

**THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN
KASHKADARYA (1920–1991)**

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Abstract: This article examines the emergence and development of the oil and gas industry in the Kashkadarya region between 1920 and 1991. The study analyzes the geological exploration activities carried out during the Soviet period, the discovery and exploitation of major oil and gas fields, and the establishment of industrial infrastructure in the region. Particular attention is paid to the role of the fuel and energy sector in the economic development of Kashkadarya and its contribution to the industrialization of Uzbekistan. The article also explores the impact of state policies, technological advancements, and investment programs on the growth of the oil and gas industry. Based on historical sources and archival materials, the research highlights the significance of Kashkadarya as one of the leading oil and gas producing regions of Uzbekistan during the Soviet era.

Keywords: Kashkadarya, oil industry, gas industry, Soviet period, industrialization, fuel and energy sector, geological exploration, natural gas fields, economic development, Uzbekistan.

During the Soviet era, the oil and gas industry played a crucial role in the development of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. In particular, the Qashqadaryo region became one of the largest natural gas-producing areas of the Soviet Union. Geological exploration works initiated in the 1950s and 1960s revealed the immense underground resources of the region. The discovery of major gas fields such as Muborak and Shurtan marked a turning point in the economic transformation of the province. This period was not only characterized by the production of oil and gas but also by the development of transport infrastructure, the construction of plants, and the strengthening of energy networks. At the same time, there was a strong interconnection between the Soviet Union's energy policy and the growth of the oil and gas industry in Qashqadaryo. Southern Uzbekistan, especially Qashqadaryo, became one of the centers of this energy policy. The discovery of the Muborak and Shurtan gas fields created great opportunities for the industrial development of the region [1.12].

Geological Exploration Works. The geological exploration works conducted in Qashqadaryo in the early 1950s were of great significance. The primary goal of these efforts was to identify the underground resources of the region. Research carried out by geologists confirmed that Qashqadaryo had abundant reserves of oil and gas. In 1956, the Muborak gas field was discovered, confirming the high energy potential of the area. These exploration activities were not limited to identifying gas fields. They also determined the concentration zones of underground resources and the technologies needed for extraction and processing. The geological characteristics of the Muborak and Shurtan fields significantly influenced the development of the Soviet gas industry. The Shurtan field, in particular, later became one of the most important gas fields in the republic and the entire Soviet Union due to its high production capacity [2.45].

Development of the Muborak Gas Field. After its discovery in 1956, the Muborak gas field rapidly became one of the Soviet Union's largest gas fields. The development of this field ushered in a new phase of economic growth for all of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. In the 1960s, a gas processing plant was built in Muborak. Its functions included purifying and liquefying gas, as well as processing it for various industrial purposes. The construction of the plant not only increased gas output but also stimulated broader industrial development in the region. The

growth of the Muborak gas field was the result of major investments made by the central government in the gas industry. New methods for storing, processing, and transporting gas were introduced in this area [3.87].

Shurtan Gas Field and the Shurtan Gas-Chemical Complex. The Shurtan gas field, discovered after Muborak, was one of the largest natural gas fields in the region. Its discovery was significant not only for Uzbekistan but for Central Asia as a whole. The development of the Shurtan field played a vital role in the formation of the gas-chemical industry. The field contained large volumes of gas, creating a foundation for further industrial expansion in the area. The construction of the Shurtan Gas-Chemical Complex marked a major step forward in the processing of gas and its application in the chemical industry during the Soviet era. This complex enabled the production of chemical goods through the transformation and refinement of gas. During the 1970s and 1980s, the production capacity of the Shurtan Gas-Chemical Complex continued to grow, contributing not only to Uzbekistan's economy but also to the economic strength of the entire Soviet Union. The facility's capacity significantly enhanced Uzbekistan's energy potential. The success of the complex was recognized as a project demonstrating the efficiency of labor in gas production and processing. Furthermore, it marked a new stage in the development of the chemical industry. Both the Shurtan gas field and the Gas-Chemical Complex played a significant role in increasing the production of chemical products in the republic. [4.92].

Built factories and industrial infrastructure. Along with the development of the oil and gas industry in the kashkadarya region, factories and industrial infrastructure also developed rapidly. Mubarak gas processing plant, Shurtan gas-chemical complex and other small plants, became the main components of the economy of the region. Factories, carrying out processes such as gas processing, refining, liquefaction, not only improved the energy supply in the area, but also increased the production of industrial products. In addition, along with the development of the oil and gas industry, the industrial infrastructure also expanded. The construction of factories, the increase in production, the application of new technologies and the establishment of new production networks, increased the economic potential of the province. The development of industrial infrastructure also made it possible to effectively manage labor resources and create new jobs. These factories and other manufacturing facilities ensured the economic development of the Kashkadarya region and helped shape it as one of the central regions. [5.150]

Transport and logistics networks. With the development of the oil and gas industry in the kashkadarya region, the expansion of transport and logistics networks was also carried out. The Mubarak and Shurtan gas processing plants required a good transportation system to distribute the produced gas throughout the Republic. Therefore, the province began to build and upgrade railways, highways and pipeline networks. The expansion of railroads and highways provided convenience for the transportation of gas and petroleum products. These networks helped to meet not only local needs, but also the needs of the entire Soviet Union. New pipeline networks were built from the kashkadarya region to transport gas to other provinces. The existing infrastructure for transporting gas was upgraded and expanded. This, as well as the development of transport networks, helped further the development of various industries, ensuring the economic integration of the region [6.120].

The life of the working people and social changes. The development of the Kashkadarya oil and gas industry during the Soviet era had a huge impact on the lives of the working people. With the development of Industry, new jobs were created, settlements were growing, and the emergence of new industrial cities was observed. Along with the opening of the Mubarak and Shurtan mines, large numbers of workers were attracted to the industry to provide labour. The development of industry also spurred the development of social infrastructure. New towns,

accommodation for workers, schools, hospitals and houses of culture were built. Good accommodation conditions were created for the working people, their social well-being increased. All this had a significant impact on the development of the Kashkadarya region and especially on the social status of the workforce. [7.156].

Echo of Soviet energy policy in the country. The echo of the Soviet Union's energy policy in the Kashkadarya region had a direct impact on the development of its gas and oil industries. The central government sought to take full advantage of the capabilities of the Kashkadarya region in the development of the energy sector. This was done especially by opening the Mubarak and Shurtan gas fields, expanding their production capabilities and building factories. The main goal of the Soviet energy policy was to increase the energy supply and ensure economic stability. It also served to modernize the Soviet Union's gas and oil industry through the policy, to improve the efficiency of industrial production, and to advance the economic system. Gas fields in the kashkadarya region played an important role in meeting the energy needs of the entire Union [8.198].

Conclusion the development of the oil and gas industry in the Kashkadarya region during the Soviet period had a huge impact on the socio-economic life of the territory. The opening of the Mubarak and Shurtan gas fields, the construction of factories, the expansion of transport networks and changes in the life of the working people, served to increase the energy potential of the region. Kashkadarya has become an important industrial center not only for Uzbekistan, but for the whole of Central Asia. Even today, the area's oil and gas industry remains as a solid foundation of the economy. The echo of Soviet energy policy in the country has played an important role in the economic strategy of the Republic. This development served to shape the gas industry in particular and increase the energy supply. The historical development of the kashkadarya oil and gas industry has a strong influence on the economic development of the region even today.

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