

WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS: HISTORICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHICAL ASPECT (THE CASE OF DAGESTAN)

The article examines the religious activity of Muslim women during the Soviet era and at present using archival and ethnographic materials, the results of field expeditions, empathy, and comparative historical analysis. The chronological framework of the study allows us to identify periods when women's religious activity increased or declined. The relevance of the topic stems from the surge in women's religious activity in the context of the re-Islamization of Dagestan society. The purpose of the work is to highlight the problems of gender asymmetry in religion and to identify the causes, opportunities and periods of women's activity in religion, revealing their real role in spiritual life and religious practices. Research showed that opportunities for women to participate in public religious activities arise for women during periods of extraordinary events. An increase in women's activity is noted during the anti-religious campaign of the 1920s and 1930s: instead of repressed clergy, many religious practices were carried out by women. Despite the multitude of publications on this topic, there is clearly a lack of research devoted specifically to Dagestan. In this regard, such a research is a very important step toward preserving the history of the region.

Keywords: Islam, gender, religion, women's activity, religious practice, North Caucasus, sufism, ziyarat, Dagestan

Authors Info: Sirazhudinova, Saida V. — Ph.D. in Political Sciences, Associate Professor, Dagestan State University of National Economy (Makhachkala, Russian Federation). E-mail: saida_kant@mail.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6069-6076>

Mutieva, Oksana S. — Doctor in History, Professor, Dagestan State University (Makhachkala, Russian Federation). E-mail: mutiewa.oksana@yandex.ru ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7669-3558>

For citation: Sirazhudinova, S. V., and O. S. Mutieva. 2025. Women's Religious Activity in the North Caucasus: Historical and Ethnographical Aspect (The Case of Dagestan). *Herald of Anthropology (Vestnik Antropologii)* 4: 136–144.

Funding: The study was funded by the Russian State Foundation, project No 22-28-00484, <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-00484/>

References

- Alibekov, H. G. 2020. Zhenskij element v dagestanskom sufizme [The Feminine Element in Dagestani Sufism]. *Voprosy istorii* 12–2: 264–272.
- Albogachieva, M. S. 2018. Zhenskie sufijskie praktiki gromkogo zikra v Ingushetii [Women's Sufi Practices of Loud Dhikr in Ingushetia]. *Islam v sovremennom mire* 14(2): 149–164.
- Amrakhov, A. K. 2019. *Edinobozhie i mistitsizm: monografiia* [Monotheism and Mysticism: A Monograph]. Vol. 1. Makhachkala: Lotos. 792 p.
- Baraeva, Z. A. 2003. *Zhenshchina v musul'manskom obshchestve: Problemy transformatsii sotsi-*

- al'nogo i pravovogo statusa* [Woman in Muslim Society: Problems of Transformation of Social and Legal Status]. Ph.D. diss., abstract, Makhachkala. 25 p.
- Bennigsen, A. 1986. Sufizm v SSSR: bibliografiia sovetskikh istochnikov [Sufism in the USSR: A Bibliography of Soviet Sources]. *Obzor po Tsentral'noi Azii* 2–4: 81.
- Chepeleva, A. V. 2015. Osobennosti misticheskogo opyta v zhenskiikh sufiiskikh praktikakh [Features of Mystical Experience in Women's Sufi Practices]. *Kontekst i refleksii: filosofii o mire i cheloveke* 6: 55–70.
- Idrisov, R. Zh. 2023. Issledovanie dukhovnogo liderstva i zhenskoi aktivnosti v musul'manskikh respublikakh Severnogo Kavkaza [A Study of Spiritual Leadership and Women's Activity in the Muslim Republics of the North Caucasus]. *Vlast'* 1: 176–180.
- Kaimarazov, G. Sh., and L. G. Kaimarazova. 2020. Zhenskoe obrazovanie v dagestane v pervye desiatiletiiia sovetskoi vlasti v regional'noi istoriografii 1920–1930-kh godov [Women's Education in Dagestan in the First Decades of Soviet Power in Regional Historiography of the 1920s–1930s]. *Vestnik Majkopskogo gosudarstvennogo tekhnologicheskogo universiteta* 3: 13–28. <https://doi.org/10.24411/2078-1024-2020-13001>
- Mutieva, O. S. 2022. Religioznye praktiki zhenshchin v musul'manskikh obshchinakh Severnogo Kavkaza: istoriia i sovremennost' [Religious Practices of Women in Muslim Communities of the North Caucasus: History and Modernity]. *Vestnik Dagestanskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 37(3): 7–14.
- Sirazhudinova, S. V. 2017. Praktika zikr v Respublike Ingushetiia: rol' v stanovlenii grazhdanskogo obshchestva i obespecheniia religioznoi bezopasnosti [Zikr Practice in Ingushetia: The Influence to Civil Society and Religion Safety]. *Informatsionnye voyny* 1(41): 58–63.
- Sirazhudinova, S. V. 2021. Stanovlenie religioznykh (islamskikh) struktur grazhdanskogo obshchestva na Severnom Kavkaze v XIX–XX vv. na primere respublik Dagestan [Formation of Religious (Islamic) Structures of Civil Society in the North Caucasus in the 20th–21st Centuries on the Example of the Republic of Dagestan]. *Vestnik Severo-Osetinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni K. L. Khetagurova* 3: 46–52.
- Sirazhudinova, S. V., and Y. M. Khuseinov. 2023. Women's Religious Activity in the North Caucasus in the Russian Empire. *Bylye Gody* 18(1): 46–55. https://bg.cherkasgu.press/journals_n/1677691372.pdf
- Vagabov M. V. 1962. *Otnoshenie musul'manskoi religii k zhenshchine* [The Attitude of the Muslim Religion Toward Women]. Moscow: Znaniye. 40 p.