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The System of Public Education in Penza Governorate in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Part 3

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Abstract

This set of articles explores the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate, a region in the Russian Empire, in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (through to 1917).

The present paper is the third part of the series. It examines the timeframe from 1895 to 1915.

In putting this work together, use was primarily made of relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russia), memorandum books, reference books, and the journals of the Ministry of Public Education Narodnoe Obrazovanie and Obrazovanie.

The following historical research methods were employed: historical-comparative, historical-typological, historical-systematic, historical-genetic, and historical-statistical. The general research methods employed in this study were analysis of the literature and sources, systems analysis, and mathematical methods.

A key conclusion drawn from this study was that the period under review witnessed a steady rise in the number of educational institutions in the region. This especially was the case with its lower and primary educational institutions. Vis-à-vis the early 1870s, the region's student body grew nearly 10 times, with the largest increase accounted for by its rural residents and the population of its capital, Penza.

Most of the region's secondary and lower educational institutions had a pronounced agrarian and technical orientation, while its primary education sector was dominated by parochial schools.

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By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, the region began to follow a national trend and witnessed an increase in the number of female students, which especially was the case in cities (a boy to girl student ratio of 1.39:1), as girls tended to attend a trade (vocational) school with a view to being later employed in the field of processing agricultural and livestock farming output. The region's rural residents followed traditional (patriarchal) values, with literacy and education not generally considered important for rural women, which explains the boy to girl student ratio of 3.4:1 in the region's countryside at the time.

Keywords: system of public education, Penza Governorate, education in Penza Governorate, public schools, period 1900–1917.

1. Introduction

Penza Governorate was a relatively small administrative territorial unit located in the heart of the Russian Empire. Primarily focused on arable farming, it had a population of about 1.5 million as at 1897. As Penza Governorate the area existed between 1796 and 1797 and later between 1801 and 1928 (Mamadaliyev et al., 2022: 258). The region's capital, Penza, was its largest and most developed city.

The present paper, which is the third and final part of the work, analyzes the timeframe from 1895 to 1915, which includes most of the reign of Emperor Nicholas II. This period witnessed a number of significant events in the history of Russia, including the nation's brisk industrial and technological progress, its powerful demographic growth between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution of 1905, the resulting economic disruptions, the shift in the form of government from absolute monarchical to de-facto constitutional, the launch of Russian political parliamentarism, the dismantling of the rural commune, and World War I. These developments could not but have had an effect on the education sector of Penza Governorate, a modest Russian province.

2. Materials and methods

In putting the work together, use was made of relevant documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russia), memorandum books, reference books, and address calendars. Specifically, the following relevant materials were drawn upon: '1895 Penza Governorate Office Holder Address Calendar' (*Adres-kalendar'*, 1895), '1899 Penza Governorate Reference Book' (Volume 1) (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1899), '1900 Penza Governorate Memorandum Book' (*Pamyatnaya knizhka*, 1900), '1901 Penza Governorate Memorandum Book' (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1901), '1901 Penza Governorate Reference Book' (Volume 2) (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1901), '1902 Penza Governorate Reference Book' (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1902), '1904 Penza Governorate Memorandum Book' (*Pamyatnaya knizhka*, 1904), '1911 Penza Governorate Reference Book' (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1911), and '1913 Penza Governorate Office Holder Reference Book' (*Spravochnaya knizhka*, 1913).

Some information was taken from relevant prerevolutionary pedagogical journals, including *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (Sirotkin, 1905). A significant amount of valuable information was obtained from 'Overview of Primary Education in Penza Governorate Based on Data for the 1899–1900 School Year' (Ocherk, 1903).

Some information was obtained from the 1900 report of the Penza Gubernia Administration on the role of the Penza Gubernia Zemstvo in the development of public education in the region (*Doklad gubernskoi upravy*, 1900).

