

Reformative Trends and Perspectives in Contemporary Central Asian *Madrasah*

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Abstract

Madrasah has been a hot debate again in Central Asia due to its theological as well as contemporary socio-political involvement. The Central Asian political authorities generally opposed interference by religion in state education institutions and didn't allow any classical or religious module to be included in the curriculum. This confusion has alarmed the society regarding the future of Islamic education in this region. This approach distinguished Central Asian countries from some prominent Muslim states wherein a series of regular reformative scrutiny of *Madrasah* is done on the periodical basis. Russia on the one hand, where secular schools have gradually introduced religious education, or on the other hand, from Muslim states such as Egypt, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia where schools, although themselves based on the western model, have integrated an Islamic component into their curriculum in order to respond to critics claiming that their education is too westernized. In most Central Asian countries, the teaching of Islam in its theological dimension has been limited to state-approved secondary level *Madrasahs* and some higher education institutions. The Central Asian governments have maintained a limited, controlled network of religious schools, which they deem sufficient to cover the country's entire geographical space. These institutions are set up as sites for disseminating authorized religious doctrine (*'Aqidah*) and recentering religious authority under the control affirming that Quranic schools have no choice other than to yield to government policy. Their role is limited to training an elite tasked with supporting the authorities in defining the contemporary discourse in religion and society.

Keywords: Post-Soviet, Curriculum, *al-Tarbiyah*, *Madrasah*, *Fatwa*, Extremism, *Mawara al-Nahr*