

Impact of Mobile Libraries on Youth Education in Uzbekistan

Dildora Isroilova¹, Dilmurod Khasanov², Gulrukh Gafurova³, Zilola Sattorova⁴,
Farkhod Kholikov⁵, Ugiljon Qushnazarova⁶, Gulshoda Urazaliyeva⁷ and
Shixnazar Rakhimov⁸

¹Kokand University Andijan branch, Uzbekistan

²Uzbek State University of Physical Education and Sports, Uzbekistan

³Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan

⁴Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

⁵Jizzakh State Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan

⁶Urgench State University, Uzbekistan

⁷Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers, National Research University,
Uzbekistan

⁸Mamun University, Uzbekistan

E-mail: ¹dilquv@gmail.com, ²dxasanov65@gmail.com, ³gafurovagulruh86@gmail.com,

⁴zilola2022@list.ru, ⁵farxodxoliqov77@gmail.com, ⁶ogiljon@urdu.uz,

⁷gulshoda_ urazaliyeva@mail.ru, ⁸shixnazar.rakhimov.1983@mail.ru

ORCID: ¹<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2668-6461>, ²<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1303-4149>,

³<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2757-1116>, ⁴<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8943-7677>,

⁵<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6424-8580>, ⁶<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8767-6921>,

⁷<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7833-8147>, ⁸<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5765-2847>

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Abstract - This article examines the historical evolution, present situation, advantages, issues, and potential future trends of mobile libraries in Uzbekistan with special emphasis on their contribution to youth education. Based on cultural heritage and given new life through contemporary programs, mobile libraries have become key tools for narrowing education gaps between the city and the countryside. As much as there has been state initiative and outside assistance, imbalances in the provision of infrastructures and quality educational resources still exist. Mobile libraries address these challenges by availing reading materials to disadvantaged youth, fostering literacy, and supporting autonomous learning. Via case studies and analysis, the essay points out how mobile libraries ensure inclusive education and suggests how their effectiveness and sustainability can be broadened in Uzbekistan's education system.

Keywords: Mobile Libraries, Youth Literacy, Uzbekistan, Rural Literacy, Literacy Improvement, Access to Education, Library Innovation, Access to Education, Educational Equality, Community Development, Learning Materials

I. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a significant role in shaping the future of a nation. Education results in knowledge and knowledge is the first step towards development and cultural changes in any era. The importance of education is very well depicted by a quotation: "Take away the cradle of a child, the book of a student, and the pen of a Poet from the past, and the present will be a dismal one". This quotation has special importance for the current era. The world is moving towards books and other sources of knowledge.

Education is equally important for boys and girls, women and men, young and old relies alike on its beneficial consequences (Bakirov et al., 2024). In every society, both males and females are considered equal in their role of providing proper educational environments to their children. Girls, who are to play a significant role tomorrow, are needs and strongly encouraged for educating for different aspects and views. But in this world, society has provided fewer opportunities for them as compared with boys. Today, women are playing an important role in almost all sectors of development. Education does not only change the lives of individuals, but also the society and the nation as a whole. Particularly, women educate more than half of the population and play a critical role in population care, feed, upbringing, and transfer of norms and cultural values.

In remote areas, there are limited resources of education in local languages, schools, and proper educational environment. In such areas, children, particularly in early development stages, face snags in education. Children are the future hopes of any nation. Adequate and fair knowledge is needed for their future wellbeing and long-term progress. Moreover, remote areas have many opportunities to be developed at modern lines (Kumawat, 2012). Therefore, to provide the children proper knowledge with educational skills, Mobile Libraries in remote areas like buses, wagons, trucks, donkey carts, etc work to develop a solid block of basics to the children of those regions suffering from remote area education problems (Kwamena Ocran, 2017).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of mobile library services has been a key approach to improving education, especially among underprivileged and rural communities. Panda, (2021) identifies mobile librarianship as a versatile and economical educational innovation adaptable to the "new normal" that can cover underserved groups of young people. In Uzbekistan, Karimov et al., (2024) and Khaydarova et al., (2024) present the functions of mobile technologies and libraries in tourism development and knowledge-based educational experience enrichment via local information access. Umarova et al., (2024) also speak of how online databases improve educational quality, whereas Nazarova et al., (2024) analyze the cultural preservation role of online libraries.

