



Cover Page



WOMEN IN ISLAM: HYPOTHESIS AND STIGMA

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It is indeed unsubstantial and improper to rationalize any kind of groundless agenda that is set to slander the achievements of any organization or institution. The progressive religious institutions have always been in front to achieve the personal and religious rights of dignity and freedom. Human being has always marked themselves enthusiastic in attaining the collective participation in social activities. The public behavior and communal thoughts make man sufficient to uphold their social pride. In order to achieve social status people themselves stood away from any sort of activity that maligns the collective emotion of the public. People involved in the social activities took immense care in protecting them from misdeed. This has been the purpose and aim of every social and public organizations, religious institutions and ethnic groups.

Islam emerged as a culture and therefore the traditions and activities commonly practiced in the religion have an ample influence of unchallenged strictness. Whoever considered religion as an orderly routine practiced the traditions to the core. Being a religion that considers time bound changes in overdue, Islam failed to reason the patriarchal dominance and the racial tyranny in as itself. Islam surpassed an era of social criticism and libel through the justification of the systematic crisis that Islam faced to invalidate the social demon. However, the time fled from an era of generosity to authority. The struggle for gender equality has not fetched up though. It is certainly a social disgrace that even the progressive communities have been in the row of this crisis. The depiction of women in ethnic and religious communities is that of a pious and noble phenomenon, but it has not wiped away their tears in life. The religion has kept a hurdle to the freedom of expression and choice before the fellow followers and especially to the vulnerable. The alienated practice of compression of women to the vulnerable section and the rejection of the voices of the oppressed has turned a general view. The status of women in religion and the society has always acquired a dignity only through the unquenchable efforts. Women in Islam are symbol of sacrifice and odd compromises.

The policies and concepts of the media and progressive public witnessed a radical change in the modern century. The portrayal of women in revolting platforms and any kind of anti-feministic portrayal has led to proper discussions and rethinks. Rethinking on such vital issues was the beginning of a new revolution and it open up a space for collective retrospection in every socio-political dimensions. The progressive modernization later knocked at the walls of Islamic jurisprudence as well. Islam has always dealt the modernization of traditions and beliefs in a distinguished manner. The policies of Islam do not compromise in any kind of authoritative traditional and institutional practices. Therefore, any method to revoke the sensitive practices is aborted in most of the cases. Perhaps revolutionary alteration of Islam could have been an idea to be resorted decades ago and nevertheless impractical. Women empowerment in society was the greatest idea of the Prophet Muhammad and indeed Islam as well. The historic replacement of social disorder and reinstating social hierarchy were the greatest goals of Islamic jurisprudence. Islam uplifted the social norms and the prohibition of early misdeed facilitated a decent and respectable living standard for women. However, it is awful and unfortunate to look on to the present scenario that Islam is hauled into. The responsibility of this circumstance is imposed on the western Medias and critique by the Islamic scholars. The ecstasy of social renovation led by the Islam was withered and over thrived by the series of accusations imposed. The despotic behavior of certain scholars and religious authoritarians paved the way for this situation.

Women in Islam are not a feeble community moreover Quran has allotted a respectable standard to womanhood. The depiction of women from the Islamic community in general media and literature is always hypothetical. The veil and burqa are never a hold back to the individuality and character of a woman. Veil is not a hurdle to the freedom and choices of women, rather it provided an identity and protected them from the pernicious social order that prevailed in the pre-Islamic society. The age of ignorance, that is the time before the arrival of Islam was hectic to the ethics put forward by the Prophet and the religious scholars. Gender Inequality and hateful discriminations on the basis of sex, caste and creed was divergent to the religious teachings of Quran. Quran publicized the benevolent character of women through hadiths and the position of dignity of womanhood was idealized. Quran addressed the followers of Islam as 'believing men and women' to emphasize the wisdom of gender equality and orderly duties put forward by Islam. According to the religious preaching of Quran women hold the equal rights to that of men. Islam regards men and women as beings of the same spirit created out of a single soul.



Cover Page



“O mankind, fear you’re Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer”. (Q4:1)

The critics as well as the opponents to the religious ideology of Islam tries to state their hypothetical analysis from whatever they have assumed from the rigid and unchangeable conduct of Islamic principles. Even though the rules and regulations of Islam are applicable to all the believers irrespective of their gender, there is a silent movement that is set against the religious community. It is quite unfortunate that certain pressure groups in the society attempt to execute their political agenda to vandalize the cultural and ethnic recognition of Islam. Islam has strived the crucial and critical period of defacement through charismatic social engineering and facilitated the liberation of individuals.

