

Self-Awareness of Gypsies: Traditionality and Modernity

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ABSTRACT: A large number of gypsies have been living in Bukhara, one of the ancient ethnographic regions of Uzbekistan, since the XIV century. Today, there are about 10,000 Gypsies, and many aspects of their traditional culture have changed as a result of the ethnic processes that have taken place for a long time. These changes were reflected in the self-awareness of gypsies too. As a result of close ethno-cultural dialogue with the surrounding Uzbeks, there have been cases of Uzbekization in the culture, economy and way of life of the Gypsies. However, changes in self-awareness have taken place at different levels in different parts of Bukhara region. For example, the ethno-cultural identity of the gypsies of Kogon and Gijduvan districts of Bukhara differs from each other. Because Gijduvan of the city of Bukhara, gypsies and gypsies themselves as Gypsies, but Uzbek knew, Kogon admitted that Romany gypsies who live and not hide it. This article analyzes why there are such differences between Gypsies living in the same region and what these differences are. The author conducted sociological surveys and compared the traditional and modern in self-awareness of gypsies.

KEYWORD: Gypsies, self-awareness, mentality, ethnic stereotype, autostereotype, heterostereotype, endoethnonym, slang.

INTRODUCTION

Self-awareness is the understanding, perception, feeling that one belongs to a particular ethnic group. There are many components to self-awareness that vary in meaning and function. However, due to the scope of our research, we analyze the changes of self-awareness of Bukhara gypsies in the ethnocultural identity. Before beginning the scientific analysis, let us take a closer look at the particular aspects of self-awareness. Self-awareness includes cognitive – that is, knowledge or imagination such as we and them, our history, our traditions, and their history, traditions, differences between them. The second is the emotional appraiser – that is, the assessment of the qualities of one's ethnic group, one's attitude to belonging to an ethnic group, and the importance of that affiliation [7, P. 25].

In the work of some researchers (J.S. Phinney) [11, P. 499] the behavioral component of self-awareness is also distinguished. That is, not only the perception of belonging to a particular nation, but also its expression (common language, application of cultural traditions, participation in socio-political life, etc.) is shown as an important component.

Norms of ethnic self-awareness of gypsies

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Ethnic self-awareness is important in determining the survival of an ethnic group and its development. There are many ethnic communities and peoples who have collective ideas about their origins, historical destiny and cultural values. From this view point, the study of the views of Gypsies, especially the younger generation on this issue will greatly help to comment on the current state of self-awareness. Unlike the older generation, young people have forgotten their knowledge and understanding of their history and culture. The modern gypsy youth don't know about the ethnic history of their ancestors, which countries their ancestors have been, what household activities they have dealt with, what historical experiences have happened in the historical destiny of their ancestors, why traditional culture have faced to changes. However, among the older generation, information about this, even if it is short, has been preserved. Because they had witnessed these processes directly or heard from the representatives of a generation older than themselves. That is, the relatively low cognitive component of self-awareness mentioned above indicates the changing self-awareness of young people in modern society. Friendly relations of the youth with the Uzbek around them, mixed marriages, due to the social curriculum through the process of studying, working they try to keep themselves away from their traditional culture and historical memory. There is also mutual social and cultural flexibility in the system of cultural values of the Gypsy youth. This flexibility changes young people's life goals and attitudes. In particular, the formation of views that are not typical of traditional Gypsy culture (education, living in peace, gaining prestige, etc.) can be an example of it. The emergence of such views and values shows that young people are formed in the spirit of individualism, i.e the principle of personal growth and development. A characteristic feature of Gypsy traditional culture is that community, group solidarity is regarded as the meaning of life.

So, this evidence shows that values are changing in the system of youth self-awareness.

