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Published in the USA

European Journal of Contemporary Education
E-ISSN 2305-6746
2022. 11(4): 1353-1365
DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2022.4.1353
<https://ejce.cherkasgu.press>

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The System of Public Education in Astrakhan Governorate in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries. Part 2

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Abstract

This set of articles relies on reference and memorandum books from the period 1873–1917 to explore the development of the system of public education in Astrakhan Governorate. This is the second piece in the set. The 20-year timeframe it covers (1874–1894) incorporates the post-reform and counter-reform periods.

The principal source used in this work is the Memorandum Books for Astrakhan Governorate.

Methodologically, use was made of sets of historical (historical-systematic, historical-comparative, historical-typological, historical-genetic, and historical-statistical) and general (synthetic analysis, content analysis, and systems analysis) research methods.

Between 1874 and 1894, the number of public educational institutions in Astrakhan Governorate increased 8 times, which may be regarded as significant progress in the development of the system of education in the region. The number of students rose 6 times, which is a remarkable achievement too.

The 20-year period witnessed brisk progress in the development of female education in the region, with the number of female students increasing 5.7 times. This must have been facilitated by the region's distinctive economic characteristics – it had well-developed fishing and livestock farming industries, with many women engaged in processing work.

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Socially, the region's secondary education sector was dominated by children of nobles and functionaries, which must have been associated with an added focus on the prestige of education and on building a successful career.

In terms of religious composition, the bulk of the region's student body was made up of Orthodox Christians. This group outnumbered the rest of the religious groups more than 30 times.

Keywords: public education, system of public education, public schools, Astrakhan Governorate, education in Astrakhan Governorate.

1. Introduction

This part of the study explores the development of the system of public education in Astrakhan Governorate in the latter part of the post-reform period (1874–1881) and in the counter-reform period (1881–1894). Thus, its chronological scope is 1874–1894. Its geographic scope is Astrakhan Governorate. An analysis was conducted comparing the region's education system with that of certain areas within the Caucasus Educational District (e.g., Tiflis Governorate, Kars Oblast, and the territory of the Kuban Cossack Host), certain areas in central Russia (Vologda and Voronezh Governorates), and certain areas in Little Russia (modern Ukraine), namely Volyn Governorate.

2. Materials and methods

The principal source used in this study is a selection of memorandum books spanning the period from 1874 to 1894. These books contain information about officials in charge of various institutions within each ministry (including one's full name, rank, title, and post) and list various institutions in the region, of which of primary interest to us are educational organizations under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education.

Valuable data on the region's social makeup are available from the First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897 (Perepis'., 1897). An insight into the characteristics of legislation in the area of education at the time can be gained from 'The Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire' (PSZRI, 1914).

In terms of methodology, use was made of both historical (traditional and nontraditional) and general research methods.

The following traditional historical research methods were used:

- historical-systematic method;
- historical-comparative method (in terms of (a) the chronological aspect, employed to compare the states of the system of education in Astrakhan Governorate in different stages during the period under review; in terms of (b) the historical-geographic aspect, employed to compare the development of the system of education in Astrakhan Governorate with that in several other regions across the Russian Empire);
- historical-typological method;
- historical-genetic method.

The only nontraditional historical research method used in this work was the historical-statistical method.

The general research methods employed in this work were synthetic analysis, content analysis, and systems analysis.

3. Discussion

Below is a review of the historiography on the subject.

Amongst the prerevolutionary literature, a highly valuable work representing an in-depth analysis of the system of public education in Astrakhan Governorate is N.F. Kazansky's 'Public Education in Astrakhan Governorate', a series of articles published in 1898 in the journal *Russkaya Mysl* (Kazanskii, 1898a; Kazanskii, 1898b; Kazanskii, 1898c; Kazanskii, 1898d).

Of interest are also the monographs 'The Astrakhan Chronicle: Historical Developments, Events, Ordinances of Public Authorities, and Facts about Social Life in the City of Astrakhan for the Period from 1554 to 1896 Inclusive', by A.N. Shtyl'ko, which also touches upon issues in the education system of Astrakhan Governorate (Shtyl'ko, 1897), and 'A Historical Account of Astrakhan's First Male Gymnasium in the Period from 1806 to 1914', by T.N. Ostroumov (Ostroumov, 1914), devoted to the history of the region's oldest educational institution.

An analysis of preschool education in the region is provided in the article 'On Preschool Education in the Astrakhan Region' by V. Kalgulov (Kalgulov, 1918).

