
VARIABLE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND ISLAM

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The basic purpose of Islam is to promote the goodness & eradication of evils for a harmonious society through co-operation, service, progress, and welfare. Human beings have been given wisdom and guidance by Allah for making their thoughts and practices strong. Both male and female are required to play an important role in the peaceful environment of the society. Islam acknowledged the status of women as a mother, wife, sister, and daughter. Women have been given the rights of property, rights to take part in professional economic activities, rights to live her life according to her choice, rights to determine her financial expenditures and savings of financial needs and to overcome these with an honorable religious status in the society which is not given by any other culture and religion. Islam has admired the active role of woman in different aspects of the life for the progress and welfare of the society. In this research article, I have tried to highlight the importance of the changing role of the woman for the betterment of the Islamic culture & environment according to divine instructions and to promote welfare in society.

Key Words: Women, Variable role, society, Islam

The basic objective of Islam is to promote goodness & eradication of evils through welfare, happiness, and progress for human society. The human being is created as the representative of Allah. Both genders are required to play an imperative role in the welfare of society. No development is possible unless and until woman plays her divergent role in the society. Islam raised the status of the woman to a great extent comparatively with all other former civilizations. A Woman has been given rights of property, rights to take part in professional economic activities, rights of marriage, rights of determine her financial requirements and to overcome these and with an honorable social status by Islam. It is a matter of fact that woman occupied an important place in Islamic Era and played an active role in the building of the Society.

There had not been a single religion, culture, civilization in the ancient world which did not victimize various forms of pains and cruelties to the woman. It shows from the study of history that during the various

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era, the woman had lost her recognition in her respective cultures & civilizations. A Woman not only lost her capabilities, skills but also her freedom. Moreover, the woman had to lose her worth and status and victimized in each society and every part of the world. The woman had fallen to the lowest level regarding their moral and lawful rights. Women were living her life in the miserable and terrible condition in different cultures of the world. The woman had to force for marrying without having equity and sometimes into adultery. Other became heirs of her wealth irrespective of the intensity of her financial needs. A woman could not even consider herself the owner of her own life. She was treated as secondary to her husband and father or any male member of her family. Her husband used to become the owner of her wealth even before her death and also became her master. It all happened when nature was changed. It all happened when nations left the way of Allah and followed the path of the devil. However, the moderate way is in which harmonized with nature, logic and human welfare. Although the Islamic way is established by Allah himself. The Greek civilization was the most civilized among the ancient nations, the Greeks considered woman the essential inconveniences and fundamental head of all problems. She was far away from the society. She had only one thing to do i.e., to give birth to children and to grow up the child. There were many women who were forced to do adultery. Mothers were also forced to do adultery. Furthermore, sisters were forced to marry against their will. She was looked down up in the society; (1) she was treated as a servant; she was victimized. Their concept of woman respect was not clear. "Women were used to girlfriends with men. They had wives to increase children and girlfriend to enjoy their sexual contact with them". (2) The status of women was not better in Rome than Greek. Roman law deprived the woman of her civil rights; hence, her legal personality was not acknowledged in the society. The woman was considered a cause of all ills and no rights were given to her. (3) The Persian people basically belonged to the military nation. The man was considered the significance pillar of the family (4). Nutshell, woman, in Persian civilization, seem to have lost her rights (5). Women had the status of a slave in Hindu society. People lost them in gambling, drinking i.e., Hindu law disgrace woman that a woman could not do anything with her own will. She was a property of her father and later on belonged to her husband. Thus it was her utmost responsibility to treat/serve her husband like a God. They considered husband the representative of

God and If her husband died before her, they used to burn her alive with him. (6)

Chinese people were used to disliking girls. Whenever the father got the news of the baby birth, he used to take her to market to sell. If no one bought her there, he used to leave her in the deserted area, strangled her, threw her in water for death and buried her alive. Sometimes, the father of the daughter used to left her in the open fields so that the cold frost could kill her or predators could eat her. Muslims find *Ibn e Batuta* travelogue that the Chinese people sold their daughters and did not perceive it bad (7). Chinese culture recognized woman as out of wisdom and no-sense. She did not possess any ability to resolve any issue related to her life without the guidance and help of a man. She was considered a miserable creature and was maltreated. Neither did she had any light nor could she demand anything. As soon as she got married, they called her in their language "obedient" (8).

