

## SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

**of the academic advisor on the dissertation work of Kenzhegulova Gaukhar Koblanovna on the topic “The role of women social behavior transformation in Public Administration,” submitted for a doctor of philosophy (PhD) in the educational program 8D04101 – Public and Local Administration.**

Gender equality and women's civic activism in Kazakhstan are important aspects of state policy; however, the level of their development requires further progress. Despite the ratification of numerous international agreements aimed at promoting gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), significant problems remain in ensuring equal representation of women in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. Moreover, Kazakhstan has taken a number of steps to promote women's participation in governance and public administration, including the implementation of programs such as the “100 Concrete Steps” Nation Plan. This program is aimed at creating a modern, accountable government and includes specific measures to expand women's participation in the public sector, entrepreneurship, and policymaking. However, despite these initiatives, barriers remain due to both institutional constraints and cultural and social norms, limiting the full participation of women in decision-making processes.

Women's civic activism plays a key role in promoting gender equality and shaping inclusive policies that take into account diverse voices and perspectives. However, the theoretical and applied aspects of the formation and development of women's activism remain insufficiently studied, which requires a comprehensive and detailed justification.

First, traditional gender roles and social stereotypes continue to influence perceptions of female leadership, which reduces the level of women's engagement in active civic and political activities. For example, the share of Kazakhstani women among leaders is only 18%, indicating significant inequality in access to managerial positions.

Second, despite the growing role of women in the socio-political sphere, Kazakhstan still lacks systematic scientific research dedicated to the mechanisms of the formation and development of women's activism. Such a gap in scientific knowledge limits the possibilities for developing effective support programs and promoting women in socio-political life. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research covering the economic, sociological, and legal aspects of women's activism, which will allow for the development of recommendations for improving state policy aimed at supporting women's leadership, as well as creating effective mechanisms to promote women's civic engagement.

In this regard, the study of women's social activism in Kazakhstan represents a relevant scientific task with both theoretical and practical significance. A comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon will not only identify the mechanisms of its formation but also determine the key barriers and success factors. Moreover, the results obtained may contribute to the development of effective

recommendations for improving the effectiveness of state policy in the field of gender equality and women's leadership.

This dissertation is an independent scientific study that includes an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references, and appendices.

The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical and methodological foundations for studying women's social activism in public administration. It presents a comprehensive review of key theories and concepts related to women's social activity and forming the basis for analyzing social activism, including theories of civil society, social solidarity, gender stratification, and institutional development. Special attention is paid to the concept of institutionalization as a necessary condition for the sustainable development of women's social activism. The chapter also substantiates the methodological principles of the study, including the necessity of a comprehensive approach involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Based on a detailed study of current theoretical and empirical materials, the doctoral candidate presents an original interpretation of the concept of "women's social activism." This is an important contribution to the academic discourse, as the proposed concept not only reflects the current state of the studied phenomenon but also lays a solid foundation for further analysis of the social and institutional factors influencing women's engagement in management processes. In addition, foreign models of women's activism development are presented, making the study particularly valuable in terms of comparative analysis and the adaptation of best global practices to the national context. Thus, the first chapter not only forms a solid theoretical basis for further research but also offers an original author's perspective on the issue of women's activism.

The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of the current state of women's social activity in public administration in Kazakhstan using qualitative and quantitative research methods. The analysis is based on data obtained from semi-structured interviews, which made it possible to identify key motivational factors, obstacles, and barriers influencing women's engagement in public and managerial processes. A quantitative analysis was also conducted using the Z-score method, which made it possible to identify patterns of women's participation in public administration, identify the most vulnerable groups, and determine the influence of socio-economic factors. In particular, the study confirmed that the level of education plays a key role in shaping women's leadership, providing access to managerial positions and expanding opportunities for participation in socially significant initiatives. A significant part is devoted to the analysis of women's social activity in the field of palliative care, which demonstrates the mechanisms of their involvement in public initiatives and interaction with state structures.

