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# STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM: AN ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

This research paper is all about the position of women in Islam and their social status. This paper discusses the different aspects like spiritual, social, economic and political and also explains the Islam and women's rights to education and what is the status of women between Islamic teachings and today's reality.

**Keywords:** women, Islam, education.

## Introduction

Islam is a major religion in the country. Islam is the only religion that promotes inclusive brotherhood principles among Muslims that have no prejudice depending on gender or race. When cultures were traditional and economically underdeveloped, Islam gave women fundamental rights and promoted every effort to increase women's status. Islam offers various directions covering women's social and political rights and the rules on their possession and their custody and religious rights<sup>4</sup>. "Women are the twin halves of men," as per Al-Quran, "The universe and everything in it are important, but a virtuous wife is the most valuable thing in the

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<sup>4</sup> A.P Vijapur, *Gender Equality In Islam: Precepts and Practices. The Radical Humanist, Special Issue on Equality of Man and Women* 7 (1997).

world.”<sup>5</sup> “Allah orders you to treat women with dignity because they are your mothers, daughters, and aunts.”<sup>6</sup>

Must remember that both the Qur’an and the prophetic traditions grant women high status and also provide them with human, political, social, and economic rights that no other religion has provided to women. Women have an autonomous identity in Islamic society, equal to men in their religious roles, their right to education, their privileges for their acts, and the protection of their values. She has absolute sovereignty and power over her house. Islam confers the same legal ability on women as the men. Without her husband’s permission, allows her to enter into some form of the commercial relationship and carry on business on her own. In certain modern cultures, in which the husband has an absolute right to control his wife’s affairs, a married woman can not satisfy the 7th century’s polite request. This legal right was not achieved until 1965 by the French woman.

It’s worth remembering that Islam was the first religion to recognise women as legal entities with equal rights to men. Women have the right in Islam to engage into a marital contract on their own terms. “What is most innovative is her ability to insist on Talaq-i-tafwid, or a delegated right to divorce”. According to this section in “the marriage contract, woman has the right to insist on the delegated right to divorce her husband on her own behalf if he violates any of the marriage requirements”. Even the most current laws contain no such provision for the advantage of women, as can be observed<sup>7</sup>. In the Islamic social system, women get certain following right such as<sup>8</sup>:

- (i) “The right to a name and an independent identity. She does not obtain a status based solely on her marriage or birth in a specific household”.
- (ii) “The right to marry someone of her own choosing and to refuse imposed marriage”.
- (iii) “The right to inherit from parents and relatives, as well as maintenance from the spouse”.
- (iv) “The ability to acquire, sell, or buy property in her own name”.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Shakera Parveen, “OPINION OF HIGHER SECONDARY GIRLS ON INSTANT TRIPLE TALAQ BILL TO EMPOWER MUSLIM WOMEN: STUDY IN MAU (U.P)” 5 *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science and English Language* 7232-7240 (2018).

<sup>6</sup> F. Jahan, *Women in India* 23 (Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam, Women and Gender Justice* 11 (Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Archana Chaturvedi, *Muslim Women from Tradition to Modernity* 216 (Commonwealth Publisher, 2004).

- (v) “The right to divorce (Khula)”.
- (vi) “The right to care for one’s parents even after marriage”.

The Holy Quran has made it quite clear that, in terms of moral and spiritual development, men and women are on an equal footing. There are no bounds to a woman’s moral advancement, just as there are to a man’s. The Holy Quran, for example, states that “Men shall have the advantage of what they achieve and acquire, and women shall have the benefit of what they similarly achieve and acquire.”

## **Islam & Social Status Of Women**

### **(i) Spiritual:**

In terms of her rights and duties, the Quran clearly demonstrates that a woman is absolutely equal to a man in God’s eyes. The following are a few examples for women’s rights: “Every soul will be kept in pledge for its deeds,” according to the Qur’an.

And similarly, in terms of religious duties, including regular prayers and fasting, one who is reduced to penury is the same as one who is well-off. Even, on the other hand, often a woman has some advantages over a man. For example, the woman is permitted to neglect her regular prayers and dietary laws under the state of menstruation and is justified if she is in a nurse and she’s in her first year of lactation. While pregnancy and in the first year of nursing, women’s lactation, nutrition is overlooked. This mother is excluded from fasting while she’s pregnant, and for forty days after the birth of her child. It’s obvious that the teaching of Islam as it concerns women is being cared for is very delicate in this case. The fact that she missed a day or two of fasting is not an excuse for missing another day during the month of Ramzan, she can make up for the missed days whenever she can.

### **(ii) Social:**

**In childhood and through the teenage stages:** Despite some Arabian tribes accepting female infanticide, the Qur’an considers it a crime. Other than that, Islam commands fair and compassionate treatment for all human beings. It is one of the sayings of the Prophet’s precepts

that “if a man does not bury his daughter alive, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will admit him into paradise”.

