

Sociological Portrait of the Korean Diaspora in Kazakhstan

Authors : Yefrem Yefremov

Abstract : In Kazakhstan, there are approximately 100,000 ethnic Koreans with the ethnonym "Koryo Saram". They are part of the global Korean diaspora around the world, deported to Kazakhstan by Stalin's decree in 1937. Koryo Saram's diasporic identity is a composite of numerous identities based on a shared cultural heritage of the USSR and independent Kazakhstan and has mosaic character. The author has conducted a sociological survey to find out the main features of the identity of the Koryo Saram diaspora. The purpose of this paper is to depict the degree of ethnic, cultural, and diasporic identity of Koryo Saram and which effect on the preserving Korean diaspora in Kazakhstan do they have. The following elements impacting the above-mentioned identities were investigated in the survey: criteria by which Koryo Saram perceive themselves to be Korean, attitude of Koryo Saram to their ethnicity, degree of feeling of ethnocultural similarity between Koreans of Kazakhstan and Koreans of the Republic of Korea, degree of association of Koreans of Kazakhstan with other Koreans living in other CIS countries, degree of practicing Korean traditions Koryo Saram's attitudes towards interethnic marriages. The primary factor in defining the identity among the respondents is the factor of ethnic origin. Nationality is the second most significant component in establishing Koryo Saram's identity. The maintenance of "Koreanness" of Koryo Sarams in the context of a multiethnic community, particularly in Kazakhstan, is based on genetic elements as well as the preservation of the culture. In conclusion, the high level of preserving Korean identity is being observed in the Korean Diaspora of Kazakhstan.

Keywords : diasporic identity, diaspora, ethnic identity, identity markers, korean diaspora, koreans of kazakhstan, koryo saram, multiethnicity

Conference Title : ICKS 2022 : International Conference on Korean Studies

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : July 12-13, 2022