

History of greening and beautification of roads in the Bukhara region in the 50s-80s of the 20th century

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Abstract: In this article analyzes the issue of greening around the roads in the 1950s-80s of the 20th century in the Bukhara region, which is considered to be the driest and waterless region of Uzbekistan, close to desert climate, along with the planting of various plants in order to prevent the erosion of sand, landslides, dug ditches and canals. Also, in the article, issues related to the care of these seedlings are comparatively studied and analyzed based on periodical press and archival materials. Keywords: cocoons, transportation, haloxylon, railways, canal, periodical press, athel pine, irrigation

1 Introduction

The 50s-80s of the 20th century were the years of political and ideological rise of the former USSR. In particular, during this period, a number of works were carried out in Bukhara region in terms of road construction, their exploitation and greening of the surroundings. Although the communist ideology was dominant and the national economy had developed in a socialist direction, it is necessary to recognize that certain achievements had been made in the field of road construction during this historical period. It was during this period that significant changes were made in the modernization of major highways and roads of local importance in the Bukhara region. In particular, the roads of Bukhara region are gaining significant economic importance even today. And the works of modernizing them in accordance with the requirements of the time are also being continued.

2 Materials and Methods

In the 50s-80s of the 20th century, the materials of the official press organ of the Uzbek SSR, the newspaper “Kyzil Uzbekistan”, the official press organ of the Bukhara region’s administrative offices, “Bukhara Hakitati” and the National Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan were used to cover the content of this article. It should be noted that taking into account the strong censorship in the periodical press bodies, they tried to be as critical as possible to this information. Also, methods such as comparative analysis of the selected topic

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from a methodological point of view, principles of chronological consistency, criticality, objectivity, historicity, systematic approach were used.

3 Results and Discussion

During the former USSR, the territory of Uzbekistan had industrial and agricultural industries built on the basis of selling industrial products developed in the central regions and transporting raw materials grown in local regions. Although the Bukhara region within Uzbekistan specializes in growing cotton, cocoons, blackberries, and various fruits, the construction of roads was of particular importance in their transportation and increasing dependence on the economy of the former USSR. Building modern roads and ensuring their long-term efficient operation became one of the main tasks in the 50s of the 20th century. Since then, artesian wells had been dug in order to build roads and prevent landslides in parts of them that pass through dry, sandy desert areas. Also, the construction of plants such as haloxylon, cotton, which prevent landslides, and various drought-resistant tree seedlings began to be reflected in the assignments given by the higher authorities of the Republic. In one of the 1951 issues of the “Kyzil Uzbekiston” newspaper, in the article titled, “The advanced collective of railway workers!” it is mentioned that artesian wells were dug in the waterless areas, and the import of water from abroad was reduced [1-12]. Since the main part of railways passing through Bukhara is a waterless area, it is certain that such works were carried out on a large scale in Bukhara.

Undoubtedly, railways are the lifeblood of any country’s economy. Therefore, planting trees and beautifying the area around the railways has always been an urgent issue. In Uzbekistan, including in Bukhara, greening of railways around the railways intensified after the Second World War. In particular, in the 98th issue of “Kyzil Uzbekistan” newspaper published, April 26, 1951; An article entitled “New tree plantations along the railway tracks along a length of one and a half thousand kilometers” was mentioned that the plantations were built to protect against floods, sand dunes and other natural disasters that damage railways. It lists the names of the railways on which the plantations were built, and the Ashkhabot railway is listed among them [9]. Considering that at that time the Ashkhabad railway started from the city of Krasnovodsk on the shore of the Caspian Sea and reached the city of Samarkand, it is understood that a large part of it corresponds to the contribution of the Bukhara region.

Planting of tree saplings was done not only along the railway tracks. Greening works were also carried out on the main and local roads of Bukhara region. For example, one of the documents preserved in the regional archives (dated May 28, 1952) states that 1,696,500 trees were planted along regional roads in the spring and that Komsomol pioneer organizations should be involved in tree maintenance [15.11]. This was considered a disguised form of attracting young children to forced labor under the leadership of associations such as Komsomol and Pioneer during the summer holidays.