The emotional-evaluative norms of self-awareness — that is, the qualities of one's own ethnic group, one's relation to one's belonging to an ethnic group, and one's assessment of the importance of that belonging — are manifested in two ways in gypsies:

1. *Positive* - In the gypsies living in Kogon district, both the younger generation and the older generation do not deny that they are gypsies and feel happy about it. That is, they know the Gypsies as an ancient people and are proud to be a representative of this people;
2. *Negative* – Gypsies living in Bukhara and Gijduvan districts claim that their ancestors were once Gypsies and that today they have become Uzbeks. They consider it as a negative situation if people around them recognize them as a gypsy. They constantly try to show that Gypsy style values have not been preserved in their life.

Undoubtedly, there a question arises why are there two such disparities in self-awareness of the Gypsies in the Kogon district and Bukhara city of Bukhara region and Gijduvan district? The reason is that Kogon district is the territory around Bukhara region. The gypsies living here lived a vagrant lifestyle until recently moving around Uzbekistan. It has not been long since their descendants came to Kogon region via Kashkadarya, and settled there (50-60s of the XX century). They settled in certain villages and lived a sedentary lifestyle. The way of life that separated them from others was the basis for the preservation of their traditional culture. The preservation of traditional culture was, in a certain sense, a factor in the continuation of their ancient occupation of begging. In addition, the presence of begging caused them to be separated from the rest of the surrounding population. As a result, not joining them was the basis of self-awareness. Hence, these above-mentioned situations

have contributed to the relative preservation of the self-awareness of the ethnic group in modern society as well.

The Gypsies living in Bukhara, first of all, have been living in this area for a long time, about the XIV century. Centuries-old ethnic processes have naturally led to a change in their way of life, a relatively early stagnation. They learned new occupations, such as handicrafts and trade from the inhabitants of the city. As a result, the traditional practice of begging was no longer needed. When the practice of begging was not preserved, reunion with the surrounding population, mixed marriages took place. These factors have led to changes in their self-awareness today.

The situation in Gijduvan district is slightly different, the district is located 50 km far from Bukhara city. As it has been mentioned above, as the land became more and more expensive in urban areas, some Gypsies settled in the villages in remote areas. It was natural that in remote villages, begging, which was a traditional occupation, was unaffordable. The most convenient occupations there were farming and live-stock. By giving up begging, the Gypsies, who had acquired agriculture and live-stock, were gradually allowed to join the surrounding population. Thus, a peculiar change in self-awareness took place.

About gypsy mentality

Now let's take a brief look at the gypsy mentality. Mentality (Latin. Mentis - mind, perception) [2, P. 580] is a community's specific way of life, culture, level of thinking, value system, worldview, behavioral characteristics and mental ability in certain social conditions. The mentality is formed in the course of a long historical development and determines the pattern of the laws of life of the nation. It combines the lifestyle and pace of life arising from economic activities and natural conditions. Only when strong factors influence the sustainability of the ethno system will the mentality be able to change.

The adoption of government resolution "On the involvement of Gypsies in manufacture, educational institutions and management" [6, P. 245] in 1933 and the Law "on the employment of Gypsies engaged in vagrancy" [1, P. 166] in 1956, of course, had a significant impact on the transition of the Gypsies to sedentary lifestyle. Nevertheless, they retain the characteristics of vagrancy today, both in short and in broad terms. That is, not staying in one place, wandering constantly, at least going around the surrounding neighborhoods and villages has become an inescapable habit for them.

Mentality is embedded in one's personal psyche system in the process of cultural communication. The mentality of one's nation is assimilated to every person from childhood through the acquisition of the native language, folklore and living conditions. Mentality develops from childhood and a person embraces both the national culture within himself and the new appearances that have arisen in connection with the cultural environment in which he lives. It means that when a person falls into a cultural environment new for himself during his lifetime, his mentality can also change. For example, it is known that Gypsies lived a nomadic life in ancient times. They could be somewhere today, and could be gone tomorrow. In such a situation, often making deceptive ways for their own benefit, traits such as eye-wash have served as a factor in their survival. However, as they later became stagnant and began to settle in a particular area, they realized that sincerity and mutual trust with the people around them were very important. Hence, a certain life situation caused the gypsies to lose the negative element in their mentality and adopt a positive character.