The portrayal of Islamic women and the role of women in Islamic society is a topic of serious thought and significance. There has been a lot of discussion and studies in Islamic platforms as well in other social segments on these issues. Islamic scholars and journals defended the serious criticism of the western literature and media through the justification of hadiths and quotes. Relying on the hadiths and findings of scholars on decision making is a political nature of the Islamic authority. Unusual problems always required uniform solutions. The reasoning on the hadiths and preaching has thrown Islam into severe deprecation. The unbending policies of Islam in religious practice have been a distress to the critics of Islam. The characterization of Islamic women to a weak personality is a hypothetical judgment. The uneasiness in generalizing the religious policies gave strength to this predicament. Islamic authorities failed to apprehend the timely discomfort that a raised-on demand of the political participation of women. It paved way for new controversies between the scholars and jurists. The early traditionalists in Islam were cunning and handled the situation dramatically. They covered the uneasy atmosphere of political protest comprehensively and organized the reasoning of Islamic standards. The criticism of the western literature and media was interpreted as an anti-Islamic propaganda to establish a political distress within the community. The counter criticisms of the Islamic scholars widely stressed on the anti-Islamic agenda of the western media to defame the womanhood in Islamic tradition. Islamic authors and scholars opposed the severe allegations of patriarchy and anarchy by elucidating the Hadiths. The reluctance of the early traditionalists in accepting the time bound rectifications regarding the socio-political participation of women misguided the adamant followers to a great extent. The misinterpretation and deceptiveness of the intellectuals has always strived Islam into serious controversies. However, the later Islamic movements accumulated a free environment for women empowerment to succeed.

The time before the advent of Islam marked the defenseless assault and exploitation of womanhood. The pagan society was injudicious and hassled the moral values. The Prophet was absolutely unrelenting in enjoining Muslims to be kind and affectionate upon their women. On the occasion of his ‘khutba’ in the Mount of Mercy at Arafat, he delivered an adoring speech quoting the need for respect and care to women. He instructed all the believers of Allah the almighty to be compassionate and loving towards their women.

“Fear Allah the Almighty regarding women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got rights over them, and they have got rights over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means”.

Women in Islam is an absolutely independent and rightful personality, God has allotted certain rights to men over women regarding the fulfillment of their orderly duties. Women have allotted their own individual and human rights. This granted permission was portrayed as the hidden agenda of the male dominated authoritativeness. Medias enormously criticized the patriarchal jurisprudence that ruled Islam. The depiction of Islamic women into a meager and helpless character has created a social stigma. The image of women in Islam was turned into a shabby and defenseless individual thrown into the harassment and exploitation of gender inequality. The progressive Islamic communities have been showing keen interests in women empowerment and aim for social and religious reallocation. Education isn’t a complicated task now. Islam was transversely seized at a point of time. The religion has beaten the obstructions laid by blind faith and wickedness. The alienated practices and justifications were the causes of the hard times to the religion. The atheists as well as the critic of the Islam drag the religion into wretched defamation. The controversies and organizational issues within Islam could have timely resolved in order to avoid the disparagement to a great extent. ‘Shari’ah’ regards women spiritually and intellectually equal to men. However, an only distinction it mentions is regarding the substantial realm based on the physical adaptiveness and equitable division of labor. Men get the privilege of more strenuous work and it makes him responsible for the maintenance of family. Women get the privilege of raising the children and upbringing them, which is regarded as a great task with enough importance. A prosperous society is sprout from a healthy family. Thus, men come into the position of sound administration. It doesn’t mean a transgression to ignore the individuality of women nor the subjugation of womanhood. Women are a



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.09>

subordinate to ideal family making. The religious enlightening of Islam for the emancipation of womanhood was revolutionary. Unlike the western concept of liberation Islam emphasizes the awareness of the reinforcement of dignity, chastity and honor. The religious conventions of Islam consider the western talks of liberation as a disguised form of exploitation of body and decrepitude of dignity and honor. The healthy and diverse dialogues between western and Islamic scholars open up a space for knowledge and cognition