**As a wife:** The Qur’an that clearly communicates that marriage is a commitment between two halves of the population, the primary objective of which is to carry on human life, but with the added emphasis on emotional and spiritual well-being. The following is one of the most powerful verses in the Qur’an about marriage: “That he made mates for you from among yourself so that you could find rest and peace of mind in them, and that he ordained love and mercy between you. As a result, there are indications for people who reflect here.”

In accordance with Islamic law, a woman may not be compelled to marry someone, even if they want to. A Muslim culture gives women the power to keep Mahar, which is presented by her husband, the usual rule in every other culture is that men keep all of their money upon marriage. If the partnership cannot go on for any other purpose, the man can ask to be separated, he is instructed to give way to you in generosity.

**Being a mother:** Islam reflected kindness to parents next only to the lordship of God. A famous saying of the Prophet is “Paradise is under the feet of a mother.”

### (iii) Economic:

the fact that women were prevented from acquiring property which was decreed in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times, and which remains in force today’s times. In Islamic law, the female’s right to property is completely recognized. If she is single or married, the right can neither be taken away nor granted. Islam considers her role in society as that of being a mother and wife as the most important. The maternal education of wisely and carefully raised children can only be given by mothers Such a far-reaching and critical function cannot be considered “idleness”. Also, it restored the rights of inheritance to women, and in most cases, her share is equal to that of the man.

### (iv) Political:

There are several examples of women in the Qur'an and Islamic history who have debated the prophet (of Islam). Although there is some level of constraint, most actions need an optimum

of reason combined with a minimum of impulsiveness. Since as early as the seventh century, Muslims have had a long tradition of women who have achieved great things in various fields. There have been many highly respected female leaders in Muslim history, such as "Shajar-al-Dur (13th Century) in Egypt, Queen Orpha (d. 1090) in Yemen and Razia Sultan (13th Century) in Delhi".

There have also been examples of female leadership in Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Turkey in the modern age. Arab women are under-represented in Arab Parliaments, though this is changing as states liberalise their political systems. Muslim women have a long history of exceptional accomplishments in all sectors of life, and neutral onlookers have long praised their status, modesty, and maternal position<sup>9</sup>.

"The Qur'an introduced some of the most important and fundamental modifications of customary rules in order to elevate the status of women and strengthen the family in Muslim society". Marriage, divorce, and inheritance were the three principal areas of Qur'anic reform. According to the Qur'an, only "the wife, not her father or any male relatives, should get the dower (Mahr) from her husband, and the dower should be presented to the women (on marriage) as a free gift". As a result, rather than being an object of a transaction, the "woman becomes a legal party to the marriage contract". Islam has granted a position of dignity and honour to women in the divine plans for regulating the interaction between men and women. This type of good control is necessary for "peace, comfort, happiness, the survival of the species, and advancement". It provides "individuality, independence of thinking and opinion, and formally recognises their natural rights, despite the fact that it never caused her to revolt and mutiny against, or be cynical towards, the male sex". The pillars of family life were not shattered. Daughters still respect their fathers, and wives still respect their husbands.

## **Islam And The Right Of Women To Education**

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<sup>9</sup> Iqbal Malik, *Women in Islam* 80 (Cyber Tech Publications, New Delhi, 2008).

The term rabbi refers to a teacher. According to this view, Islam confers rabbinical rank on women centuries before any other faith. According to Prophet Mohammed's (SAW) sayings; "It is obligatory for every Muslim, male or female to acquire knowledge". When women were mistreated and only used as property 1400 years ago, Islam demanded that they be educated.

According to the Prophet Mohammed (SAW); "If a daughter is born to a person and he brings her up, gives her good education and train her in the arts of life, I shall myself stand between him and hell fire." The first piece of advice given to humanity in the Quran was to read. In Islam, education is required. Islam has made it an obligation for every Muslim male and female to seek knowledge, which is regarded as the highest form of worship in Islam. It is consequently un-Islamic to prevent a Muslim lady from obtaining an education. Women have made major contributions to Islam's cultural and intellectual growth. Prior to the modern era, the role of female Hadith experts was unique in human history. The major goal of educating women is to prepare them for the biological and emotional aspects of their responsibilities as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. We all are aware that "When you teach a man, you only taught a person; when you teach a child, you taught a family, but when you teach a woman, you taught the whole nation". As a mother, the woman plays an important role as the children's early socializer and educator. Yet another Hadith states that "A mother is a school, if she is educated, then a whole people are educated". Quran emphasizes the "importance of developing a good personal character through education". According to Islam, "a society cannot grow unless its human resources are properly educated and employed". The Quran advocates for women's rights and educational opportunities. Numerous scriptures emphasise the importance of "education for both men and women, and education is recognised as a method for women to care for themselves and their children". There is no preference for men over women when it comes to the right to an education. Both are "encouraged to obtain an education from the cradle to the grave". Indeed, all Qur'anic verses dealing with "education and knowledge are addressed to both men and women". Prophet Mohammed (SAW) also highlighted the "significance of knowledge to his people and encouraged them to seek it even if it meant travelling around the world, including to China (which was then considered as a far off land)". "Acquire knowledge, it enables its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to heaven".