General mentality and personal mentality stand side by side. That is, it can represent a general social will that does not belong to an individual, or it can also reflect the psyche of an individual. This means that the mentality of the ethnos is, in turn, the mentality of its individual representatives too.

In this regard, the following attitude to the mentality of the gypsies can be given from “Mahbub ul-qulub” by Alisher Navoi: “Vagrant Jut”^{*} and the manners of most of the gypsies are funny and the methods are correct. There is humility in their rolling jumps and indifference when they lean on the ground. They are proud of themselves, even if it is dung on their donkeys; even though the limits of their humanity are not different from the ape, there is prided in their eyes” [9, P. 38]. In this play which was written 500 years ago, the gypsies' character, behavior and features such as humility, indifference, and pride were described. Even today, gypsies have such behavior and it can be evidence of its historical formation.

What is the ethnic stereotype of the gypsies?

Here we would like to present the results of the analysis of the existing ethnic stereotypes (Greek – stereotipos - trace, mark, sign) of gypsies about themselves and the stereotypes of Uzbeks about gypsies. First of all, ethnic stereotype, or in other words, ethnic sign is a system of knowledge that describes the differences between peoples in their perceptions of the world. That is, it is a set of perceptions, views and opinions about an ethnic group, and when we talk about a nation, first of all, the embodiment of its behavior, character, appearance and other similar aspects in the eyes of a person is an ethnic stereotype. According to the researchers, there are two different components of an ethnic stereotype: an autostereotype – an imagination about one’s own nation and its distinctive features; heterostereotype –an imagination about other peoples [12, pp. 54] .

During the ethnographic field research, it was defined that gypsies evaluate their imaginations about their ethnos as "strong holder of kinship relations", "hospitable", "friendly and harmony", "peace-loving", "ignorant" and "hardworking" [4].

In the Uzbek imagination, Gypsies are described as "friendly," "having many children," "cold", "prone to theft", "lazy", "disorder", "ignorant", and "avenger" [5].

Thus, the autostereotype of the Gypsies and the heterostereotype of the Uzbeks towards them coincide with such qualities as "friendly and harmony", "ignorant". However, on the remaining qualities there is a situational disproportion. So, this can be explained by two different reasons.

First, if any nation is asked to assess their qualities, of course they appreciate the positive qualities. Negative qualities are not told or hidden. They do not like to describe their negative qualities when it comes to themselves and consider it their duty to express positive opinions. A similar situation may have led to a one-sided bias in the description of the Gypsies themselves.

Second, when Uzbeks are asked about their views on the Gypsies, they respond depending on what they have heard and observed throughout their lives. Gypsies’ lifestyle, occupation, behavior, communication and other similar factors may have led to the formation of such perceptions in those around them.

In general, there are true and wrong aspects in the views in both ethnic stereotypes. For example, in the responses of the gypsies to the views about themselves, such qualities as "strong holder of kinship relations", "hospitable", "friendly and harmony", "peace-loving", "ignorant" are true. These qualities

^{*}Jut is the name of a Jat tribe with an ancient cultural history of India.

can be observed many times during long-term communication with them and getting closely acquainted with their lives. However, there is no denying that their assessment of the quality of "hardworking" is far from the truth. Because there are still young men and women who, despite their young age, do not have the skills to work and are not engaged in any useful work. If they had a quality of hard-working, their standard of living would be much better than it is now. However, there are also some inaccuracies in the Uzbeks' descriptions of Gypsies. For example, it is possible to agree with such ideas as "friendly and harmony", "having many children", "ignorant", "lazy". But, ethnic stereotypes such as "prone to theft", "disorder", "avenger", and "cold" are far from the truth. Of course, the expression of such ideas may have been due to their unfamiliarity with their way of life, the relatively low level of cultural communication, and the existence of various myths.