As mentioned in one of the above information, the problem of drinking water along the roads was solved as much as possible. When drinking water was found in the area of the road to be built, the direction of the road construction was changed. For example, on August 31, 1957, the Council of Workers’ Deputies of the Bukhara region issued a decision “On partial changes in the route of the Bukhara-Kogon highway”. In order to search for the flow of clean drinking water, it is envisaged that 10 wells (wells) will be dug by the Kyziltepa drilling group, that wells 1, 2, and the third coincide with the main road planned to connect Bukhara-Kogon, and 2, 3, 4, and 5 wells will provide clean drinking water to the city of Bukhara, and highway 2 and 3 decided to bypass the wells from the south-west side.

Bukharagorvodoprovod took over additional work funds. The head of the Oblavtodorotdel, Flyuk, said that until September 10, 1957, he should redesign the Bukhara-Kogon highway [16. 63]. Although this decision served to spend more funds for the construction of a certain part of the road than planned, in practice it prevented future large expenses and gained great importance in greening and prosperity of the roadsides.

In the 50s of the last century, the main attention was paid to the construction of roads and bridges in the Bukhara region and the improvement of their surroundings. And it was intended to transport cotton and other agricultural products. The Zarafshan tract is the largest highway of the Bukhara oasis, and it was of national significance. The construction of the collector bridge of this road passing by the town of Vobkent made it possible to deliver raw materials to the Kogon railway station and distribute industrial goods to the regions of the region. The delay in the construction of the bridge was sharply criticized in one of the issues of the newspaper “Bukhara Hakitati” in 1952, and it was noted that it made it difficult to transport cotton, grain and other goods from the districts [6].

After this criticism, the construction of the bridge was completed quickly, trees were planted near the bridge, teahouses were established, and opinions were also expressed that it became a peaceful corner. This situation applies to highways and bridges, and we can learn from dozens of articles and reports in the press of that time that the condition of roads of local importance was even worse. As an example, the condition of the road from the Chandir cotton processing point in the Shafirkon district to the Joynav village council in the 1950s can be cited.

According to one of the issues of “Bukhara hakikati”, although the road has been broken for a long time, the brought gravel was not sprinkled enough (at that time, local roads were sprinkled with gravel every year during the cotton season to prevent mud in winter), as a result of the overflow of water in the ditch, many parts of the road were damaged, and traffic became difficult. The fact that mulberry trees and other trees were not planted enough around the ditch that passed by the road, and that the roadside was not landscaped and improved was cited as one of the reasons for this situation.

As a result, you can read comments related to the fact that cars and carts pass through the cotton fields of the collective farms named “Khrushchev”, “Bulganin” and look for cotton seedlings [2]. Such a situation could be found on most of the roads of local importance in Bukhara region.

It should be noted that not all the roads of Bukhara region were in this condition in the 50s. Even in remote districts, including the Olot district, there is a lot of information about the improvement of roads and greening around them. In the data of 1957, it was repeatedly covered in the periodical press that the construction of new roads and the improvement of their surroundings continued intensively in the Olot district alone. In particular, 200,000 soums were spent for the improvement of the railroad and the road leading to it in the district. This was done in the first quarter of 1957, and since it is the spring season of the year, the theme of the construction of various ornamental and fruit trees along the roads did not escape the attention of journalist I. Jorayev [5].

In the 60s of the 20th century, little attention was paid to greening and improvement of the roads in the whole of Uzbekistan, especially in the Bukhara region. In the discussions at the ministerial level, there were many opinions about the fact that nothing was done about the improvement of the roads, the lack of pavilions, not constructing shade trees at bus stops, and the fact that little attention was paid to greening the roadsides [17. 31].