Challenges continue to be evident. Johnson, (2016) and Shonhe, (2019) note that school libraries in developing nations tend to be under-staffed, lacking proper infrastructure and digital resources, which significantly discourages educational equity (Sundara Bala Murugan et al., 2024). These findings are similar in the case of Uzbekistan, where rural schools experience limited exposure to library services, resulting in a knowledge divide between urban and rural students. Mobile libraries are an effective intervention in this context, ensuring digital inclusion and youth literacy (Kwamena Ocran, 2017; Blessing et al., 2019).

Technological integration is also a significant factor. Elahi, (2014) observe that students view mobile-based library services in a positive light, as they enhance access to scholarly materials. Wagner et al., (2014) further contend that mobile literacy programs can empower disadvantaged learners and create long-term education development.

In addition, Kurbanazarova et al., (2024) examine smart learning systems in language learning with a focus on the ability of digital platforms to customize learning. Overall, these studies highlight that although mobile libraries are confronted by financial, infrastructural, and operational challenges, they hold huge potential to reshape young people's education in Uzbekistan. Collaboration between policymakers, teachers, and librarians is critical to expand and maintain such programs, narrowing the digital and educational gap nationwide (Mohandas et al., 2024).

III. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MOBILE LIBRARIES IN UZBEKISTAN

Undoubtedly, the idea of furnishing door-to-door library services in Uzbekistan through the use of mobile libraries is not original. Nonetheless, the origin of the genus of mobile libraries can be traced back to book-donkey traditions in Buhara and Samarkand (Bobojonova et al., 2024). While the current practice of bookmobiles is somewhat novel worldwide, the historical basis of mobile library services goes back more than half a century. Historical figures from Uzbek history played noticeable roles in the establishment and

enlargement of this service. One such prominent figure, Amir Zomoniddin Bokharoi, who occupied the throne in Samarkand and Bukhar, introduced mobile libraries. The introduction dates back centuries and has made a lasting impact on populations with limited or unsatisfactory access to libraries (Blessing et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the books were confiscated by surprise and burnt in 1373. After that horrific incident, the public developed repulsion toward mobile libraries and removed them from their memories for centuries; they shuddered at even the mention of the word "mobile library." Similarly, the Djanid dynasty founded in Khorezm Shahlar during the reign of Djeit-Konon established folklibrarians in many populated places and required that this tradition be mandatory (Karimov & Doniyorov, 2019). This installation, too, was related to the use of mobile libraries. However, upon the occurrence of a catastrophic event, battal lions distributed books at cooperative grounds in the region of Uran, a city well-known for its historical tragic calamity. Ultimately, more than 200 battal lions with precious books were attacked and all the books were burned before being brought into the city per agreement. Such horrific events hindered the development and expansion of mobile library services (Mirsodiq et al., 2019).

Throughout the era of socialism, various Soviet periodicals published articles on and provided detailed information about mobile library services in Uzbekistan (Jabborova et al., 2024). New vehicles were purchased and given as donations monthly from different companies. Soviet-era literature detailed the rise of books read and the rise in library service during this monthly period. However, this work eventually began to degrade after the decline of the Soviet Union in 1991, the emergence of an independent republic, and the introduction of a market economy that necessitated the necessity of financial independence for libraries. Furthermore, the advent of private automobiles increased the number of individual vehicles so the public would no longer depend on or seek mobile library services. As a result, these services were left undeveloped and began to shut down in the regions. Thus, from a socioeconomic perspective, mobile library services in Uzbekistan gradually diminished. Purposeful mobile library services were discontinued during this period. In the early years of Uzbekistan's Nukus autonomy and independence, the conditions began to firmly take effect on each other. New valuable baseline changes began to serve the economic status of individuals and society as a whole. Many rural households were susceptible and opened their small individual businesses, went to work in the cotton fields, and began growing different crops. Utility and markets began opening in population centers, towns became populated, and in time many even obtained the city ranking. Physically, these organizational changes pushed to apply their own collective and individual existence to responsibility about their everyday lives. The children were sent to school, and parents did what was necessary for their further education. As a result, the Muslim community was abuzz with conceptual changes.