Among the relevant education-related regulatory materials drawn upon in this work, of particular note are 'A Digest of Ordinances of the Penza Gubernia Zemstvo Assembly (1865–1911)' (*Postanovleniya Penzenskogo...*, 1911) and 'The Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire' (Third Collection (1881–1913)) (*PSZRI*, 1914).

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

The following traditional historical research methods were used:

- historical-comparative (employed to compare Penza Governorate's education system with that of some other regions of the Russian Empire, including through the lens of the quantitative, chronological, and gender criteria);
- historical-typological (to classify the region's educational institutions by level);

- historical-systematic (to analyze the region’s education system during the reign of Nicholas II through the prism of the period’s overall historical situation);
- historical-genetic (to investigate the effect of the various preceding events on the development of the region’s education sector).

The only nontraditional historical research method used in this part of the work was the historical-statistical method (employed to conduct a quantitative analysis of the region’s educational institutions and student body).

The general research methods employed in this work were analysis of the literature and sources (employed to obtain relevant information), systems analysis (to conduct an integrated analysis of available information on the state and development of the region’s education system during the reign of Nicholas II), and mathematical methods (to calculate the statistics).

3. Discussion

There is a relative paucity of dedicated research on the system of education in Penza Governorate. Below is an outline of the prerevolutionary, Soviet, and contemporary historiography covering the development of the education system in Penza Governorate in the period under review.

In the prerevolutionary period, the subject was, most notably, explored by the following scholars: N.F. Ezersky, with his detailed analysis of the education system in ‘The Zemstvo and the School’ (Ezerskii, 1910), ‘The Organization of Learning in Public Schools’ (Ezerskii, 1912), and ‘The Book for Classroom Reading in a Public School’ (Ezerskii, 1913), P. Kazantsev, with his ‘Studying a Local Area for Pedagogical Purposes’ (Kazantsev, 1912), and K. Korol’kov, with his ‘The Attitude of the Penza Zemstvo toward Parochial Schools and Certain Measures by the Penza Zemstvo to Help Develop Public Education in the Governorate’ (Korol’kov, 1898), which explores the potential of the church to help develop public education.

A valuable reference source on the subject is the entry ‘Penza Governorate’ in the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopaedic Dictionary (Volume 23 (45)) (Brokgauz–Efron, 1896).

I.F. Kuz’min provided a brief geographic and historical description of Penza Governorate, which includes an account of its education sector. The time this account was published overlaps with the lower limit of the present study’s chronological scope (Kuz’min, 1895).

A brief but interesting comparison of the systems of education in Penza and Perm Governorates was provided by S.G. Sirotkin (Sirotkin, 1905).

In the Soviet period, some information on education in Penza Governorate was contributed by I.M. Bogdanov, with his account of the overall situation in the education sector in prerevolutionary Russia in the monograph ‘Literacy and Education in Prerevolutionary Russia’ (Bogdanov, 1964). Some attention to the region’s education sector was devoted in the joint monograph ‘Essays on the History of the Penza Region (Spanning the Period from the Earliest Times to the Late 19th Century)’ by a team of researchers including A.F. Dergachev, E.Ya. Dmitruk, and N.V. Karaul’nykh (Ocherki, 1973).

Education in Penza Governorate was briefly touched upon in the joint monograph ‘Essays on the History of the Education and Pedagogical Thought in the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Second Half of the 19th Century)’, devoted to pedagogical innovation in the Russian Empire and published under the editorship of A.I. Piskunov (Ocherki, 1976). Some attention to education in Penza Governorate was devoted in the monograph ‘Essays on the History of the Education and Pedagogical Thought in the Nations of the USSR (Spanning the Period from the Late 19th to Early 20th Centuries)’, which provides a detailed account of the development of the system of education in Russia at the turn of the century (Ocherki, 1991).

