

The Role Of The Intelligentsia In Preserving National Self-Identity

Amirov Azamat Odil og'li

Deputy Director of the Coordination and Methodological Center for Contemporary History of Uzbekistan under the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Uzbekistan

Received: 22 October 2025; **Accepted:** 12 November 2025; **Published:** 18 December 2025

Abstract: The article examines the role of the intelligentsia as a key social stratum that ensures the preservation and development of national self-identity amid intensifying processes of globalization, cultural mobility, and the transformation of public consciousness. It analyzes the historical, cultural, and socio-philosophical prerequisites for the formation of the intelligentsia, its mission in transmitting values, maintaining cultural continuity, and shaping national discourse. It is emphasized that the intelligentsia remains an important factor in consolidating society, fostering critical thinking, and preventing the erosion of spiritual guidelines, acting as a mediator between tradition and modernity.

Keywords: Intelligentsia, national discourse, national self-identity, cultural heritage, globalization, social mission, modernization.

Introduction: In the modern context of rapid globalization, increasing cultural exchange, digitalization, and the transformation of public consciousness, the issue of preserving national self-identity acquires particular significance. National identity functions primarily as an element of cultural memory and as a crucial factor in social stability, spiritual continuity, and societal resilience. In this regard, special attention is given to the intelligentsia—a social stratum traditionally responsible for producing, preserving, and transmitting cultural and spiritual values.

It is no secret that historically the intelligentsia has served as a connecting link between generations, shaping the intellectual foundations of national culture, supporting its development, and contributing to the formation of public self-awareness. As the head of our state noted: «In our society, preschool educators, school teachers, university professors and lecturers, the scientific and creative intelligentsia are the four solid pillars of the Third Renaissance to which we aspire». The intelligentsia serves as a key intermediary between a society's historical heritage and the challenges of modernity, determining the direction of cultural development and ensuring the continuity of national tradition. It is important to note, with

reference to history, that during periods of external pressure it is the intellectual elite that assumes the role of guardian and transmitter of the cultural code. This code includes a set of ideas, values, behavioral norms, linguistic and symbolic systems that ensure the integrity of the national community and its ability to preserve its distinctiveness. The intelligentsia, being the most educated and socially active part of society, undertakes the task of reflecting on these elements, renewing them, and adapting them to new conditions.

One of the key functions of the intelligentsia is the formation of national discourse—that is, the system of meanings and interpretations through which society understands its own history, cultural values, and political interests. National discourse creates the framework within which people perceive themselves as a unified cultural and historical collective. In turn, the intelligentsia, using the possibilities of print media, literature, theatre, and education, shapes ideas about national identity, identifies relevant issues, and outlines ways to address them. Thanks to these efforts, new concepts of community are created, allowing the nation to endure amid external challenges and internal transformations.

Another crucial field of activity is the codification of language and writing, without which the sustainable

existence of national culture is impossible. Language is not only a means of communication but also the foundation of collective consciousness. The intelligentsia engages in the standardization of grammar, the creation of dictionaries, the development of textbooks, the expansion of literary norms, and the adaptation of the language to contemporary realities. This process is especially important in multilingual environments or under conditions of colonial pressure, when local languages may face marginalization. Through linguistic codification, intellectuals ensure the development of national literature, education, and science, which directly influences the preservation of cultural identity. Equally significant is the role of creating a modern educational system. As N.Djurayeva notes in her article: "The Jadids became the main initiators of reforms in the field of education. The traditional madrasa system, which had existed in Central Asia for several centuries, was largely oriented toward religious instruction and did not meet the modern requirements of scientific progress. The Jadids recognized the need to establish educational institutions that would combine elements of traditional Muslim education with new disciplines and teaching methods that corresponded to the spirit of the time». In traditional societies, education was often limited to religious institutions and focused primarily on the study of spiritual texts. The intelligentsia introduces new forms of instruction that include secular sciences, critical thinking, history, geography, natural sciences, and foreign languages. The creation of a new type of school not only modernizes the system of knowledge but also expands the social base of carriers of national identity. Through the educational system, a generation is formed that is capable of preserving its cultural roots while simultaneously adapting to the challenges of the modern world.

A special role is played by cultural mediation between tradition and modernity. The intelligentsia strives to preserve the fundamental values and semantic structures of society while recognizing the necessity of adapting them to contemporary conditions. Intellectuals critically interpret tradition, distinguishing its stable and valuable elements from those that hinder development. They serve as conductors of new ideas—enlightenment, progress, social modernization—yet they do so by relying on local cultural norms and historical experience. Thus, they ensure the integration of society into global processes without allowing the loss of its cultural uniqueness.