However, it should be noted that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, not only greening of roadsides, but also adapting roads to the needs of the times was considered one of the major problems. Criticisms in the periodical press and in the higher authorities of the road construction agencies in the Republic have borne fruit. According to the archive data of 1960,

4 million 90 thousand decorative and fruit trees were planted along the highways of the entire territory of Uzbekistan [18. 4-5]. However, neither the archival documents nor the periodical press contain any specific information about what was done with regard to the germination of these planted seedlings. Due to administrative orders, no one paid attention to the maintenance of roadside trees. No one was interested in whether the plantations being built corresponded to the land reclamation condition. In addition, due to the local climate, the need for frequent watering of planted crops was not taken into account. Because of this, most of the trees planted in the spring on the roadsides have dried up in the summer heat.

In the second half of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, special attention was paid to roadside greening not only in the Bukhara region, but in the whole of Uzbekistan. In the periodical press and archival documents, you can find a lot of information confirming these opinions. Even in the late 1960s, tourists and visitors coming to Uzbekistan to see the architectural monuments of historical cities such as Bukhara and Samarkand were required to first come to the capital city of Tashkent and from there to the above-mentioned cities by rail and road. The distance from Tashkent to Bukhara was required to be covered first through the “Greater Uzbekistan tract” and then through the “Zarafshan tract”.

In the 1960s, the former USSR’s relations with developing countries in Asia and Africa increased, since most of these countries were Muslim countries, their eagerness to see Bukhara and Samarkand caused the beautification and greening of the above-mentioned highways to be put on the agenda. This issue was considered at the level of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the Council of Ministers of the Republic, and the decision “On measures to further improve road management in the Uzbek SSR” was issued. According to this decision, it was taken into account that the production forces of Tashkent, Syrdarya, Samarkand and Bukhara regions are rapidly developing, as well as the fact that foreign tourists often come to see historical monuments in Samarkand and Bukhara, And the Ministry of Road Transport and Stone Roads of the Republic has been tasked with the development and implementation of measures for the repair of the Tashkent-Mirzachol-Samarkand-Bukhara highway and greening of its surroundings in the coming years [13].

It can be concluded that as a result of the implementation of this decision, the surroundings of the roads of Bukhara region were beautified, green areas were planted, ornamental and fruit trees were planted. Also, the sprouting of the planted seedlings was controlled in a certain sense. However, in the 1970s, when there was a shortage of water, there was not enough work on the greening of roadsides, not only in Bukhara, but also in all regions of Uzbekistan. According to archival documents, in 1970 Bukhara (Zarafshan) and Surkhandarya (Greater Uzbekistan) tracts had important national economic importance, but greening of roadsides was not well organized. The growth of seedlings built in 1969 on the roadsides of national and republican importance was 60%, in Chirchik region it was 10%, in Kashkadarya 15% and in Chinoz it was 23% [19.120]. The growth rate of seedlings planted in the spring has been proved in the above facts.

In the 70s of the 20th century, the infrastructure of highways was improved, and the beautification of their surroundings was partially completed. Now it is the turn of the roads of local importance, and special attention has been paid to the greening of internal roads in various districts of the region. As an example, it is appropriate to cite one of the articles published in the periodical press in 1977 about road builders in Romitan district, one of the districts bordering the desert of Bukhara region. The article states, “At the same time, road builders are actively participating in installing electrical poles in the central rampart of the Romitan state farm, laying sidewalks in the district centers, and planting trees around the roads”. Also at the it can be seen that the sentences are mentioned in the end of the article: “15 km from the center of Romitan district, there is a small settlement on the northern

collector of the Amu-Bukhara car canal, where road builders live. There are beautiful houses, kindergartens, and even a pioneer camp here, which was once a field where not even a single apple grew. Builders rest in this settlement, they set plans to build new roads” [11].



Fig. 1. The surroundings of the roads of Bukhara region were beautified, green areas were planted, ornamental and fruit trees were planted.

So, it can be seen that the road builders were not only involved in building the road and greening its surroundings, but also in developing new lands. They took a certain part of the land from the sand dunes and appropriated it by building a small settlement for themselves and improving it. In the 1970s, the exploitation of desert lands in the Bukhara region and adjacent to it intensified, and irrigation of lands in the desert areas required a lot of water. Reservoirs were built in order to provide regular water supply. The construction of roads to reach these developed lands and the work of greening around them was an important task of state importance.

