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**MODERN URBAN WOMEN'S CLOTHING AS A COMPONENT OF  
REGIONAL FASHION IN DAGESTAN**

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*Abstract*

The purpose of this article is to study the modern urban women's clothing of the peoples of Dagestan in the context of the North Caucasus regional fashion with the fixation of general and special, environmental, economic, cultural, ethno-cultural, gender, socio-demographic, confessional and professional characteristics, preferences and restrictions, including group and specific subculture, dress code, as well as the preserved elements of the traditional national mountain costume. The study was conducted by sampling, survey, questionnaire and interviewing methods. The results of the study of modern urban women's costume showed that its basis is modern, focused more on Western fashion, expensive and tastefully selected stylish clothes, worn with gold and silver jewelry and precious stones, with individual elements of the traditional national costume, complemented by accessories and hair, with moderate use of cosmetics and perfumes of world famous manufacturers. The study led to the conclusion that, despite the fact that the clothes of the townswomen of Dagestan less retained ethnic and cultural characteristics and ethno-differentiating features, yet, some of its functions, details and features suggest that there is a Dagestan regional women's fashion. The inclusion of some of the preserved elements of the traditional Dagestan mountain costume, as well as certain preferences or restrictions and prohibitions that distinguish it from the style and fashion of urban women from other regions of Russia, give it ethnic flavor and originality, and to some extent contribute to the preservation of national cultural identity in the context of globalization.

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**Keywords:** Urban culture of Dagestan, clothing, regional fashion.



## **1. Introduction**

One of the most variable elements of the material culture of the peoples of Dagestan is clothing. It is determined by the natural and economic conditions of the people, their cultural traditions, ethical norms and aesthetic senses. In ethnography, clothing is treated as artificial covers of the human body. In addition to the utilitarian purpose – protecting the body from exposure to the external environment – clothing may also have significative and ritual functions. The concept of clothing includes hats and shoes. Clothing changed under the influence of various factors, in particular – the climate, geographical environment and traditional occupations of the population (Kolyakov, 1989). Researchers note the close connection between the functional purpose of clothing and the specifics of natural and geographical conditions and the economic and cultural type of Dagestan (Osmanov, 1996). The material used for the production of clothing was crop production (hemp and cotton fibers, natural dyes) and animal husbandry (wool, leather, sheepskin).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem is to study the modern urban women's clothing of the peoples of Dagestan in the context of the North Caucasian regional fashion with the fixation of the general and the particular, ecological, economic, cultural, ethnocultural, gender, socio-demographic, confessional and professional features, preferences and restrictions, including group and specific subculture, dress code, as well as the preserved elements of the traditional national mountain costume.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the article is the modern urban women's clothing of the peoples of Dagestan as a component of the North Caucasian regional fashion. At the same time, the preserved elements of the traditional national costume are also investigated.

The study of traditional material culture in the era of globalization is dictated by the fragility, variability of some of its elements, the importance of fixing gender differences, restrictions and preferences in the components of the urban and rural population of Dagestan. Saving and popularizing the phenomena of traditional household culture can give a certain impetus to their revival, development and inclusion in everyday life as everyday elements for the majority of the population.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this article is to study the modern urban women's clothing of the peoples of Dagestan with the fixation in its composition of elements of the traditional mountain costume, identifying the common and particular in the Dagestan elements of the regional North Caucasian fashion. Realization of this goal involves the implementation of a number of tasks – to characterize the traditional mountain and urban clothing of the peoples of Dagestan, to show gender, age and regional characteristics, preferences and restrictions in women's clothing, confessional, socio-demographic and professional dress code, including group and specific subculture.

## 5. Research Methods

The article is based on field ethnographic material collected by the author in 10 cities of Dagestan using the methods of sampling, interviewing, questioning and interviewing respondents. By interviewing and surveying methods, individual and group interviewing of 30 respondents was studied the costume of students of the Faculty of History and the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the Dagestan State University, faculties of management, information technology and management of the Dagestan State University of National Economy. The rest of the respondents of middle and older ages in the cities of the republic were interviewed by individual interviewing.

## 6. Findings

Clothing is one of the elements of everyday culture, reflecting the geographical, historical, economic conditions of the people's life, its ethno-cultural traditions and interactions, ethical standards and aesthetic senses.

One of the unique phenomena of the material and spiritual culture of the peoples of Dagestan is traditional clothing. "Having emerged as a man-made object of utilitarian purpose, it has at the same time an ideological and figurative content, which is explained by the variety of functions" (Gadzhikhanova, 2010). The traditional clothing of the peoples of Dagestan (Gadzhiyeva, 1981) was basically the same type of clothing of other peoples of the Caucasus, which reflected their ethnic kinship, historical and cultural ties and interinfluence. For example, it is in many ways similar to the national clothes of Chechens and Ingushs (Garsaev, 2010).

