This was due to the fact that the economic and social status of Tatars in Kazan continued to stay relatively low in Imperial period. The worst period experienced by Tatars was the rule of Peter the Great (1682-1725). Tatars living in Slobodas had to pay a variety of taxes to Russians. Most of Tatars living in the settlements were peasants and Peter the Great used to assign them to difficult tasks. For example, after establishment of the shipbuilding industry the majority of Tatars were sent to forests to cut timber for ships from October to April. This was a hard job as a result of which thousands of Tatars died from cold and various diseases. Moreover, their households left behind in Kazan were decaying. About 5,000 Tatars from Kazan were sent to construction of St. Petersburg. Another 5,000 were sent to construct a fortress on the river Kura in the Caucasus Mountains (Tagirov 2007, p. 274-275). As the result, the male workforce was often absent and Tatar slobodas were deteriorating.

There was a significant economic inequality among Tatars. The majority of Tatars were poor people making their income from agriculture. Rich Tatars were mostly the people who established manufactories and became relatively successful merchants exporting their products to foreign countries. The number of successful Tatar merchants increased by the middle of eighteen century. About 34 factories operating in Kazan at those times were owned by Tatars. The products they manufactured included furs and leather. Some of the travelers visiting Kazan in the second half of eighteen century noticed that Tatars in general were more successful as merchants than Russians (Tagirov, 2007, p. 273). For example, Tatar merchants Ishmuratov, Mamatov, Dautov and others established trade links with Muslim regions including Central Asia, Persia and Bukhara where Christian Russians simply could not enter (Tagirov 2007, p. 274). The houses of Tatar merchants were generally large,