

Abstract

This diploma thesis focuses on the minority Arab population in Khuzestan, Iran. The thesis is based on research conducted during the summer of 2014 in the province of Khuzestan. It consisted of theoretical part as well as data taken during the research period. Additional data was taken from respondents via internet and social networks. The aim of the thesis is an objective analysis of the Arab community life in Iran. Research questions focus on the status of this minority, tribal organization of Khuzestani Arabs and preservation of their cultural identity and heritage.

The first two chapters consist of the introduction and set the framework for the methodological basis. The third chapter provides geographical and historical information of this province. Acquaintance with the geographical and historical facts is necessary for better understanding of the character of the Arab community in Khuzestan. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the Mesopotamian dialect and Khuzestani dialect of this community. The fifth chapter analyzes the question of religious identity of Khuzestani Arabs.

The sixth chapter explores the tribal organization and the origin of Khuzestani Arabs, and provides an overview on Arab and non-Arab tribes in the province.

The following chapter examines the identity and ethnicity of Iranian Arabs and also explores discrimination and marginalization of Arabs in Iran.

The penultimate chapter discusses culture, traditions, customs, cuisine and religious feasts of this minority population.

The last chapter which is considered to be a significant component of this thesis and also draws inspiration from my previous bachelor thesis on Iranian wedding traditions, focuses on rites of passage in Arab society in Khuzestan. In the conclusion, Iranian and Arab wedding traditions are compared.

Based on this research, it was concluded that this minority Arab population doesn't have a favorable social status in Iran and often becomes the subject of mistreatment. Tribal organization in this society is very important and Arab culture and traditions are still well-preserved.