Among the relevant works produced during the Soviet period, of particular note are the monographs 'Literacy and Education in Prerevolutionary Russia', by I.M. Bogdanov (Bogdanov, 1964), and 'Essays on the History of 19th-Century Progressive Russian Pedagogy', by V.Z. Smirnov (Smirnov, 1963).

The Astrakhan region's education system of the prerevolutionary period was, most notably, examined in the Soviet-era articles 'The Ways to Maintain Student Discipline in Gymnasiums and Progymnasiums', by V.Z. Smirnov (Smirnov, 1956), and 'Literacy and Public Education in Russia between the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', by A.G. Rashin (Rashin, 1951).

The region's educational potential was discussed in 'Essays on the History of Education and Pedagogical Thought across the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Second Half of the 19th Century)' (Ocherki..., 1976) and 'Essays on the History of Education and Pedagogical Thought across the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Period from the Late 19th to Early 20th Centuries)' (Ocherki..., 1991).

Among the modern works covering the history of education in Astrakhan Governorate, of particular note are the monographs 'Government Regulation of Islam in the Russian Empire between the Last Third of the 18th and Early 20th Centuries', by D.Yu. Arapov (Arapov, 2004), 'Islam in the Astrakhan Region', by V.M. Viktorin (Viktorin, 2008), and 'The Kazan Educational District between the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries', by I.E. Krapotkina (Krapotkina, 2011), the textbook 'The Development of the Education Sector in Astrakhan Governorate in the Period between the 18th and Early 20th Centuries: A Series of Lectures', by A.M. Treshchev, G.V. Alferova, and E.A. Tarabanovskaya (Treshchev i dr., 2001), and the dissertation 'Public Education in the Astrakhan Region in the Period between the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', by A.B. Olneva (Olneva, 1988).

Among the modern articles addressing ethnic and confessional education in Astrakhan Governorate, of particular note are the articles by I.K. Zagidullin (Zagidullin, 1992), R.M. Islemisova (Islemisova, 2013; Islemisova, 2014; Islemisova, 2015), R.G. Rezakov and F.M. Rekesheva (Rezakov, Rekesheva, 2014), and E.A. Tarabanovskaya (Tarabanovskaya, 2016).

As part of the present study, a comparative analysis was also conducted of the development of the system of public education in Astrakhan Governorate during the period under review vis-à-vis a number of other regions of the Russian Empire, including Vologda Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2019), Volyn Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2022), and certain areas within the Caucasus Educational District (e.g., Magsumov et al., 2020, Magsumov et al., 2021, Mamadaliev et al., 2022b, and Molchanova et al., 2019). The purpose behind comparing the region's education system with that of other regions of the Russian Empire was to form an objective understanding of the state and pace of the development of the system of public education in Astrakhan Governorate.

4. Results

Based on a set of statutory instruments adopted in the 19th century (e.g., *Charter for Educational Institutions Subordinate to Universities of November 5, 1804*¹, *Charter for Gymnasiums and Uyezd and Parish Schools of December 8, 1828*, and *Regulation on Urban Schools of 1872*) (PSZRI), educational institutions in the Russian Empire could be classified into the following four major types:

1) higher educational institutions: universities, institutes (except for teacher's institutes), and academies;

2) secondary educational institutions: gymnasiums and progymnasiums, teacher's institutes, ecclesiastical and teacher's seminaries, real schools, and technical schools;

3) lower educational institutions: urban schools, tradesman's (industrial) specialized schools, tradesman's schools, higher primary schools, Mariinsky schools, and uyezd schools;

4) primary educational institutions: primary schools and parochial (parish) schools.

The present work will not consider the system of higher education in the region.

¹ All dates hereinafter are provided in the old style.

As at 1873, Astrakhan Governorate had 38 educational institutions with a combined enrollment of 2,395 (Magsumov et al., 2022a: 1010).

The region had the following educational institutions as at 1874 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1874: 64-138):

- in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Gubernia Male Gymnasium; Astrakhan Female Gymnasium of Empress Mary; Astrakhan Ecclesiastical Seminary; Astrakhan Diocesan Female School; Astrakhan Uyezd School; Armenian Agababov Uyezd School; Astrakhan First Parish School; Astrakhan Second Parish School; Astrakhan Third Parish School; Astrakhan Fourth Parish School; Astrakhan Fifth (Petrine) Parish School; Astrakhan Armenian Parish School; Astrakhan First Female Parish School; Astrakhan Second Female Parish School;

- in the city of Cherny Yar: Cherny Yar Uyezd School;

- in the city of Krasny Yar: Krasny Yar Male Parish School; Krasny Yar Female Parish School; Yenotayev Male Parish School; Yenotayev Female Parish School; Cherny Yar Male Parish School; Cherny Yar Female Parish School;

- in the city of Tsarev: Tsarev Parish School.