A.G. Rashin provided a general characterization of the system of public education in the Russian Empire in the period between the 19th and early 20th centuries (Rashin, 1951). The monograph ‘Essays on the History of 19th-Century Progressive Russian Pedagogy’ by V.Z. Smirnov explored the progressive ideas propounded by prerevolutionary Russian pedagogues such as K.D. Ushinsky, A.I. Herzen, and D.I. Mendeleev (Smirnov, 1963). The same scholar also investigated issues of maintaining discipline in secondary educational institutions (Smirnov, 1956).

Lastly, below is an outline of the more prominent contemporary works providing an insight into the development of education in Penza Governorate.

A valuable analysis was provided in 'Essays on the History of Public Education in the Penza Region', produced in 1997 under the editorship of V.I. Nikulin (Ocherki, 1997).

Of particular interest are the dissertations by L.D. Goshulyak focused on analyzing the making and development of the system of public education in Penza Governorate in the period between the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Goshulyak, 1995; Goshulyak, 2002). O.V. Dunayeva investigated the development of vocational education ((Dunaeva, 1999a) and the social composition of vocational educational institutions in the region (Dunaeva, 1999b).

The development of the region's gymnasium education sector in the period between the 19th and early 20th centuries was explored in the dissertation by O.A. Kostyukova (Kostyukova, 2006).

There has been a fair amount of research on female education in Penza Governorate in the period between the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with the following issues explored specifically: its history (Makarkina, Polosin, 1998), its making and development (Parshina, 2007), classifying the region's female educational institutions (Parshina, 2010), and the development of the region's vocational female education sector (Parshina, 2008).

An analysis of the system of public education in Penza Governorate in the period 1900–1905 was provided in the article by N.N. Chetvertkova, which is based on materials from the Penza Governorate Gazette newspaper (Chetvertkova, 2007).

Some general information on the topic is available from the joint monograph 'The Penza Region in the History and Culture of Russia', produced in 2014 under the editorship of O.A. Sukhova (Penzenskii krai, 2014).

Reference was also made to research on other regions of the Russian Empire with the aim of comparing the system of education in Penza Governorate with theirs, including the areas of Kuban Cossackdom (Molchanova et al., 2020), regions within the Caucasus Educational District (Natolochnaya et al., 2016; Cherkasov, 2011; Shevchenko et al., 2016), Vologda Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2019a; Cherkasov et al., 2019b), and Voronezh Governorate (Cherkasov et al., 2020).

4. Results

The study's geographic scope centers on Penza Governorate, an area that existed as such between 1796 and 1797 and between 1801 and 1928. Its chronological scope is from 1895 to 1915, i.e. from the start of the reign of Emperor Nicholas II (1894–1917) to World War I. As the largest portion of the nation's financial resources went toward the war effort, rather than social policy, a decision was made by the authors not to explore the development of the region's education system at the time of World War I.

The region's educational institutions were classified by type in the work's first two parts.

The reign of Nicholas II can be considered a turning point in the history of the Russian state. Most importantly, there were the three unprecedented revolutions, the second of which put an end to the country's monarchical form of government, which had been in place for many centuries, and the third of which turned Russia into the first major socialist state. Technically, the stage for changes in the country's form of government, which would transform from absolute monarchical to de-facto constitutional, was set by the first revolution. Also, worthy of special mention is what was a phenomenon completely new in Russia – the introduction of a multi-party system and the establishment of the State Duma, a body that both de-facto and de-jure would hold all legislative power in the country. This stage in Russian history, when there existed zemsky sobors, cannot be regarded as a time when Russia had in place the institution of separation of powers, as de-jure legislative power remained in the hands of the tsar. An event that was a total failure for the Russian Empire was the Russo-Japanese War, which was one of the key causes of the First Russian Revolution (1905) and the change in both the political regime (from authoritarian to democratic) and the form of government (from absolute to limited monarchy) in the country. The other problems faced by the Russian government at the time included explosive demographic growth (for which it was not prepared), a highly backward agricultural sector (both in methods of organization¹ and technologically), a considerable amount of foreign capital in industry (hence, low revenues for Russian industrialists and poor workers). However, these challenges did contribute to

¹ Essentially, the rural commune was dismantled closer to the end of the first decade of the 20th century.

the government's ability to modernize the country in the shortest time possible through the adoption of new technology and attraction of foreign investment.