All the functions mentioned above were manifested most vividly in the activities of the Jadids, who proved to be a force capable of simultaneously preserving the

spiritual heritage of the Muslim societies of the region and opening them to modern knowledge. They reformed the educational system, created new schools, developed textbooks on secular subjects, standardized Uzbek, Tatar, and other Turkic literary languages, and actively used the press to disseminate educational ideas. Their theatrical productions, journalistic writings, scholarly and educational works, and pedagogical practices became tools for shaping a modern cultural community capable of perceiving itself as a nation.

It should be emphasized today that modern global processes—informational openness, the hybridization of cultural practices, and the growth of digital communications—create both opportunities and risks for the preservation of national identity. Under these conditions, the intellectual and spiritual mission of the intelligentsia acquires new meaning, requiring thorough theoretical reflection.

The question of the role of the intelligentsia has repeatedly attracted the attention of researchers in philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, and political science. Classical works of thinkers, in particular M.Bakhtin's "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics" viewed the intelligentsia as the bearer of spiritual values and an agent of societal transformation. In the post-Soviet period, the emphasis shifted toward analyzing the social functions of the intelligentsia, its influence on national self-awareness, and its role in cultural modernization.

Central Asian scholars have also been actively studying the genesis of this issue. The article "The Formation of Uzbek Identity in the Post-Jadidism Period" by E.E.Karimov and Sh.O.Madaeva analyzes how the Jadid intelligentsia and subsequent generations i.e., the post-Jadids shaped the national self-awareness of Uzbekistan. In the work «The Scientific Activity of the Jadids and Their Representatives», A.Akbarov examines the contribution of the Jadids to the development of science and education, emphasizing their role as an intellectual stratum that promoted ideas of modernization. Nevertheless, despite the considerable number of existing studies, a comprehensive analysis of the role of the intelligentsia specifically in the context of preserving national self-identity amid contemporary global challenges remains insufficiently developed, which further enhances the scholarly and practical significance of the present research.

In the modern era, the intelligentsia continues to fulfill its key function related to the formation and transmission of spiritual and cultural meanings.

Through scientific, educational, literary, and artistic activities, it ensures the continuity of cultural heritage and forms a stable foundation for national identity. It is no secret that globalization processes increase the risk of eroding cultural reference points. However, the intelligentsia acts as a stabilizing factor, shaping intellectual mechanisms that enable society to adapt to new conditions without losing its national foundations. It is the intelligentsia that helps develop a critical approach to external borrowings and prevents the uncritical adoption of alien cultural practices.

Moreover, in the digital age, the forms of cultural communication are undergoing significant change, and the intelligentsia plays the role of a mediator that bridges traditional values with contemporary cultural formats, shapes new models of national discourse, and ensures the integration of national culture into the global cultural space.

Digitalization opens new channels for the intelligentsia to influence public consciousness—through educational platforms, social networks, and new media. At the same time, its responsibility increases in countering information manipulation, the spread of unreliable information, and cultural superficiality.

Finally, in the context of ideological fragmentation and the rapid transformation of social structures, the intelligentsia performs the function of a unifying force. It contributes to the formation of a nationwide value framework, strengthens the spiritual integrity of society, and promotes the preservation of historical and cultural continuity.

Thus, the intelligentsia remains a key actor in the process of preserving national self-identity: “The Jadids played a crucial role in shaping the scientific and educational paradigm of Central Asia. Their ideas of combining traditional Islamic education with modern scientific disciplines, as well as their emphasis on progressive, humanistic, and rationalist values, had a significant impact on the development of the region’s social paradigm” . Its social mission connected with the formation of cultural meanings, the preservation of spiritual continuity, and the critical interpretation of global influences becomes especially significant under the conditions of contemporary transformations. The intelligentsia serves as a pillar of the national cultural space, ensuring a balance between tradition and innovation, between its own cultural heritage and the challenges of globalization. Owing to its ability to generate ideas, shape public opinion, and transmit values, it contributes to strengthening national self-awareness, consolidating society, and preserving spiritual resilience.

REFERENCES

1. Президент: Учителя и интеллигенция — опоры Третьего Ренессанса. -Электронный ресурс: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2021/09/29/teachers/>. -Дата обращения: 15.11.2025.
2. Бахтин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского. - М.: Художественная литература, 1972.
3. Каримов Э.Э., Мадаева Ш.О. Формирования узбекской идентичности в период пост-джадидизма // JCAR. - Том 6 № 1 (2025).
4. Акбарова А. Научная деятельность джадидов и их представителей. -Электронный ресурс: <https://shorturl.at/wYtMz>. -Дата обращения: 15.11.2025.
5. Джураева Н.А. Роль джадидов в формировании научно-воспитательной парадигмы развития в Центральной Азии // “Uzluksiz ta’lim tizimida ma’naviy tarbiyani shakllantirish va rivojlantirishning dolzarb vazifalari” mavzusida Respublika ilmiy-amaliy konferensiya materiallari. - Toshkent, 2025. –С.1112-1115.