According to the source, there also were several Cossack stanitsa schools and a Host boarding school. It, however, does not specify the number of those schools. It also mentions the activity of the Inspectorate of Public Schools in the city of Astrakhan.

The 1875 Memorandum Book lists the same number of educational institutions as there were in the previous year.

As at 1876, the region had the following educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1876: 82-103):

- in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Ecclesiastical School; Astrakhan Sixth Parish School; Armenian Parish School; Astrakhan Third Female Parish School.

The 1877 Memorandum Book lists the same number of educational institutions as there were in the previous year.

In 1878, the governorate became home to the following educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1878: 52-131):

- in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Real School;

- in Astrakhan Uyezd: one-grade male school in the village of Nachalovo (Cherepakha);

- in Yenotayevsky Uyezd: two-grade male school in the village of Sasykoli;

- in Chernoyarsky Uyezd: one-grade male school in the village of Aksay;

- in Tsarevsky Uyezd: two-grade male school in the village of Prishiby; two-grade male school in the village of Sloboda.

In 1879, the governorate became home to the following educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1879: 98-133):

- in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Seventh Parish School; Astrakhan Fourth Female Parish School;

- in the city of Cherny Yar: urban two-grade school;

- in Tsarevsky Uyezd: two-grade male school in the sloboda of Vladimirovka.

In 1880, the governorate became home to the following educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1880: 86, 131):

- in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Tradesman's School of Emperor Alexander III; Nautical School;

- in Tsarevsky Uyezd: two-grade male school in the village of Bykovo.

In 1881, the region became home to an urban four-grade school in the city of Astrakhan (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1881: 89), and in 1882 a one-grade school was opened in the village of Selitryanoye (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1882: 118).

In 1883, the governorate became home to the following educational institutions (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1883: 95-118):

- in the city of Astrakhan: non-Slavic school for Tatars; female urban four-grade school;

- in Astrakhan Uyezd: one-grade school in the village of Karantinnoye; one-grade school in the village of Kazymyaskoye; one-grade school in the village of Yandykovskoye;

– in Krasnoyarsky Uyezd: one-grade school in the village of Petropavlovskoye; one-grade school in the village of Raznochinskoye; one-grade school in the village of Teplinskoye; one-grade school in the village of Nikolskoye (Dzhambay);

– in Yenotayevsky Uyezd: one-grade school in the village of Tambovo; one-grade school in the village of Bolkhun; one-grade school in the village of Prishiby (not to be confused with the village of Prishiby in Tsarevsky Uyezd); one-grade school in the village of Nikolskoye (not to be confused with the village of Nikolskoye in Krasnoyarsky Uyezd, also known as Dzhambay);

– in Chernoyarsky Uyezd: one-grade school in the village of Solenoye Zaymishche; one-grade school in the village of Vyazovka; one-grade school in the village of Popovitskoye; one-grade school in the village of Solodniki; one-grade school in the village of Staritskoye; one-grade school in the village of Kamenny Yar; one-grade school in the village of Torgovoye; one-grade school in the village of Zavetnoye; one-grade school in the village of Remontnoye;

– in Tsarevsky Uyezd: two-grade female school in the village of Vladimirovka; one-grade female school in the village of Verkhnebalykleyevskoye; one-grade male school in the village of Nikolayevskoye; one-grade female school in the village of Nikolayevskoye; one-grade male school in the village of Verkhne-Akhtubinskoye; one-grade female school in the village of Verkhne-Akhtubinskoye; one-grade school in the village of Rakhinka; one-grade school in the village of Berezhnovo; one-grade school in the village of Molchanovka; one-grade school in the village of Slobodka; one-grade school in the village of Novonikolskoye; one-grade male school in the village of Sredne-Akhtubinskoye; one-grade female school in the village of Sredne-Akhtubinskoye; one-grade male school in the sloboda of Kapustinoyarskaya; one-grade female school in the sloboda of Kapustinoyarskaya; one-grade school in the village of Kislovo; one-grade school in the village of Kalmytskabalakskoye; one-grade school in the village of Kolobovka; one-grade school in the village of Solodovka; one-grade school in the village of Zaplavnoye; one-grade school in the village of Pologoye Zaymishche; one-grade school in the village of Verkhnepogromnoye; one-grade school in the village of Srednepogromnoye.