Clothing was an important component of the daily life of the citizens of Dagestan. The clothing of the urban residents of Dagestan was distinguished by its diversity and during the second half of the XIX – early XX centuries. It changed due to the fact that cities were becoming more multi-ethnic (Dalgat, 2015). According to B.-B.-A. Abdulvahabova, the main trend in the development of urban clothing in the late XIX – early XX century. was its europeanization. The qualitative changes in urban clothing were associated with economic growth, trade and industry revival, the greatest discovery in the history of world sewing business – the advent of a sewing machine (Abdulvahabova, 2012). According to Z.V. Kanukova, "for the social, ethnic and gender-age groups of the townspeople were characterized by varying degrees of intensity in the development of clothing. Clothing (shoes, accessories) of the urban elite, especially women, has undergone a major transformation. Men's clothing was more conservative, and among youth there were the least noticeable class differences" (Kanukova, 2013).

In Soviet times, significant changes occurred in the clothing of the peoples of Dagestan, associated with the spread of factory products, the appearance of new needs and living standards, which led to the disappearance of most types of national clothes (Seferbekov & Khalidova, 2018). The traditional look in clothes remained mainly among the older generations and mainly among women and people engaged in animal husbandry. Characteristics in clothes, emphasizing the marital status of women also remained. There were ethical restrictions in the clothes of girls. Traditional knitted and sheepskin products showed resistance and were widely distributed. Fashionable types of clothing were characteristic of young people. The city also experienced a certain influence of national clothes. According to Makhmudova (2016), "the main source of introducing new elements into the clothes of the peoples of the USSR was the amorphous

universalism of the urban type" (minimizing the individual, including ethnic and cultural characteristics of a person).

With the collapse of the USSR and the weakening of restrictions associated with traveling abroad, Dagestanis began to travel abroad more often, including with the purpose of purchasing clothes and other household items. There are new types of clothing. In connection with the unfolding deideologization of social relations and a kind of post-Soviet religious renaissance, the influence of Islam on clothing is felt (Dodae, 2013). In recent decades, a significant part of the female population of Dagestan has become popular women's clothes, produced in accordance with the rules of the Islamic religious dress code (Magomedov & Gadzhalova, 2017; Zulpukarova & Seferbekov, 2018).

It should be noted that, despite the negative attitude of wearing Russian society to the hijab, in Dagestan this type of clothing is popular with a certain part of girls and women of older age, who consider it one of the types of national Dagestan costume. Also there are also opponents of the hijab, which considers it non-traditional for Dagestan Arab clothes.

At the same time, the Dagestan society demonstrates a rather loyal and tolerant attitude to other types of modern fashionable women's clothing. A special category of youth is students. Despite the differences in their social origin and, consequently, their finances, the student body is connected with a general type of activity and forms in this sense a definite social and professional group. General activity in combination with territorial concentration of students generates a certain commonality of interests, group self-awareness, a specific subculture and lifestyle.

One element of this particular subculture is the student costume. "A costume is a system of certain items of clothing selected by purpose. The costume gives an external characteristic to a person, determining his gender, age, nationality, social and cultural status, aesthetic level, character, and sometimes mental state. The costume can be complemented by make-up, tattoo, hairdo, jewelry and signs of distinction. Another means of costume identification is made up of jewelry and accessories, which play a significant role in creating his laconic image" (Gadzhikhanova, 2010).

It is the students who, due to the peculiarities of their socio-demographic and professional group, group self-consciousness, specific subculture and way of life, are most concentrated in themselves innovations in clothes. On this basis, the contemporary costume of a student of the city of Makhachkala was studied. The costume of students of Dagestan State University and Dagestan State University of National Economy was studied by interviewing and questioning methods, individual and group interviewing of 30 respondents. Considering that Muslim types of clothing are also popular among students, there were such questions - how do you feel about wearing the hijab? During the study, students wearing the hijab were also interviewed.

The results of the study of the student's modern costume in Makhachkala show that, with the exception of some nuances (wearing individual elements of the Dagestan national costume, rejection of tattoos, a neutral or positive attitude towards wearing the hijab), it practically does not differ from the clothes of other people from Russia. Dagestan youth are mainly focused on fashionable, stylish, branded types of clothes of Western fashion. At the same time, students do not accept extravagant and vulgar clothes of screaming colors, tops, excessive mini, deep cleavage, women's pants (in some cases), translucent and overly tight clothes. There is a special dress code for visits to the village, when girls almost do not use

make-up, collect unfastened hair, wear headscarves or kerchiefs, wide and long (maxi and midi) skirts and dresses with closed shoulders and long sleeves, shoes at medium and low heels.

The most common clothing styles for female students are urban, classic, business, romantic. The wearing of individual elements of a traditional national costume (vintage *kabalai* dresses, *bulushka*, shawls *gulemendi*, *kelagai*, *shal*, *kiaz*, knitted socks *jurabs*, silver jewelry) is observed only in certain situations (for a wedding, a visit, a birthday) or weather seasons (winter time).

Considering the fact that the national costume is one of the most significant elements of ethnic identity that has survived in the era of globalization, in recent years, Dagestan mountain national clothes have been reviving in Dagestan. Ethnographers of the republic developed a whole range of recommendations for its use in modern culture (Gadzhhalova, 2015).