Jews consider the woman responsible input out Adam from Heaven, so it was one of the reasons for her decline. devil tricked Adam through her and co, consequently, the man was deceived by the devil. The first thing which tempted human being and took him out of heaven was a woman. (9) In Jewish society, the woman was in the possession of their fathers before marriage and fathers had the right to sell them before they were fully mature if they did not have money and were poor. Hence her father had full command to marry her when he liked and will of a woman was not taken into consideration. She was bought at the time of marriage and dowry was given to her father or guardian. Later, she became the possession of her husband who was her absolute owner. Even the Old Testament did not raise the status of woman. Torah says, that Woman introduced the sin in the world and she is the cause of human destruction. (10).

It is mentioned in Talmud that when there were praises a non-Jewish woman, they were not to be blamed, for her marriage with any person. They considered a non-Jewish woman like an animal and hence they can't make any matrimonial contract with them (11).

As for as the Christianity is concerned, we may find in the Old Testament that Eve was responsible for the heinous crime so this belief was transferred to Christianity. Although, It is mentioned in the New Testament that Adam did not go astray rather woman went astray and thus this incident happened (12). In the start of Christianity, it was tried for the betterment of woman and blessed her with many prizes so that

she could be saved from defaming, but they failed to do so. The opportunities offered by Christianity were very less, and hence could not raise the status of woman and would not free her from man's trenches. Women were neither protected from cruelties, hatred nor was she given any right. Gospel gives significance to man and not women. The priests called the woman the root-cause and fountainhead of all sins, and consider her lawful rotation of between the man and woman not sacred which must be avoided. After this, it became common among people that remaining single is better than being married. Saul said in this context that one who marries one's daughter, does a wonderful job, and one who does not get one's daughter married, does a far better job. (13).

In short, it can be summarized as the reality of women in ancient cultures, civilizations and religions before to the Islam as follow

- 1) No concept of humanity; did not value the man and did not have a role in their life.
- 2) No concept of equality between male and female; for boys as well as girls; between husband and wife.
- 3) Subordination of women to contempt and humiliation; and forced into routine work, such as prostitution and entertainment for men, as in the most ancient civilizations and cultures.
- 4) No understanding and application of religion had been prevented from so as to Jews, Christians, and other religions.
- 5) Manipulating women from their individual and collective rights, as is happening to most nations, civilizations and religions.

Before the advent of Islam, the woman had lost all the rights in Arab society. The birth of a girl was considered shameful. They treated her like slaves and mostly buried them alive. Her birth was not considered an occasion of happiness but humiliation (14). Allah Almighty stated about the condition of the woman before the advent of Islam. If there were the news of a baby child is announced to any one of them, his face darkens and he chokes with inward gloom. (15) Hence, the study history shows that man finds the woman as surrounded by problems and was exploited, it also exposed that she was treated with injustice. Moreover, there was no system of belief which could have saved the woman from cruelties, problems, and injustice. In fact, after the advent of Islam, the distinction between man and woman regarding fundamental human rights was removed. However, Islam bestows all those rights for the woman that she was deprived of in the Arab society. Islam gives the woman all those rights which man enjoys such

as legal, social, economic, political, moral and spiritual rights, etc. In this way, women can play her role in society and can take part in various spheres of life, Consequently; women can participate and play a constructive role in Islamic culture.

Women in ancient civilizations not having the dignity being the human being as Islamic culture acknowledge it, which designed her rights, include her status as a human being; Woman began to be called not only half society but an organic for the whole society under the shadow of Islam. She has her contributions in the formulation of Islamic culture and society. She got such rights which she could not gain in any other culture, civilization or religion, in the previous society, and these rights gained legitimacy and mankind.

Variable role of women is not only an extension for the man as some critics were considered. We may judge the role of women for building and reforming of the society. Its role for the integrity of the family, the upbringing of generations, development in education and politics, for advisory and even to save the inheritance.