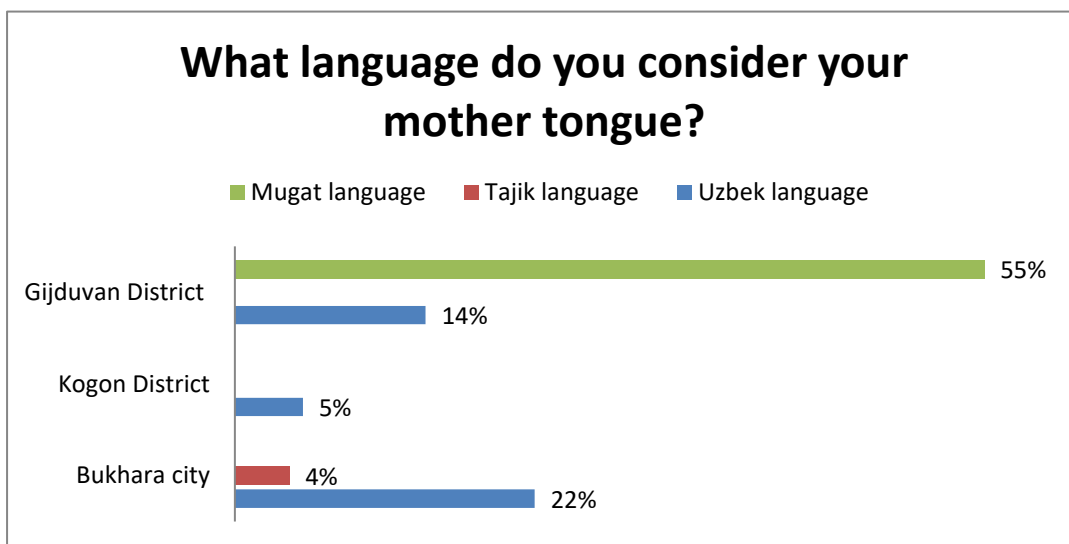
Kinds of identity of the gypsies

Today, it is important to determine what kinds of identity are understood in self-awareness of the gypsies. For example, it is not according to the economic-cultural type because all gypsies have similar economic activities. It is also not according to religious identity, as all Uzbek gypsies are Muslims. It can be classified according to the type of linguistic identity. Because, one of the important features of understanding ethnic identity is language, and the language and dialect of gypsies differ from each other. For example, in various ethnographic regions of Uzbekistan, Gypsies mainly speak Tajik as their first language, and then the Uzbek language. However, the Gypsies living in the Bukhara region, in addition to the Tajik and Uzbek languages they have their own *Mugan* language too. This mugat language consists of a mixture of certain words known only to the Gypsies and a specific dialect of the Tajik language, that Uzbeks and Tajiks cannot understand this language. At the same time, other gypsies of the oasis (Tashkent, Fergana Valley, Navoi, Samarkand, etc.) do not understand the traditional language of Bukharian Gypsies. Perhaps, they have their own language that is not understandable to others.

Why are there differences in language between different ethnic groups of Gypsies? There is information about the colloquial language of Central Asian gypsies in some literatures, the authors noted that their dialects such as *lafzi mugat*, *Abdol language*, or *zaboni panoyi*. In particular, in the work of I.Oranskiy detailed information is given in this regard [10, P. 32]. *Lafzi mugat* (mugat - one of the names of gypsies - Z.Q) is a language specific to gypsies and it is incomprehensible to Uzbeks or Tajiks. *Abdol* means "beggar", "dervish". Also, the jargon of artists, musicians, hermits, and singers is called "abdol (abdol) language" [8, P. 58]. That is, here the ancient profession of the gypsies is also noted. *Zaboni panoi* means secret language in Persian. The existence of such hidden languages (slang) in Gypsy ethnic groups can be explained by the social conditions, lifestyle and types of occupation. For example, the members of a group engaged in mobile trade, handicrafts, and showing performances by traveling in various regions used secret language as a means of protecting their professional activities. For the gypsies, who led a sedentary lifestyle and were mainly engaged in farming, there was no need to speak in secret. This means that there appeared differences in the language of the gypsies according to the type of their occupation, social status, as well as their living areas.