The present paper relies on relevant statistical data to explore the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate, a region in the heart of the Russian Empire. It will attempt to trace how this process was influenced by the 'Law on Allocating 6,900,000 Rubles toward Primary Education' of May 3, 1908, intended to make education more accessible to all citizens.

The 1899 Reference Book does not list all educational institutions in the region but only those run by benevolent societies, namely ([Spravochnaya kniga, 1899: 253](#)):

- First Penza Male Gymnasium (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 33](#));
- Second Penza Male Gymnasium (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 34](#));
- Penza Female Gymnasium (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 34](#));
- Penza Female Progymnasium (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 35](#));
- Penza Teacher's Seminary (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 35-36](#));
- Penza Ecclesiastical Seminary (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 36](#));
- Penza Technical (Real) School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 36](#));
- Penza Surveyor's School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 36](#));
- Penza Uyezd School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 62](#));
- Penza First Noble Ecclesiastical School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 48](#));
- Urban School (Insar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 48](#));
- Krasnoslobodsk Ecclesiastical School (Krasnoslobodsk).

The 1900 Memorandum Book adds the following schools to the list:

- Penza School of Horticulture (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 41](#));
- Lower School of Forestry (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 41](#));
- Technical Railway School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 42](#));
- Penza Tikhonov Second Ecclesiastical School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 49](#));
- N.D. Seliverstov School of Art (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 36-37](#));
- Diocesan Female Ecclesiastical School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 50](#));
- Model School at the Female Ecclesiastical School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 51](#));
- Penza Verkhne-Pokrovsky First Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 63](#));
- Penza Second Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 63](#));
- Penza Third Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 63](#));
- Penza Fourth Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 63](#));
- Penza Fifth Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 64](#));
- Penza Sixth Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 64](#));
- Penza Seventh Parish Male School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 64](#));
- Penza First Female Urban Primary School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 64-65](#));
- Penza Second Female Urban Primary School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 65](#));
- Penza Third Female Urban Primary School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 65](#));
- Penza Fourth Female Urban Primary School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 65](#));
- Penza Fifth Female Urban Primary School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 65-66](#));
- Penza Tatishchev Female Trade School ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 66](#));
- Penza Female F.E. Shvetsov's Trade School ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 66](#));
- Gorodishche Uyezd School (Gorodishche) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 78](#));
- Gorodishche Parish Male School (Gorodishche) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 78](#));
- Gorodishche Parish Female School (Gorodishche) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 79](#));
- Insar Four-Grade Urban School (Insar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 89](#));
- Insar Parish Male School (Insar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 89](#));
- Insar Parish Female School (Insar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 89](#));
- Kerensk Urban School (Kerensk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 99](#));
- Kerensk First Male Parish School (Kerensk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 99](#));
- Kerensk Second Male Parish School (Kerensk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 99](#));
- Kerensk Female Parish School (Kerensk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 100](#));
- Krasnoslobodsk Four-Grade Urban School (Krasnoslobodsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 109](#));
- Krasnoslobodsk Male Parish School (Krasnoslobodsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 109](#));
- Krasnoslobodsk Female Parish School (Krasnoslobodsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 109](#));