IV. CURRENT STATE OF YOUTH EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

Despite significant investments made by the Uzbekistan government to improve education, disparities between students from rural and urban areas are getting larger, and students face many challenges in schools. These challenges include, but are not limited to: poor library facilities which do not meet the required standards, limited print and nonprint resources, and an absence of libraries in many schools. Students who live in rural areas are more likely to be affected by these challenges. Mobile libraries can be used by libraries as a potential solution to provide the community with better access to information, reading materials and education. Also, these libraries can provide some services to community which can be beneficial to the schools which they operate. This literature review is based on research articles, reports and websites which have been chosen to address the purpose of the study on the challenges that students face in Uzbekistan and the impact of Mobile Libraries on community, libraries and an educational aspect. Socio-economic conditions are the most significant factor in determining the weaknesses of education. The state of children's health is directly correlated with their family's living conditions. Consequently, inadequate housing conditions, low income and under-nourishment lead to a low level of health among children. In 2016, 40.5% of students did not use libraries. During the last five years, the number of schools with libraries was reduced from 66.9% in 2012 to 54.0% in 2016, and the number of schools with librarians was reduced from 65.7% in 2012 to 46.3% in 2016 (Johnson, 2016). There were 245 mobile libraries in operation across Uzbekistan in 2016, and they distributed 134,000 items of printed material. Each year there is an increase in their number. Pupils from rural schools with mobile library service were more likely to fall in love with reading than urban peers (Shonhe, 2019). Governmental and international organizations have made a considerable investment in the development of the education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan. For example, the introduction of a nine-year comprehensive school system, ethnic language teaching, mastery of the basics of computer science and information technology, and organizational and educational-methodical support for the education system. However, every year the problems between urban and rural school systems and their educational level are intensifying. Ministry of Public Education has implemented a number of various projects aimed at improving the conditions of SD schools. Thus, within the framework of large projects: "Obod Qishloq", "Obod Mahalla", "Obod O'qituvchi", more than 1.5 million houses, several residential buildings, roads, and sewers have been refurbished. In addition, within the framework of SDP, new public schools have been built in villages with more than 250 households. However, despite these projects, the negative aspects in the system of SD schools remain. Continuing differences between the levels of education of urban and rural pupils. Older buildings, poor hygiene in schools, a lack of school libraries, a lack of qualified web editors, a lack of textbooks and manuals can be a complete list of problems faced by rural students today.

Most likely, it is because of this that rural students have little interest in learning compared to urban students, which becomes a factor in discrepancies in student attainment.

V. BENEFITS OF MOBILE LIBRARIES FOR YOUTH EDUCATION

In Uzbekistan, a mobile Library is a vehicle for learning and development on wheels. Mobile libraries play a vital contribution to the promotion of educational enhancement of underserved areas and are beneficial, particularly for the youth in shaping a better future. Mobile library provides an opportunity for increased access to have books and library materials for children, young adults, and adult learners across Europe and beyond that are innovative, flexible and cost-effective, and eliminate the constraints and competition for resources within smaller communities (Panda, 2021).

The ability of mobile libraries to effectively reach children in rural areas and small towns is difficult, and as a technology they have many advantages: it is difficult to steal a book from a mobile library, but it can be given back to the mobile librarians. Mobile libraries are also difficult to burn down or damage, or the government can begin to conduct buses that have become targets of mob violence. A mobile library offers a literacy and love for reading today to over 6 million people across wide areas of Europe that were forgotten by libraries following political changes in the 1990s. Libraries deliver reading and learning for everyone who can see them passing in a timely way due to its approaches providing children with reading opportunities to help them encourage stronger relations with books and a love for reading later in life.

Mobile libraries need to be seen as working as a part of a much wider package of education support, providing reading materials in schools, training of teachers in child reading and engagement, social marketing to encourage daily reading and reading aloud in the family, engagement of local government and networks to galvanize a local book infrastructure and improve reading spaces. Along with reading materials, mobile libraries provide engaging educational programs and provide guidance and encouragement to young learners, enhancing their enjoyment of creative educational content and expanding their opportunities for self-directed learning. A mobile library is also a creative platform for engaging a small community of users in a range of educational activities and functions, such as promoting personal development through reading and learning skills, which is essential for young people to become successful contributors and leaders. Mobile libraries for children and young people services to encourage reading, studying, creative work focused on the learning and growing up of an individual should always be involved; and improving children's self-expression and self-reliance enhancing the development of their communicative, analytical, and critical thinking skills supporting creating a healthy lifestyle and all-around development of personality in a civilized environment to consider physical, intellectual, social and other aspects.