In 1884, the region became home to the following educational institutions ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1884: 129, 137](#)):

– in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Female Tradesman's School; Astrakhan Male Tradesman's School; primary public school in the Akhtuba station of the Baskunchak Railroad.

In 1885, the region became home to the following educational institutions ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1885: 73, 131, 163](#)):

– in the city of Astrakhan: Astrakhan Male Tradesman's School of the Ecclesiastical Charity for Poor Armenians;

– in the Kalmyk Horde: male Kalmyk school; male Tatar school in the village of Trekhprotokskoye (run by Mullah Khodzhayev); male Tatar school in the village of Trekhprotokskoye (Mullah Bilyalev); male Tatar school in the village of Kalinchinskoye; male Tatar school in the village of Zatsarevskoye; male Tatar school in the village of Bashmakovskoye;

– in Krasnoyarsky Uyezd: male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (run by Imam Yakseybayev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Alaverdyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Realiyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Isayev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Mambedaliyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Allaverdyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Kedrali Sarsembeyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Abdula Sarsembeyev); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Umerov); male Tatar school in the village of Khozhetaevskoye (Imam Sultanaliev); male Tatar school in the village of Seitovskoye (Imam Shamardanov); male Tatar school in the village of Seitovskoye (Imam Amiraliev); male Tatar school in the village of Seitovskoye (Imam Bayramaliyev); male Tatar school in the village of Seitovskoye (Imam Il'yasov).

According to the source, “education in all 15 schools of Krasnoyarsky Uyezd was free” ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1885: 163](#)).

In 1886, Astrakhan became home to an Armenian male ecclesiastical school and an Armenian female ecclesiastical school ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1886: 80](#)). In 1887, the city became home to a deaf-and-dumb school and urban first, second, and third one-grade schools ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1887: 92](#)). That same year, the city of Krasny Yar became home to an urban

three-grade male school ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1887: 116](#)), opened in the premises of a former parish school.

Starting in 1888, the source carried systematized data, including on education.

According to the 1888 Memorandum Book, at that time the region had 101 educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education with a combined enrollment of 6,739 (5,016 boys and 1,723 girls) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 186](#)).

The region had 144 educational institutions under the purview of other authorities. These included ecclesiastical and ethnic educational institutions, an obstetric school, schools of literacy, and unisex children's shelters. The 144 schools had a combined enrollment of 5,123 (3,899 boys and 1,224 girls) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 186](#)).

While the 1889 Memorandum Book lists the same number of educational institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education in Astrakhan Governorate at the time as there were in the previous year, it now lists a larger number of ethnic and private educational institutions in the region – 147. The region's educational institutions answerable to the Inspectorate of Public Schools had a combined enrollment of 6,591 (4,876 boys and 1,715 girls). Overall, the size of the student body in the governorate at the time was 12,708 (9,437 boys and 3,361 girls) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1889: 210-211](#)).

In 1891, the number of educational institutions increased by 13 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1889: 71](#)). It did not change in 1892 ([Pamyatnaya knizhka 1892: 288](#)). In 1893, it increased by 21 (to 308) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka 1893: 27](#)). In 1893, the region's combined student body was 14,725 (10,766 boys and 3,959 girls). The region's secondary education sector had a combined student body of 977 (618 boys and 359 girls) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1893: 27](#)).

Astrakhan Governorate had quite an impressive boy to girl student ratio vis-à-vis other regions in the period under review (e.g., [Natolochnaya et al., 2020](#) and [Magsumov et al., 2021](#)) – 2.7 to 1. This indicates that the period 1874–1894 witnessed brisk progress in the development of female education in Astrakhan Governorate. The ratio was even more impressive within the region's secondary education sector – 1.7 to 1. Vis-à-vis the regions Astrakhan Governorate was compared with, the figure was higher only in Kutais ([Mamadaliyev et al., 2021](#)) and Vilna Governorates ([Natolochnaya et al., 2019](#)).

The 1894 Memorandum Book provides no statistical data on the numbers of educational institutions and students in them in the region at the time.

The numbers of educational institutions and students in them in Astrakhan Governorate in the period 1874–1894 are displayed in [Table 1](#).