- Krasnoslobodsk Ecclesiastical School (Krasnoslobodsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 111](#));
- Verkhny Lomov Primary Male School (Verkhny Lomov) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 114](#));
- Verkhny Lomov Primary Female School (Verkhny Lomov) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 114](#));
- Nizhny Lomov Four-Grade School (Nizhny Lomov) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 120](#));
- Nizhny Lomov Male Parish School (Nizhny Lomov) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 120](#));
- Nizhny Lomov Female Parish School (Nizhny Lomov) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 120](#));
- Mokshan Four-Grade Uyezd School (Mokshan) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 129](#));
- Mokshan Male Parish School (Mokshan) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 129](#));
- Mokshan Female Parish School (Mokshan) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 129](#));
- Narovchat Four-Grade Uyezd School (Narovchat) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 139](#));
- Narovchat Male Parish School (Narovchat) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 139](#));
- Narovchat Female Parish School (Narovchat) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 139](#));
- Saransk Four-Grade Uyezd School (Saransk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 150](#));
- Saransk Male Parish School (Saransk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 150](#));
- Saransk Male Parish School (Saransk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 150](#));
- Troitsk Two-Grade Model Male School (Troitsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 154](#));
- Troitsk Female School (Troitsk) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 154](#));
- Chembar Three-Grade Uyezd School (Chembar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 161-162](#));
- Chembar Parish Male School (Chembar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 162](#));
- Chembar Parish Female School (Chembar) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 162](#));
- Shishkeyev Parish Male School (Shishkeyev) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 165](#)).

The 1904 Memorandum Book adds the following schools to the list:

- Penza Female Second Gymnasium (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 44](#));
- Penza First Urban Four-Grade School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 44](#));
- Penza Second Urban Four-Grade School (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 44](#));
- Penza Sixth Female Urban Primary school (Penza) ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 48](#)).

The capital, Penza, also became home to four parochial schools ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 60-61](#)), and the cities Insar, Gorodishche, Nizhny Lomov, Verkhny Lomov, Narovchat, and Saransk also became home to six parochial schools and five two-grade parish schools ([Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 70-159](#)).

The 1911 Reference Book does not systematize the data by type of educational institution and reports only the total numbers of educational institutions and students in the region ([Spravochnaya kniga, 1911: 203](#)):

a) number of educational institutions:

- in Penza – 67;
- in uyezd and supernumerary towns – 66;
- in uyezds – 869.

b) number of students:

- in Penza – 6,540 males and 4,706 females;
- in uyezd and supernumerary towns – 4,874 males and 3,507 females;
- in uyezds – 47,190 males and 13,884 females.

There were a total of 1,002 educational institutions and a total of 80,701 students.

As evidenced by the above data, there was a significant increase in the number of students in Penza Governorate at the time, whose percentage relative to its population was quite high. Note also that most of the development of the region's female education sector occurred in its capital, Penza, where (as well as in the region's uyezd cities) the boy to girl student ratio was 1.39:1. In the region's uyezds, i.e. in the heart of its countryside, this ratio was 3.4:1. This was associated with adherence to traditional (patriarchal) values in the region's rural areas, where education (and even literacy) was not generally considered important for women ([Goshulyak, 1995](#); [Goshulyak, 2002](#)).

In addition, in 1914 the region had in place an entire network of parochial Orthodox Christian schools, a total of 378 educational institutions, with a combined enrollment of 25,759 (17,681 boys and 8,078 girls) ([Vsepoddanneishii otchet, 1916: 122-123](#)).

As at January 1, 1915, Penza Governorate had a total of 170,730 school-age children, with 91,085 of these attending schools run by the Ministry of Public Education ([RGIA. F. 733. Op. 207. D. 39. L. 1](#)). Exclusive of private educational institutions, the ratio of children receiving to those not

receiving education in the region was 1:1.87, with children attending parochial schools accounting for a little over a quarter of the region's total student body.