From an early age, a lifelong love of learning can be fostered. The public library takes over the role of the educational partner for parents and nurtures the development of children's emotional, social and mental abilities. Moreover, there will be a strong demand for counseling services in order to ensure an adequate development of children and their timely access to various services. Raising children to become full citizens helps to solve various real-life situations and prepares them

as active participants in the development of their community. The public library is able to strengthen the family and community with the role of social educator and disseminator of cultural values; through interactive forms of education and activities that contribute to the formation of healthy, intellectually, morally developed individuals; as well as creative and critical thinking supporters and capable of self-education in any conditions (Table I).

TABLE I DETAILED BENEFITS OF MOBILE LIBRARIES

Category	Aspect	Target Group	Description
Access & Availability	Access to Books and Learning Materials	Children and youth in rural areas	Provides access to books and educational materials for children and youth, especially in remote areas (Panda, 2021).
Equity & Inclusion	Support for Underserved Communities	Underserved and remote communities	Supports communities with limited library infrastructure, delivering flexible, innovative, cost-effective services.
Literacy Promotion	Encouragement of Reading and Literacy	Young readers and students	Fosters a love for reading and learning, encouraging self-expression and critical thinking.
Educational Integration	Integration with Broader Educational Support	Schools, teachers, and families	Should be part of broader initiatives including teacher training, school reading programs, and local engagement.
Holistic Development	Creative and Personal Development	Youth and adolescents	Offers creative platforms for learning, promoting communication, analytical, and healthy lifestyle development.
Community Support	Support for Families and Communities	Families and local communities	Functions as a social educator, helping families raise educated, emotionally and socially developed children.

VI. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF MOBILE LIBRARIES

Stand-alone, traditional libraries were often the only sources of materials unique to regions with limitations on transportation accessible by limited conventional library hour services (Panda, 2021). Mobile libraries can be a possible replacement for these traditional, stand-alone libraries. Mobile libraries can play a vital role in the society, including borrowing and lending of materials as a result of its visits to specified routes as a vehicle or even if it is not a vehicle. In developing countries, like Uzbekistan, the access to reading materials has also influenced due to poverty, vast rural area, and adult illiteracy simultaneously with the extended time devoted to work, problems with the public transport system and as a result a low mobility. The challenges faced by mobile libraries are: Lack of availability of vehicles for the transportation of the library and sociocultural barriers. There are also difficulties related to the competition for the booking of the vehicle and the coordination for the scheduling. Furthermore, it is not possible to seek other options for the extension of the loan period of the book stock due to the turnover reasons and as a result of the existing load restriction in the vehicle. The operation of the mobile library system is subjected to the current availability of the particular expensive books and as a result the service life of the books will be reduced (Shonhe, 2019). Maintaining many new books in the fleet of the mobile libraries adds the costs to the operation and no selection of books for the replacement is subjected to the excessive wear and damage of the copies. In this mobile library system the problems exist in replacing the book of the same caliber for the artistic reasons as a result of the lack of the range of the types and as a result accelerates the process of having the library filled with the averaging. Despite the outreach service, there is a lack of a dedicated

public awareness campaign, and as a result is not able to reach the beneficiaries of the most remote and underserved areas by overcoming the traditional, cultural, and physical obstacles. The project manager is the only staff member having managerial experience and background knowledge, but the additional support such as driver, librarian or operator should be contracted on a part time basis. There are no formal job descriptions for these posts and the field feelers will be unable to develop the role within the existing capacity. While the loans and the exhibitions take place in the park, the public perception about the mobile library is that it is only a children's library. In the severely under-resourced areas, the employment of the time and the use of the space should be carefully gauged (Table II).