These are the glimpses of our culture's history. We must be proud of it and give it undiminished value. (16) In the ignorance era, women had no rights of inheritance, but Islam conferred the rights of inheritance to women. Likewise, the opinion of a woman was not considered; but Islam declares it obligatory to seek woman's consent in the matter of life.

Islam realizes the equalization of the punishment of adultery between women and men, unlike the laws that the people framed, putting the difference in the crime of adultery. In the same way, the rights of man and woman are equal. Consequently, men were given the right to divorce and women were also bestowed to take the right of *Khula*.

Islamic Sharia and Rights of a woman are as follow:

- 1) Common rights: Right of Life, Right of Liberty, Right of Education, Right of Equality
- 2) Social Rights: Rights as a mother, Rights as a daughter, Rights as a sister, Rights as a life-partner, Rights as a divorced and widowed, Rights as a neighbor, etc.

Among the prominent social rights mandated by Islam to women include: Right to choose a life partner, Right to the dowry and ownership, Right at the earnings of the spouse, Right to claim divorce, Right in the foster (17)

3) Religious Rights: Equality in performing worship (Declaration of *Kalma*, prayer, fasting, *zakat*, and the rituals of *Hajj & Umrah*).

4) Human and Civil Rights: Islam has acknowledged human and civil rights of woman as follow: Right of equality in creation, Right of equality in succession in domestic affairs, Right of equality in human values, Equality in responsibility and rewards, Equality in rights and duties, Equality of life and care in the family, Equality in the pursuit of knowledge Social and Marital Rights of Woman, Equality in rights and duties.

5) Political Rights: The political status of *Hazrat Aisha* is not hidden to anyone. She was truly a role model for every political leader. For example, when she stood on the side of opponents of *Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib* after the martyr of the third Caliph, *Hazrat Uthman-bin-Affan*, she led the people on her side in an efficient political way (18). Another, political role model we find in the history is *Madam Razia Sultana*. She was the first Muslim ruler woman of South Asia. She was a talented, wise, and very generous woman (19). So we may summarize the political rights of woman in Islam as: i.e., Right to advise the guardian, Right to advise the ruler, Right to denounce the unjust ruler, Right to shelter, Right to monitor current events, Right to claim her political rights and defend them.

6) Judicial Rights: Right to pledge allegiance, Right to participate in the preaching of Islam and Jihad.

7) Financial and Economic: Islam has bestowed a Muslim woman such as financial and economic rights, which no other society, culture or religion bestowed upon her. Islam has given equal rights to a Muslim man and woman to possess, mortgage and perform all types of contracts. She was right on her possession and men in any relation or in any form cannot interfere with her rights. Therefore, a Muslim woman can perform her financial and economic affairs without any hindrance and restriction. She can dispose of her funds with full discretion. She has the right to sell, purchase, lease and entrepreneurship, speculation and other financial contracts as well as donation, charity, devotion, and dedication which are performed to seek the will of Almighty Allah. The Most prominent financial rights recognized by Islam for Women are as follow, Right to work according to Islamic teachings. Economic performance i.e., rights of alimony, dowry, inheritance, business, dispose-of, own property. These rights cannot be fully elaborated here. But today, the so-called torch bearer of modern civilization want to take the woman to the pre-Islamic

civilization which was the society of stagnant and deprivation. These are intellectually unaware of the vision of Islam, they consider a woman just a commodity by which woman has become marketable and they are promoting their trade through the advertisement of women. They reduce the role and importance of women given by Islam and interpret and present the wrong picture of the rights of women provided by Islam (20). Islamic law does not prohibit the woman from working, but it sets the limits and controls which suit and benefit the community members: Professional work of woman creates a negative impact on family life. To match their work to the nature of the woman. Should not operate in accordance with the forbidden and illegal ways. Professional and conducive areas allowed for a Muslim woman. For the sake of Allah woman has to perform religious duties. The areas of science and public education. In telemedicine for the treatment and woman's diseases and pregnancy and childbirth and other. In the area of household home economics.