For example, the results of surveys conducted in different ethnographic regions in Bukhara region show that the views on the mother tongue differ from each other. The table below shows which of the languages Uzbek, Tajik and Mugat the Gypsies living in different regions consider as their mother tongue:

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This means that the gypsies of Gijduvan district consider Uzbek as their mother tongue. Because they do not know the Mugat language but they know the Tajik language, since they are surrounded by Uzbek-speaking population, they have been communicating in Uzbek in the family. The gypsies of Bukhara, on the other hand, mostly consider Uzbek as their mother tongue, while some admit Tajik as their mother tongue. Because living in the city speaking in Uzbek and Persian languages led to bilingualism. They can't speak Mugat language. The gypsies of both regions did not feel the need for specific slang because they had lived a stable life for a long time, mixed with the surrounding population, and spoke the same language as the surrounding population. The situation is different in Kogon district. Kogon gypsies consider the Mugat language as their mother tongue and use it in their interactions. Because they have preserved the traditional language due to a sedentary lifestyle. The Mugat language, a legacy of the nomadic way of life, has risen to the level of their mother tongue. Only a small number said they considered Uzbek as their mother tongue.

Although the mugat words are relatively rare today in the language of the Gypsies, they are actively used in internal communication among both adults and the younger generation. During the study, it was possible to collect some mugat words (*appendix -*). As mentioned above, this language was used by the Gypsies to keep secret their interactions from "strangers." The same is true today. For example, in addition to speaking mugat in the family or in the community, they speak this language in some cases on the street, if they do not want others to understand it in order to keep it a secret. However, all gypsies can speak beautifully in Uzbek and Tajik too.

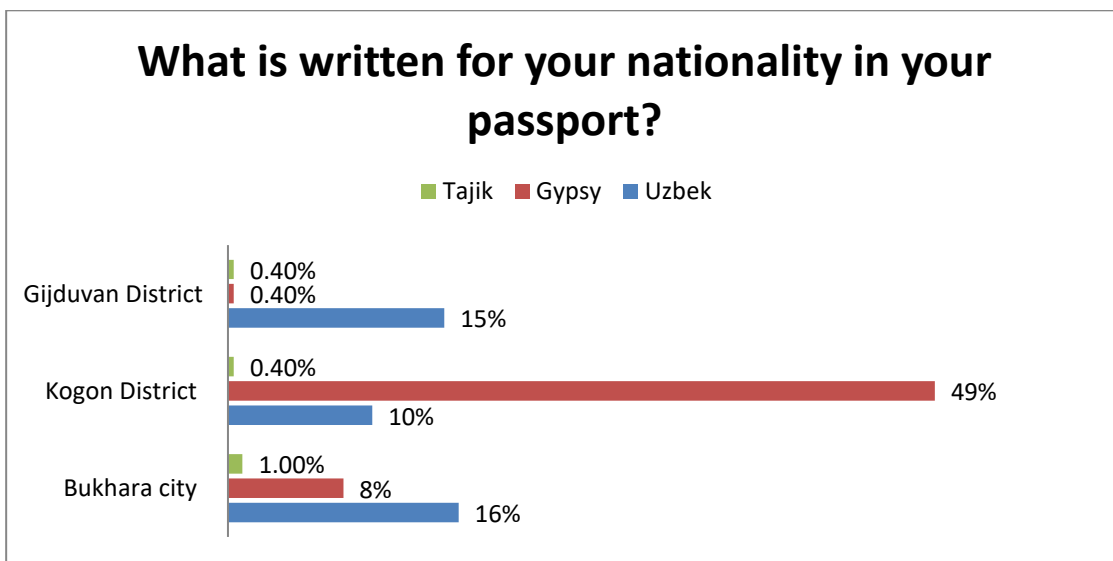
It can also be studied in terms of territorial identity. For example, in the case of Uzbekistan, the gypsies of Kashkadarya, Tashkent, the Fergana Valley, Samarkand, Navoi, Jizzakh, and Surkhandarya have different aspects. Although at first glance they have common features, the gypsies of each region differ in terms of language, appearance, dressing, culture and customs. For example, in Bukhara and Kashkadarya, and partly in Surkhandarya, Gypsies communicate in the Mugat language, while in other regions, communication is conducted in Tajik or Uzbek. In Tashkent, Gypsy women may not wear headscarves, but Bukhara Gypsies cannot be met without headscarves. This is due to the fact that they lived in the area for a long time and acquired local characteristics together with the surrounding population. In the example of Bukhara region, there is a distinction between gypsies such as Kogon gypsies, Gijduvan gypsies and the gypsies of Bukhara city. These differences are mainly related to the tribal type of self-awareness, which is divided into