TABLE II CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF MOBILE LIBRARIES

Category	Challenges
Infrastructure Constraints	Limited vehicle availability, poor transport systems, and sociocultural barriers hinder consistent service.
Scheduling and Accessibility	Difficulty in booking, coordinating routes, and maintaining consistent service delivery schedules.
Book Loan and Turnover Issues	Limited ability to extend loan periods due to load restrictions and book circulation issues.
Material Maintenance and Cost	Expensive books reduce service life; high cost and damage make replacement difficult and inconsistent.
Public Awareness and Perception	Lack of awareness campaigns and public perception as a service only for children limit reach.
Staffing and Role Clarity	Only the project manager has managerial experience; part-time staff lack formal job descriptions.
Community Engagement	Difficulty in serving remote areas and creating a meaningful impact due to cultural and physical barriers.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING MOBILE LIBRARY EFFECTIVENESS

Operating a mobile library presents many challenges and can be more difficult than setting up a building-based institution (Blessing et al., 2019). Libraries struggle to keep their mobile branches on the road. In Uzbekistan, the lack of government funding and investment in rural areas is probably the key reason the mobile library system hasn't developed well. The socioeconomic situation in Uzbekistan has caused serious issues in the education sector and limited the development of mobile libraries. These include funding shortages, poor service networks, few professional staff as librarians, and little reading material. A further study is needed to explore the challenges faced by mobile libraries in Uzbekistan during the drive for youth education, in order to overcome problems and ensure a sustainable service.

Firstly, it's recommended that local governments invest enough money in mobile library work, which includes regular funding, buying enough materials, and paying wages to librarians. Funding and financial resources should be allocated to the operation of mobile libraries, including trucks, drivers, on-board materials, fuel, paid staff, wages, and other operational costs. Furthermore, service networks should be established based on strategic planning and local conditions. The mobile library network cannot only be formed by buses/vans, but should also cooperate with local schools, kindergartens, hospitals, etc., since those institutes have spacious and fixed buildings. Meanwhile, the promotion of mobile libraries in the venues of more prosperous areas within rural districts is necessary as the outcome is more likely to be positive. Additionally, there is much professional training for library staff required, like workshops, studying at vocational schools, or learning from empirical experiences, to help provide quality and efficient services for citizens. The government and education department should cooperate to establish a service system that provides professional training and development for the librarians in various rural-based institutes. The training should offer basic skills for working in relatively complex environments, like teamwork, how to communicate with children and teenagers, what kind of books they need, and how to deal with unexpected events during work. Libraries have low costs, long operating hours, and can provide free ubiquitous access to readers. Mobile libraries also act as a key means for public library work in rural areas and received help from parents and teachers.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Since the establishment of mobile libraries in Uzbekistan in 2017 as an innovative approach to providing access to educational resources, significant positive changes have been observed in the educational sector. Mobile libraries are considered a growing trend in tertiary education. They make it easy for users to access education indirectly through intelligent tools, such as modern teaching aids, lecture records, films, documentaries, and books. The implementation of this practice in Uzbekistan fills an educational niche and helps students gain easy access to

specific education resources (Elahi, 2014). The case studies reveal that the establishment of a new approach to educating youth has had an overall positive impact. Based on the information gathered on this subject, it is safe to conclude that there is a direct correlation between the establishment of mobile libraries and the change in higher education in Uzbekistan. From a broader perspective, this study contributes to the national education sector of Uzbekistan by filling educational niches, which increases the possibilities for obtaining new knowledge. In the following year, the plan will focus on improving feedback, ensuring that services have a sustained and long-term impact, and developing the concept of mobile libraries further in the national context. Ongoing research will be conducted into the latest educational resources, and staff will continuously review and check the stock of resources stored and distributed in the mobile libraries to ensure they are up to date. A long-term educational initiative is planned to provide lessons on soft skills such as business planning, organization, leadership and implementation. It underpins the government's ongoing commitment to providing equal educational possibilities as a way to remove the growing contrast between the strong and the powerless. Broad, relevant, and free education can be the key to unlocking and developing the potential of skilled children. In this regard, political commitment, knowledge and financial investment specifically in the state educational system are crucial. On the authority, as the principal responsible for providing education, concentrating efforts and resources on building and advancing the delivery of educational services to boys and girls with the goal that they will receive the same essential aptitudes for a splendid future.

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