture: improve and propagate common moral values, historical heritage, cultural and art works, traditional sport and folk games of Turkic people; conduct festivals and competitions in the field of theatre, opera, music and ballet, open exhibitions. This organization creates mutual relations with international and national organizations, social groups and movements in the sphere of culture, art and education.

TURKSOY is also called as the UNESCO of Turkish speaking states. This organization realizes cooperation on culture and art of nations and states with Turkish culture and Islamic belonging. In the framework of TURKSOY, the member states conduct cultural and art events and other common events in each others' territories. The organization itself and its activities has brought Turkish world closer.

2000 was announced as “year of culture” by UNO, 2001 and in general first 10 years of XXI century was agreed to consider the years of dialogue of civilizations. As a part of civilizations’ dialog, because of wide range and selfless activities, provided attention to the children with special care needs, improving their lives and welfare, special attention to education and great support to the initiatives in Islamic world, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva was honored to be Goodwill Ambassador of ISESCO in 2006. (Казахстан и ТЮРКСОЙ, 2009)

It can not be denied the role of Media in terms of widening cultural relations of our country and promoting its cultural heritage. However, the activities of media representatives, ICTs and websites on this issue are still insufficient. The translation of literature of our cultural values into different foreign languages and their digitalization are very important.

Baku has recently hosted the World forum on Intercultural Dialogue as this initiative proposed by Azerbaijan and supported by UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilizations, Council of Europe, North -South Center of the Council of Europe, ISESCO and the Euro-news. The forum puts an accent on the recognition of intercultural dialogue. It is one of the most pressing challenges of the world and it increasingly manifests itself on a global scale. It will provide an opportunity for the sharing of good practice and the launch of new initiatives. Intercultural dialogue had a universal character; this process has been a motivating factor for peace, cultural understanding and elimination of poverty.

Nowadays, the geographical outreach of cultural relations of Azerbaijan widens and adheres new forms. However, there are still much to be done to achieve greater recognition of Azerbaijan culture worldwide.

Still many states in the world know Azerbaijan because of its oil and Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and they are not aware of how rich and wide range of culture Azerbaijan has got. In best scenario, several cultural heritage belongings to our nation are accepted as common Islamic culture examples, and not objective information about the owner nation is disseminated to the world.

Unfortunately, our nearest and notorious neighbors, not limiting with the occupation our lands, also consider and announce that our several cultural monuments, music and lyrics are theirs. All above mentioned facts demand from Azerbaijan state, patriotic nation and public organizations to take on actions in terms of better promotion of national culture and to suggest world community and international entities, deeper understanding of national moral problems of our nation.

Today cultural-moral relations is becoming both the main sphere of International Relations and serves as the main factor providing the stability and security in the world, the solidarity between nations, and mutual confidence and trust. The expansion of international relations in cultural sphere gives an impetus for the sustainability in prosperity of nations and countries. Today the cultural relations of Azerbaijan are being expanded and getting new shade. Finally, Azerbaijani state, public organizations and each citizen should do



their bests for representing and enhancing our national culture all over the world.

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