The study of the costume of students in the city of Makhachkala testifies to the influence of globalization on this component of the material culture of the citizens of Dagestan. In their costume, there are practically no elements of traditional national clothes, it is more international, focused on fashionable western branded styles (Ataeva, Bulatov & Seferbekov, 2017).

The study of the Dagestan women's costume of the townspeople of middle and older ages showed that the basis of their costume is modern fashionable clothes of European (less often – Asian) style, which they buy in stores, boutiques, in the clothing market and on the Internet. In many cases, these are clothes from the latest European collections (France, Italy), fashion, and the same shoes and accessories.

Casual clothing of women-citizens of Dagestan are a bathrobe, t-shirts with jeans as well as a classic or business style dress to the knee of red, black, green colour, made of chiffon, viscose or velor with shoes on an average and high heels.

In winter, they wear dresses and skirts made of thick knitwear, wool, velvet and velor, blouses, jackets, turtleneck, sweater, jacket-dytk, cashmere or drape coat, sheepskin coat, mink coat, scarf or shawl, ski knit hat, tanned leather hat or a cap, *jurabs*, boots and high boots. In the spring and autumn – dresses and suits made of "wet silk" and staples, a cardigan, a jacket, a blouse, a windbreaker, a raincoat, a cashmere coat, a leather jacket, and leather or suede shoes are popular. In the summer – T-shirts, sundresses, dresses made of chiffon, cotton, linen and silk fabrics with sandals, slippers and sandals.

A long or knee-length dress or a suit of soft colors made of suede, viscose, guipure, chiffon with high and medium heels shoes is worn on special occasions, (on a visit, to the theater and cinema, for a walk, for a wedding, birthday, for condolence, to visit relatives).

On special occasions (most often for weddings and birthdays, and sometimes for corporate parties), many women wear their inherited vintage dresses *kabalai* or national costumes with silver jewelry (bracelets, rings and pendants). This costume is complemented by vintage silk or wool headdresses *gulemendi* / *kelagay* / *shchal* / *klaz*. In everyday life, some women wear modern headscarves by Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Chanel. The classic or business suit of a modern urban Dagestan woman is complemented with jewelry (rings and earrings, pendant, bracelet) made of silver, gold with diamonds or semiprecious stones and bijouterie.

Cosmetics and perfumes of world-famous manufacturers – Dior, Madame Rochas, Guerlain Magie, Noire, Mascara, Max Factor, L'Oréal, Faberlic, Mexx, Mary Kay are very popular among the townswomen of Dagestan.

Of their hairstyles "classic", "high", "hair iron", "ponytail", wavy hair are popular.

Almost everyone who was interviewed during the study of a woman against tattooing their body, but at the same time they allow permanent makeup for themselves (tattooing). Some of them prefer mehendi – painting, decoration of the body (mostly hands) with henna.

As it turned out in the course of the study, clothes are not the most important things in life for most women. However, they like to wear beautiful, expensive and fashionable clothes. For some of them trousers, mini-dresses, dresses with bare shoulders and deep cleavage, translucent, tight-fitting, torn clothes with glitter and rhinestones of screaming tones are not acceptable.

Just as in the case of students, older women of the city observe a dress code when traveling to the village: they wear long and wide dresses with sleeves, put a scarf over their heads, do not use make-up, wear shoes with medium and low heels. The most common female styles among the women of these ages are classic, business, Chanel, glamor, romantic, military, minimalism. The accessories for their clothes are a bag or clutch, a mobile phone, a briefcase, a watch, sun glasses, gloves and an umbrella.

The studied category of women refers to the *hijab* with sympathy or neutral. Some women preferred a modest and closed (but not Arabic) style of clothing with the obligatory wearing of a headscarf.

So, as it can be seen, modern clothes of the townswomen of Dagestan are focused mainly on western fashion. It sometimes contains some elements of a traditional female costume. These preserved details of the traditional women's national costume contribute to the preservation of the ethnic identity of the peoples of Dagestan in the era of globalization.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, we can note the close relationship of clothing with the environmental conditions and economic and cultural type of Dagestan. Despite the fact that the clothes of the townswomen of Dagestan less protected ethnocultural features and ethno-differentiating features, nevertheless, some of its functions, details and features suggest that there is a Dagestan regional women's fashion. It is based on modern, more western-oriented fashion, expensive and tasteful stylish and branded clothing, bought in a store, boutique, on the clothing market or ordered online, worn with gold and silver jewelry and precious stones, with individual elements of the national costume, augmented with accessories and hairstyle, with moderate use of cosmetics and perfumes by well-known global manufacturers.

The inclusion of some of the preserved elements of the traditional Dagestan mountain costume, as well as certain preferences or restrictions and prohibitions that distinguish it from the style and fashion of urban women from other regions of Russia, give it ethnic flavor and originality, and to some extent contribute to the preservation of national cultural identity in the context of globalization. Saving and popularizing the phenomena of traditional household culture can give a certain impetus to their revival, development and inclusion in the modern life as everyday elements for the majority of the population of Dagestan.

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