

Islam, Gender and Education in Contemporary Georgia: The Example of Kvemo Kartli

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Abstract : Religious minorities of Georgia include Muslims. Their composition is sufficiently miscellaneous, enclosing both ethnical viewpoint and belonging to the inner Islamic denomination. A majority of Muslims represent Azerbaijanis, who chiefly live in Kvemo Kartli (Bolnisi, Gardabani, Dmanisi, Tetri Tskaro, Marneuli and Tsalka). The catalyst for researchers of Islamic History is the geopolitical interests of Georgia, centuries-old contacts with the Islamic world, the not entirely trivial portion of Islam confessor population, the increasing influence of the Islamic factor in current religious-political processes in the world, the elevating procedure of Muslim religious self-consciousness in the Post-Soviet states, significant challenges of international terrorism, and perspectives of rapid globalization. The rise in the level of religious identity of Muslim citizens of Georgia (first of all of those who are not ethnic Georgians) is noticeable. New mosques have been constructed and, sometimes, even young people are being sent to the religious educational institutions of Muslim countries to gain a higher Islamic education. At a time when gender studies are substantive, the goal of which is to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence in societies, it is essential in Georgia to conduct researches around the concrete problem – Islamic tradition, woman and education in Georgia. A woman's right to education is an important indicator of women's general status in a society. The appropriate resources, innovative analysis of Georgian ethnological materials, and surveying of the population (quantitative and qualitative research reports, working papers), condition the success of these researches. In the presented work, interrelation matters of Islam, gender and education in contemporary Georgia by the example of the Azerbaijani population in Kvemo Kartli during period 1992-2016 are studied. We researched the history of Muslim religious education centers in Tbilisi and Kvemo Kartli (Bolnisi, Gardabani, Dmanisi, Tetri Tskaro, Marneuli and Tsalka) in 1992-2016, on the one hand, and the results of sociological interrogation, on the other. As a result of our investigation, we found that Azeri women in the Kvemo Kartli (Georgia) region mostly receive their education in Georgia and Azerbaijan. Educational and Cultural Institutions are inaccessible for most Azeri women. The main reasons are the absence of educational and religious institutions at their places of residence and state policies towards Georgia's Muslims.

Keywords : Islam, gender, Georgia, education

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