several patriarchal families. For example, they are divided into the types such as Father Abdurayim, Father Oymahma, Father Shahrisabz and others and consider themselves the descendants of this or that tribe. That is, these tribes are actually considered to be the descendants of the Gypsy brothers who were born from the same parents.

However, there are now changes in the self-awareness of the gypsies, and the principle of self-awareness in terms of affiliation to a territorial unit or social class is more prominent, rather than self-awareness through affiliation to a particular tribe. This is because the Gypsies, most of the homeless ethnic groups of the Gypsies began living an active settled life process in the middle of the XX century. Especially in the last 20-30 years, fully settled Gypsies have formed separate communities in certain villages and neighborhoods. Different ethnic groups of Gypsies may live in mixture this or that village. However, they understand each other as a community in terms of territory. For example, Kogon gypsies, Bukhara gypsies, Gijduvan gypsies, Vobkent gypsies and so on.

Self-naming – *endoethnonym* is also adopted by the ethnic group as a sign of their identity. It is known that, like the Central Asian gypsies, the Bukhara gypsies call themselves *mugat*. Mugat – Mug means "fire or a fire-worshiper", and the ancient belief of the Gypsies was the basis for the ethnic group to call themselves by this name. However, today the representatives of the group do not know the lexical meaning of this word or what it means. It has been preserved as a name passed down from ancestors to generations. So, in the example of Bukhara gypsies, the ethnonym is not important in self-awareness.

The economic and cultural relations of the Gypsies with the Uzbeks, Tajiks and other nations resulted in their absorption into components of these peoples in some cases. As a result, there happened a variety of differences in calling their nations. The following table also shows that gypsies living in different parts of Bukhara have different characteristics in their self-awareness.

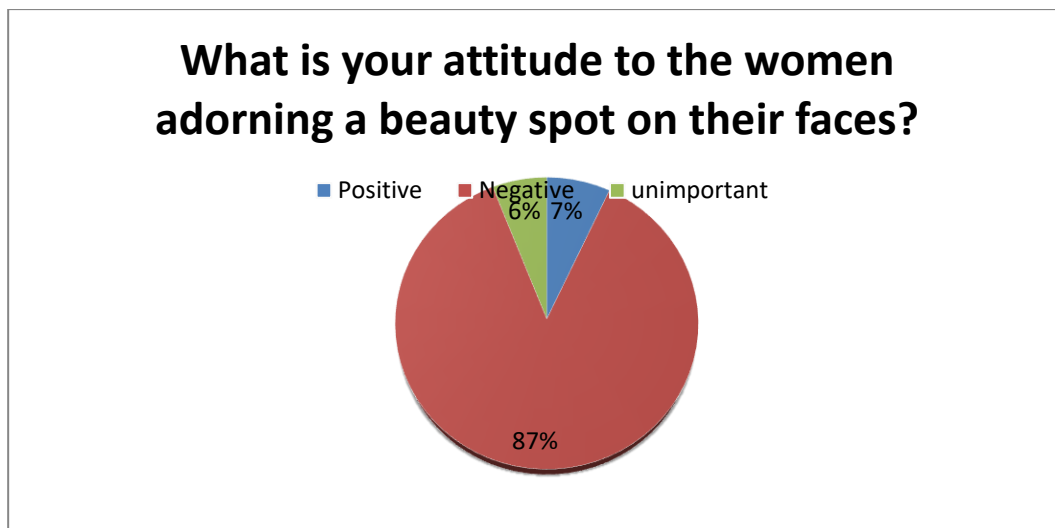


If we depend on the results of this survey, the Gypsies, who live in rural areas in Kogon District, note themselves as Gypsy, sometimes Uzbek in the documents. There are different views in self-awareness of the most Gypsies in the city, even though they consider themselves "gypsy", they don't differ themselves from other neighboring nations. In their personal documents noted mainly as an Uzbek or a Tajik.