Table 1. Numbers of Educational Institutions under the Purview of the Ministry of Public Education and Students in Them in Penza Governorate in the Period 1899–1915 ([Spravochnaya kniga, 1899: 253](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1900: 33-165](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 33-165](#); [Pamyatnaya knizhka, 1904: 40-159](#); [Spravochnaya kniga, 1911: 203](#))

Year	Number of educational institutions				Number of students		
	Higher	Secondary	Lower	Primary	Boys	Girls	Total
1899 ¹	N/A	11	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1900 ²	N/A	12	36	21	N/A	N/A	N/A
1904 ³	N/A	12	38	36	N/A	N/A	N/A
1911 ⁴	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58,604	22,097	80,701
1914 ⁵	N/A	N/A	N/A	378	17,681	8,078	25,759
1915 ⁶	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	91,085

The data in [Table 1](#) indicate that, overall, the system of education in Penza Governorate developed in the period between the first and early second decades of the 20th century in quite a stable manner. There were increases in the number of lower and primary educational institutions and the size of the student body in the region. However, given that the period's memorandum and reference books (unlike the Trustee's reports, which are not available through open access) provide only fragmentary information, it is impossible to establish at this time how intensive the development of primary education was in the region subsequent to the passage of the Law of May 3, 1908.

The fact that the size of the region's student body increased several times is an indirect indication of the effectiveness of the measures undertaken by the government to improve access to education for the broad masses of the people.

If we compare the system of education in Penza Governorate with that in the governorates of the Caucasus region, the areas of Kuban Cossackdom, and Voronezh Governorate, we can see that at that time the process of development of the education sector was more intensive in the southern regions ([Cherkasov et al., 2020](#); [Molchanova et al., 2020](#); [Magsumov et al., 2020](#); [Natolochnaya et al., 2020](#)), while Penza Governorate did relatively better in this area than Vologda Governorate ([Cherkasov et al., 2019a](#); [Cherkasov et al., 2019b](#)). Note also that the boy to girl student ratio of 2.4:1 is quite substantial, which is testimony to adherence to patriarchal values among Russian families in the central part of Russia. During the same period, Tiflis Governorate had a boy to girl student ratio of 1.1:1 (i.e. near parity) ([Mamadaliyev et al., 2020](#)).

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the insights gained from this study:

1. There is currently a relative paucity of material covering the development of the system of education in Penza Governorate in the early 20th century. The reference and memorandum books available to researchers can provide only a general idea of the process.

2. Even the fragmentary information available attests that the number of educational institutions increased steadily in the region, which especially was the case with its lower and primary schools.

¹ Data incomplete

² Data incomplete

³ Data incomplete

⁴ Based on non-systematized data in the 1911 Reference Book for Penza Governorate

⁵ Data incomplete

⁶ Data incomplete

3. Vis-à-vis the early 1870s, the region's student body grew nearly 10 times, with the largest increase accounted for by its rural population and with its major cities (above all, its capital, Penza) witnessing increases in both the number of educational institutions and the size of the student body.

4. Most of the region's secondary and lower educational institutions had a pronounced agrarian and technical orientation, which was in line with its economy being dominated by agriculture and livestock farming. The region's primary education sector was dominated by parochial schools, which was associated with the bulk of its population (over 80 %) being made up of ethnic Russians who were Orthodox Christians. However, by 1914 the region's parochial schools were attended by only a quarter of its entire student body. By 1915, over half of the region's school-age children attended schools run by the Ministry of Public Education, which is quite an achievement in terms of making education accessible to all citizens.

5. By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, the region began to follow a national trend and witnessed an increase in the number of female students. This especially was the case in the region's cities, as girls tended to attend a trade (vocational) school with a view to being later employed in the field of processing agricultural and livestock farming output. The boy to girl student ratio in the region's urban sector was 1.39:1. By contrast, in the region's rural areas, where residents followed traditional (patriarchal) values and literacy and education were not generally considered important for women, the boy to girl student ratio was 3.4:1.

6. Vis-à-vis the areas within the Caucasus Educational District and Vologda and Voronezh Governorates, the system of education in Penza Governorate developed in line with common patterns, with the region, overall, being neither a front-runner nor a laggard in this respect.

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