As at 1888, Astrakhan Governorate had the following distribution of students by faith within its secondary education sector ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 71-72](#)):

- Orthodox Christians: male gymnasium – 247; real school – 138; female gymnasium – 245;
- Armenian Gregorian Christians: male gymnasium – 45; real school – 28; female gymnasium – 61;
- Protestants (Lutherans): male gymnasium – 17; real school – 9; female gymnasium – 17;
- Catholics: male gymnasium – 11; real school – 6; female gymnasium – 11.

The number of students representing other religious groups was negligible. As we can see, the bulk of the student body within the region's secondary education sector was made up of Orthodox Christians, which was associated with the fact that the bulk of its population was made up of ethnic Russians.

In terms of social composition, in 1888 Astrakhan Governorate had the following distribution of students within its secondary education sector ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 72](#)):

- children of nobles, officers, and functionaries: male gymnasium – 157; real school – 61; female gymnasium – 151;
- children of petit bourgeois: male gymnasium – 68; real school – 93; female gymnasium – 87;
- children of peasants, Cossacks, and members of the lower ranks: male gymnasium – 31; real school – 17; and female gymnasium – 17;
- children of distinguished citizens and merchants: male gymnasium – 55; real school – 12; and female gymnasium – 70.

The number of students representing other social groups was negligible.

The percentage of students in terms of social background varied in the region from year to year. Specifically, in 1887 the number of children of distinguished citizens and merchants attending the male gymnasium was 12, and in 1888 it was now 55. It was the opposite in the real school – 49 students in 1887 and 12 in 1888 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 72). The causes of this volatility have yet to be identified.

What is obvious is that the prevalence of children of members of the higher social classes in the gymnasium was primarily associated with an added focus on the prestige of education and on building a successful career.

Things were even more radical within the region's public education sector when it comes to distribution by faith. Specifically, as at 1888 the number of Orthodox Christians attending urban and rural schools in the region was 5,448, ahead of Tibetan Buddhists (mainly Kalmyks) – 172, Molokans and Sabbatarians – 147, and Armenian Gregorian Christians – 113 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 72).

Table 1. Numbers of Educational Institutions (with a breakdown by type) and Students in Them in Astrakhan Governorate in the Period 1874–1894 (Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1874: 64-138; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1875: 67-135; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1876: 64-134; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1877: 69-138; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1877: 69-138; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1878: 50-130; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1879: 51-133; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1880: 36-131; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1881: 46-136; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1882: 45-143; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1883: 94-143; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1884: 122-137; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1885: 72-163; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1886: 81-130; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1887: 81-130; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1887: 84-147, 186; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1888: 65-114, 210-211; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1889: 210-211; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 210-211; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1890: 76-77; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1892: 288; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1893: 27; Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1894: 71-118).

Year	Educational institutions				Number of students
	Secondary	Lower	Primary	Total	
1874 ¹	4	3	15	22 (38 ²)	2,395 ³
1875 ⁴	4	3	15	22	N/A
1876 ⁵	4	4	18	26	N/A
1877 ⁶	4	4	18	26	N/A
1878 ⁷	5	4	23	32	N/A
1879 ⁸	5	5	24	34	N/A
1880 ⁹	5	6	25	36	N/A
1881 ¹⁰	5	7	25	37	N/A
1882 ¹¹	5	7	26	38	N/A
1883 ¹²	5	9	69	83	N/A
1884 ¹³	5	11	70	86	N/A
1885 ¹⁴	5	12	91	108	N/A

¹ Data likely incomplete

² Data for 1873 from N.F. Kazansky (Kazanskii, 1898c: 4).

³ Data for 1873 from N.F. Kazansky (Kazanskii, 1898c: 4).

⁴ Data likely incomplete

⁵ Data likely incomplete

⁶ Data likely incomplete

⁷ Data likely incomplete

⁸ Data likely incomplete

⁹ Data likely incomplete

¹⁰ Data likely incomplete

¹¹ Data likely incomplete

¹² Data likely incomplete

¹³ Data likely incomplete

¹⁴ Data likely incomplete

1886 ¹	5	14	91	110	N/A
1887 ²	5	15	94	114	N/A
1888	5	15	101 (228 ³)	121 (248 ⁴)	12,809
1889	5	15	101 (231 ⁵)	121 (251 ⁶)	12,798
1890	5	15	106 (240 ⁷)	126 (265 ⁸)	12,856
1891	5	18	116	139	12,685
1892	5	18	116	139	13,619
1893	5	18	137 (290 ⁹)	160 (308 ¹⁰)	14,725
1894 ¹¹	5	18	137 (290 ¹²)	160 (308 ¹³)	N/A