Undoubtedly, this is the effect of the mixed marriages in a certain degree, the nationality of the children born in the families in which the husband is gipsy and the wife is Uzbek was noted Uzbek by their parents.

Another case is that mostly the adult children from a gipsy family have their nationality written Uzbek in their passports though they feel their personal identity as gipsy. This is because some respondents explain that if it is noted gipsy in their passport, they may face some difficulties in their employment, getting driver's licenses and other similar daily life difficulties. Therefore, they try to note themselves as Uzbek as possible as they can [3].

The views related to the historical homeland should be separately focused on in self-awareness of the Gypsies. It is known that the historical homeland of Gypsies is India. Therefore, by the end of the XX century and the beginning XXI there had been interpretations to connect the Gypsies with the Indians in self-awareness of and consider them a nation directly related to them. In the process of ethnographic research, as an example of this situation, it can be observed in gipsy women's tradition of adorning a beauty spot on their faces and foreheads. In addition, striving to wear colourful clothes and walking barefoot are explained as a sign of imitating to Indians. However, such views are not widespread today, and they regard themselves as a part of the Uzbek people, in contrast to their predecessors. The main reason for such a change in self-awareness may be related to civic identity. Their sedentary way of life in Uzbekistan and obtaining the citizenship of the republic led to the loss of the connection of their self-awareness with Indians. As a result, Indian customs have also disappeared from daily life. During our ethno-social research we didn't observe the habit of adorning a beauty spot among the women younger than 40-50 years old. When asked what they thought of such a habit, it was found that women and men had a lot of negative attitudes, regardless of their ages.



Thus, in the example of the habit like the one above, one can see that the perception of identity has changed. Modern Gypsy youth don't regard themselves as the descendants of the Indians. Their views about the historical homeland are connected with the name of Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the question of the self-awareness of Bukhara gypsies manifests itself in various forms. It is known that this variety is connected *firstly* with historical period, *secondly*, with the territory. From the historical point of view sedentism, socialization and cultural approach of the Gypsies to the surrounding population also led to the transformation of their self-awareness. As an evidence of it, the difference between the adult and young people's historical memory, mentality, the principles of loyalty to traditions can be given as an example. The older generation remembers life stories and legends about their ancestors, but the younger generation does not think it is important to preserve such memories. While the older generation is firm on the issue of internal marriages, the younger generation does not deny mixed marriages. While the older generation is satisfied with the traditional way of life, the desire for development and for obtaining some results noticeable among the younger generation. In general, the measure of national values varies between generations.

From the view point of regional addresses of the Gypsies, we can see that the self-awareness of the Gypsies living in different parts of the Bukhara region is different. The gypsies living in Bukhara city regard themselves Uzbek, because of living centuries-old nomadic way of life, and gave up begging as they acquired trading and handicraft skills as a result of stabilizing as well as cultural relations with the surrounding population. A similar situation is observed in Gijduvan too. In rural areas, there is no opportunity to engage in begging or the collection of by-products based on monetary relations. The reason is that the rural area is mainly composed of peasants and cattle-breeders, and mostly subsistence farming (exchange) prevailed. As a result, the process of socialization of the Gypsies, who had mastered the agricultural sector, was active, and there was a mingling with Uzbeks. This situation served as the main factor of the changes in self-awareness.

Kogon gypsies, on the other hand, differ from the gypsies of the above two regions. Belonging to Gypsies is well preserved in terms of self-awareness. They do not mingle with the surrounding population. Because it has not been long before their socialization processes began. Second, because their area is suburban, it is comfortable for begging and collecting by-products, and they have not got rid of their traditional lifestyles.

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