In the late 1970s, 40 km of Amu-Bukhara machine canal and 50 km of new roads were built in Kyzylkum's cattle pastures and 50 km of new roads were planted around them. Especially in the Amu-Bukhara canal, in order to prevent the large water capacity and erosion of the banks, sertomir plants and various ornamental trees were built around the canal. On the sides of the road leading to the Kyzylkum pastures, haloxydon and athel pine plants were planted to prevent landslide and the burying of the roads [3]. Greening around the roads through desert areas has caused great difficulties and the possibility of their overgrowth has decreased even more.

In the early 1980s, work was carried out aimed at expanding Todakol, another large reservoir of Bukhara region, and increasing its capacity to irrigate local lands. In fact, Todakol was formed in 1952 when the excess water of the Zarafshan River accumulated here, and then the works of filling it with the Amu-Bukhara canal began in 1968. At the same time, work on greening the banks of the canal with the construction of various bushes and trees began. However, the scope of the works resumed in the 1980s was much larger than the previous ones. During this period, Todakol-Bukhara, Kogon-Losha roads were built and their surroundings were greened. At that time, the pursuit of the plan also intensified, and it can be seen that a group of miscreants are working ahead of time by completing their monthly plans by 108-110%, which was reflected in the periodical press materials [1]. Greening of roads passing through reservoirs was done quite easily.

One of the characteristic features of the 70s and 80s of the 20th century is the pursuit of the plan and the taking of additional obligations by organizations that have completed the set plan. For example, in 1975, the Bukhara Regional Road Construction Department completed the annual plan ahead of schedule, but in the January 22, 1976 issue of the “Bukhara hakikati”

newspaper, in December 1975, the road users were told that in December 1975, 30 km of highways gave opinions related to the fact that they had undertaken and succeeded in greening [7]. The pursuit of the socialist initiative and the implementation of the socialist plan has intensified. As a result of this, most of the works done in the 80s had defects.

The events called “Red Saturday” carried out under the influence of the former socialist ideology were also very important in greening roads, streets and squares. “Red Saturdays” were usually organized on weekends and holidays, and workers took part in them on a voluntary-compulsory basis. Great attention is paid to beautification works on Saturdays. On April 15, 1977, on the occasion of Cosmonautics Day (April 12 was celebrated as Cosmonautics Day in the USSR), on the “Red Saturday”, only the drivers of Kogon district delivered 750 tons of national goods to the destination.

In addition, the yard of the enterprise, which collected 6 tons of iron and steel, was beautified, and fruit and decorative tree seedlings and flowers were planted [10]. In addition, in the Karakol district on April 17, 1982, the activities of the participants of the “Red Saturday” in the same context were praised in the press, “Red Saturday” will become a special labor holiday of transporters. 1200 decorative and 500 fruit tree seedlings were planted by the transporters. The territory of the bus station and its surroundings will be cleaned in an exemplary manner [14]”. Also, the transporters and road builders of Bukhara organized “Red Saturday” on April 14, 1982, and planted more than 14,000 trees of different types of seedlings and flower seedlings around the roadsides and enterprises [4].

The reconstruction of the Amu-Bukhara machine canal and the construction of the Sverdlov (now Jondor) machine canal were built in the 80s of the last century and were considered the last large irrigation facilities created during the former USSR. “Goskomvodstroy” motor transport enterprise in Bukhara took part in its construction, and it was found in the periodical press information of 1983 that it exceeded the set 6-month plan tasks in terms of all technical and economic indicators. It was also mentioned that they honorably fulfill the tasks they have set for themselves in terms of greening their surroundings [8]. Neither in archival documents nor in periodicals have we yet come across larger construction projects after these irrigation facilities.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that in the 50s of the 20th century, attention was paid to road construction and greening of roadsides in the Bukhara region, mainly highways and railways. In the 1960s, greening works were carried out on national and regional importance, and in the 1970s and 1980s on local roads. However, in the execution of these works, efforts were made to pursue the socialist plan, to achieve the set goal through various competitions, commitments and initiatives. In any case, by the 1980s, the roads of the Bukhara region had turned into somewhat modern roads surrounded by greenery.

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