As for as the variable role of Woman in the establishment of Islamic civilization is concerned. No other religion but Islam has honored and dignified the role and importance of women. Islam has declared the woman a counterpart of man. Islam says that one is the best who is more compassionate to her family. The Muslim woman has given the rights to foster, look after and best upbringing. She is the delight of eyes, fruit of the heart of parents and brothers. When she grows up, she becomes respectable and honorable. She is married with the recitation of the Verses of Almighty Allah and a promise. The abode of her husband is the dearest and safest sanctuary for her. The husband is required to look after her, respect her, and honor her and to solve all her problems. When she gives birth to a child, the husband is ordained to treat her well. Almighty Allah has connected her right with His right and declared her disobedient His own disobedient. When she is a sister, it is ordered to treat and respect her well. When she is the aunt, it is equal with mother in respect and reverence. When she is a grandmother and aged one, her status and importance are increased in her sons, grandsons and in all her relative. Neither her opinion is rejected nor denied. When she is away from kith and kin, Islam has ordered to respect her, help her, guide her, not to trouble her and ask the Muslims men to lower their eyes. Muslim society has always considered these rights. Owing to which the status and importance of Muslim women have been restored. Whereas the non-Muslim society is deprived of such privileges. No doubt that the women play an

important role in the upbringing of the child. Any other member cannot replace them; the teacher can provide the child information and knowledge through which an encyclopedia of knowledge could be prepared, but the effect of a woman can give that a teacher or anybody else cannot produce. That is why the Islamic scholars have urged to choose a woman who can play her role in upbringing the child. Moreover, it is necessary to choose such a woman before marriage. Stressing upon the same point, they say that the upbringing of a child should be before birth by choosing good mothers (21).

Renowned *Abu Aswad ad dualie* said to his sons: "I did well to you before your birth, in your childhood, in your boyhood". His sons replied: "How good was done to us before we were born"? He said: "I chose the best mother for you, due to whom you cannot be ridiculed in the society" (22). This is one of the parent's first right on their children to choose each other who are pious, chaste, generous and can up bring their children in a well way. They can resolve their affairs, they can have concerns about their religious affairs because a child inherits parents collective, moral and spiritual qualities and these qualities remain in his whole life. It is necessary for a mother that she should be equipped herself with educational and moral weapons to up bring her child. Physical training begins in the womb of the woman when she is conceived. She fully diverts her attention towards her child; she takes care of her nutrition. This exercise keeps going on until the birth of the child. The woman is held responsible in the Islamic system to foster her child and other necessary affairs of the newborn baby (23). Mental Training concept is to realize the reality of mental health. It is a fact that a constant check is necessary for the children to keep them healthy mentally. Neither they should be rebuked too much nor should they be spared. In this way, the children are looked after and they enjoy good health. (24)Educational Training is considered to be the first training institute of all mothers for their children. A woman not only takes care of her kids including physical and mental growth but also the moral and ethical training as well. Saying of Holy Prophet is which is narrated By *Abdullah ibn e Amr* that Command your children to pray when they become seven years old, and beat them for it (prayer) when they become ten years old, and arrange their beds (to sleep) separately. (25)Mother is the only influencing factor of the children in the early five years. She trains them to sit, to eat, to drink and to behave in a well-mannered way. These habits remain with every individual almost throughout their lives. (26)

Conclusion:

Islam has considerably enhanced the status of women. The western civilization was claimed to raise a higher status of women. Although Islam does not differentiate between man and woman in religious and legal matters, there is no doubt man and women have different roles to play in society for which they are religiously and physically well equipped. Women have played an important role in Muslim society to train their children as true Muslim. They trained their children to promote the goodness and to eradicate the evils from the society. The Women played an important role in implementing the sharia and defending in Jihad. The Women have proved to be remarkable contributions in every field of life i.e, Social, Economic, Political and Moral system.

Recommendations:

- 1) Through media need to give awareness about the Islamic rules and regulations towards the rights of women in the country.
- 2) Women need to encourage in every sphere of life i.e, Social, Moral, Economic and political grounds and their role need to acknowledge in the society.

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