The third chapter is devoted to the development of mechanisms for the institutionalization of women's social activism in public administration in Kazakhstan. Particular attention is paid to the development of a model for institutionalizing women's social activism, which takes into account national characteristics of the volunteer movement, legal constraints, and prospects for interaction with government structures. It also proposes the creation of specialized centers to coordinate women's initiatives, ensure activists' participation in decision-



making processes, and expand access to financial and educational resources. Recommendations are developed for the integration of educational programs, the development of leadership competencies, and the improvement of public policy tools to expand women's roles in decision-making processes. Particular attention is paid to the prospects for cooperation between the state, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector within the framework of women's leadership support programs. In this context, emphasis is placed on the formation of sustainable partnership models, including mechanisms of public-private partnerships and international grant funding, which will increase the effectiveness of women's activism and its impact on social policy.

Based on the above, it is concluded that the dissertation is a comprehensive study covering theoretical aspects, empirical analysis, and practical recommendations aimed at the development of women's social activism and its effective integration into the public administration system of Kazakhstan. The work has significant academic and practical value, as it provides an in-depth study of the mechanisms for the formation of women's activism and proposes ways for their implementation in management practice.

Kenzhegulova G.K. is actively engaged in scientific work, participating in the implementation of a number of fundamental and applied research projects carried out within the framework of state commissions and international projects. During the doctoral program, she took an active part as an independent performer in the following scientific projects:

1) PTF BR 18574240 "Strategy for the Development of Regional Potential in Kazakhstan: Assessment of Socio-Cultural and Economic Potentials, Development of a Roadmap, Model, and Development Scenarios" (2022–2024);

2) PTF BR 24992974 "Modernization of the Higher Education Quality Assurance System in Kazakhstan Based on Digitalization: Development of Approaches, Mechanisms, and an Information Base" (2024–2026);

3) International grant project "Kazakhstan Women's Participation in Online Marketplaces: Benefits and Barriers," funded by the Asian Development Bank Institute, Japan, Tokyo (June 2021 – August 2022);

4) Grant project of the Ministry of Education and Science AP14869297 "Priorities and Mechanisms for Overcoming Unequal Access of Rural Women in Kazakhstan to Resources" (2022–2024);

5) Grant project of the Ministry of Education and Science AP22784063 "Strategic Directions for Empowering Women and Access to Quality Employment in Kazakhstan" (2023–2025).

Overall, the research work of Kenzhegulova G.K. is characterized by theoretical and methodological soundness and scientific-practical relevance, and can be classified as in demand both nationally and internationally. The doctoral candidate has published 1 co-authored monograph and 19 scientific papers, including 4 articles in peer-reviewed journals indexed in the Scopus database (Q2, percentile above 35), 7 articles in collections of scientific international-practical conferences (6 foreign, 1 foreign with indexing in the Scopus database), 9 articles in

publications recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Education and Science, as well as obtained 1 certificate of authorship.

The relevance of Kenzhegulova G.K.'s dissertation research topic is associated with the study of the impact of women's social activism on national and local governance. Women bring diversity to political and public spheres. Their participation allows for the introduction of new ideas, perspectives, and experiences that may be overlooked in the absence of gender diversity. Equal representation of women contributes to the development of fairer policies and practices in public administration. Women's social activism is studied globally; however, its influence on national and local governance remains underexplored.

At the same time, women play an important role and actively strive to increase their representation in political structures and government bodies. Legislative measures have been adopted to ensure a minimum level of women's representation in parliament and other government institutions. Female political leaders and activists work to overcome stereotypes and barriers to enable broader participation of women in decision-making.

In addition, women's social activism also aims to support women's economic participation. Various initiatives and programs are being implemented to support women's entrepreneurship, develop their professional skills, and increase employment levels. Women's business associations and organizations conduct training sessions, conferences, and forums that promote the development of female entrepreneurship and leadership.

Based on the application of qualitative research tools, Kenzhegulova G.K. identified factors influencing the development of women's social activism and the role of NGO participation in implementing Kazakhstan's social policy in the healthcare sector—specifically in the development of the palliative care system. The doctoral candidate proposed a number of recommendations aimed at promoting women's social activism.

The dissertation research has been conducted at a high level and meets the requirements for doctoral dissertation preparation. The findings correspond to the stated goals and objectives, and are reliable and well-founded. Taking this into account, the dissertation work of Kenzhegulova G.K. on the topic “The role of women social behavior transformation in Public Administration” may be recommended for public defense for for a doctor of philosophy (PhD) under the educational program “8D04101 – Public and Local Administration”

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