## **Women's Status In Islamic Teachings And Today's Reality**

Islam brought about significant “social and humanitarian reforms, and Prophet Mohammed (SAW) brought about constructive changes that were radical at the time”. Gender and women’s issues were also addressed in these reforms. Islam established various rights for women in order to protect their well-being. When one examines the “Islam that the Prophet preached and

practised, one finds a spirit of defending women’s rights, empowerment, advancement, and fairness in all facets of social, family, and political life”.

Unfortunately, women continue to “face injustice, systematic discrimination, targeted violence, and denial of basic rights in many parts of the world today, including the Muslim world”. Islam has been used as a pretext and a disguise in many Muslim communities to advocate the exact opposite of what it truly promotes. Despite the Prophet’s statement that “seeking knowledge is a duty of every Muslim man and woman”, women are still denied access to education in many regions. Unfortunately, it appears that the Prophet’s spirit of reform has ceased and, in many cases, reversed. “Why do so many Muslim communities now ignore the Prophet’s teachings about defending women’s rights and treating women with respect and justice?”

The following are the reasons behind Muslim women’s educational backwardness:<sup>10</sup>:

- (a) Misinterpretation of Islamic prescriptions by less educated religious authorities; exacerbated negative attitudes toward women’s education.
- (b) Negligence on the part of the parents since they were uneducated.
- (c) Poor economic situation.
- (d) The maktabas and madarasas primarily focused on religious education and, as a result, woefully ignored modern education.
- (e) A lack of understanding of the significance of female education in the development of Muslim societies.
- (f) The backwardness of Muslim society has created a social environment that is not favourable to the advancement of women’s education.

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<sup>10</sup> Archana Chaturvedi, *Encyclopaedia of Muslim Women* 62 (Commonwealth Publishers, 2003).

## The Quran And Women's Economic Rights

The right of women to “productive employment has existed since the beginning of Islam and is guaranteed by the Quran”. Economic freedom is bestowed upon both men and women by the Islamic religion. When family members deny a woman the right to enjoy her freedom, it is custom, not religion, that is to fault. Prophet Mohammad (SAW) made significant progress in

elevating the status of women. Women had economic freedom throughout the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods. Khadija (PBUH), the Prophet's first wife, was a highly successful businesswoman and entrepreneur who was one of Arabia's wealthiest people. There is a lot of Quranic legislation about women's rights to inherit and bequeath. Daughters, like wives and mothers, are entitled to a portion based on their role in the family. They are free to invest their money or property in whatever way they see fit, without the approval of the nearest male relative. A husband cannot compel his wife to hand over her money. Even in low-income families, a wife usually keeps her money or property separate from her husband's. Another illustration of Islam's support for women's economic freedom is the fact that the Mahr is given to the woman rather than her father. When the bride receives the Mahr for personal use, she spends it on valuables such as gold, which serve as a sort of security.

Women's participation in Muslim society has grown in recent years. There are a variety of reasons for this, including increased educational options for women and the influence of the feminist movement, which originated in Western countries and emphasised economic independence for women. As women begin to play increasingly visible positions in society, perceptions toward women's duties tend to shift ideologically. Surprisingly, even among Muslim males, particularly those residing in Western nations, there is a tendency to focus on Hadiths that depict the Prophet (SAW) performing domestic tasks and Hadiths that depict the father's role in the rearing and teaching of children. As resources and situations change, so do attitudes in order to remain relevant and compatible with modern life<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Anne Sofie Raid, *Women in Islam: The Western Experience* 86-89 (Routledge, 2001).

## Conclusion

In education and honor, Islam provides equal opportunities for men and women and even for religious and moral rights. Islam allows for equality. But the Muslim clerics are unfortunate that this equality is understood to be their normal domain, men and women. They say that women are viewed as naturally weaker in society than men and cannot assert their male equivalent equality. They say that they have separate responsibilities for men since they left behind women by housework in which she wants to learn expertise in houses. As an individual, there has been a full forum and ability to develop education. In Islamic Law, a woman's status was more significant than a modern Hindu woman's, but a Hindu woman's status was either average or the same at the ground level. Rejection of women's education.

A woman is respected, admired, and highly regarded in Islam because It can be shown that heaven is situated under a mother's foot. God tells women to live a life of modesty, reputational as well as to men, with other women, though not with no backing whatsoever, in the Holy Qur'an, but this is mistaken by some religious leaders, who confine it to various social manacles. Finally, it prohibited a woman from engaging in public events. Thus a world of men and women was established in mainstream Islam, which hindered its attempts to rise above its societal limits. History tells that Muslim women, such as Razia Sultana, Chand Bibi, Nur Jahan, Jahanara, etc., were highly learned and accomplished. By their personality, these ladies could discover and achieve dominance.