As evidenced in [Table 1](#), the system of education in Astrakhan Governorate developed in the period 1874–1894 in a leap-ahead fashion. There was fairly consistent growth up to 1882, but in 1883 the number of schools increased sharply – more than 2 times (from 38 to 83), with the bulk of the growth accounted for by primary schools in the region. This may be attributed to incomplete data in the sources. At the same time, the number of secondary educational institutions in the region did not change for many years, which may be associated with the government’s counter-reform policy. Three of the region’s five secondary educational institutions – the male gymnasium, the female gymnasium, and the real school – were under the purview of the Ministry of Public Education.

The sources offer more or less complete statistics on education in the region in the period from 1888 to 1893, with precise figures provided with regard to the number of educational institutions, the size of the student body, and the distribution of students by faith and social estate. This, too, may be associated with the counter-reform policy of the government of the Russian Empire.

The region witnessed a substantial increase in the number of educational institutions in the period 1892–1893. The provision of statistical data in the sources for those years was done in a highly skilled manner – so the growth must have been indeed explosive, which may have been associated with the brisk development of industry and commerce in the region at the time.

There was a gradual increase in the number of students, accompanied by an increase in the number of educational institutions. As at 1894, the region had an average of 49 people per school, which is a fairly decent result. By comparison, in the same period the figure for the Caucasus Educational District ranged from 65 (as was the case in the lightly populated regions, like Dagestan and Terek Oblasts; e.g., [Rajović et al., 2022](#), [Cherkasov et al., 2020c](#), and [Natolochnaya et al., 2020](#)) to more than 90 (e.g., Tiflis, Kutais, and Black Sea Governorates; e.g., [Mamadaliyev et al., 2020](#), [Molchanova et al., 2019](#), and [Cherkasov et al., 2020b](#)).

If we compare the state of education in Astrakhan Governorate with that across central Russia (e.g., [Cherkasov et al., 2019](#), [Cherkasov et al., 2020a](#), and [Magsumov, Zulfugarzade, 2020](#)), we can see that, compared with the third quarter of the 19th century, the situation improved significantly by the century’s end. This must have been directly associated with the brisk development of industry (fisheries and shipbuilding) and commerce in the region, which, obviously, required a literate workforce (a comparison could be drawn to the Black Sea regions within the Caucasus Educational District).

¹ Data likely incomplete

² Data likely incomplete

³ Together with private educational institutions

⁴ Together with private educational institutions

⁵ Together with private educational institutions

⁶ Together with private educational institutions

⁷ Together with private educational institutions

⁸ Together with private educational institutions

⁹ Together with private educational institutions

¹⁰ Together with private educational institutions

¹¹ Data likely incomplete

¹² Together with private educational institutions

¹³ Together with private educational institutions

5. Conclusion

The study produced the following conclusions:

1. Over the 20-year period under review (1874–1894), the number of educational institutions in Astrakhan Governorate increased 8 times (from 38 to 308), which may be regarded as significant progress in the development of education in the region.

2. The period witnessed an increase of nearly 6 times, from 2,395 to 14,275, in the number of students in the region – the best result among the regions of the Russian Empire with which Astrakhan Governorate was compared.

3. The period witnessed brisk development of female education in the region, with the number of female students attending a public school increasing from 693 in 1874 to 3,959 in 1894, which, too, may be regarded as quite progressive vis-à-vis the other regions considered. As at 1894, the region had a boy to girl student ratio of 2.7:1. Note that in 1874 the figure was even higher (2.4:1), which was not characteristic of many Russian regions at the time, above all those within the Caucasus Educational District. Within the region's secondary education sector, the boy to girl student ratio was 1.7:1. This can be explained by the region's distinctive economic characteristics, with its primary industrial focus being on fisheries and many women there involved in the processing of caught fish. The success of any region in terms of industry and commerce is normally driven by the education levels of its population, and Astrakhan Governorate had a well-developed economy at the time.

4. Socially, the region's secondary education sector was dominated by children of nobles and functionaries, which must have been associated with an added focus on the prestige of education and on building a successful career. Yet there were times when the share of members of other social estates in the region's student body changed radically and unpredictably.

5. In terms of religious composition, the bulk of the student body was made up of Orthodox Christians. This group outnumbered the rest of the religious groups more than 30 times. This was the case not just in the region's primary education sector but its lower and secondary education sectors as well.

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