

Q) Islam has bestowed all the status, role and rights to the women being demanded in the recent Feminist Movements. Explain in detail.

1) Introduction:

The 21st century is witnessing an exuberant increase in Feminist Movements. These movements aim to liberate women from social conformity and fight for women's rights. The UN defines women rights in the following words:

"Women's rights are fundamental human rights that ensure the equal social, economic, political and cultural opportunities for women, enabling them to fully participate and contribute to the society"

The women have been striving for centuries to procure these rights and are still struggling

Islam accentuates the rights, status and role of women in the society, and has endowed all these rights to women 1400 years ago, without the women having to struggle for them.

2) 2) Role and Status of women in Different Cultures:

2.1) Arab Culture Before the Advent of Islam:

The Arabs used to treat women disdainfully. Women were regarded as mere objects. Female babies were considered as a humiliation and were abandoned. The Arabs used to follow practices of Female Infanticide wherein the girls, who were still infants, were buried alive. This practice was ubiquitous in Arab lands. Later Islam, after its inception in Arab, not only condemned this gross act but also prohibited it. The Quran says in this regard:

"And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed"

2.2) Status of Women in Indian Culture:

The Indian culture is marred with some of the worst women treatments. The

Indians treated women as mere objects, betting and winning/losing them in games. Women were regarded as lesser creatures and were even sacrificed to please their gods. The relationship of man and wife was more of master and slave and the wife was cremated when her husband died.

2.3) Status of women in Greek:

The Greek considered women as embodiment of evil and abhorred them. Women had no share in inheritance and has no right to receive education. There were no laws to protect women's rights and their living conditions were inhumane.

2.4) Status of women in China:

The Chinese considered women child to be humiliation. Women were despised in societies. They had no rights and were only given derogatory jobs in communities.

3) Role, Status and Rights bestowed on women by Islam that contemporary Feminist movements are striving for:

3.1) Basic Humanity:

Islam accentuates that man and women are regarded as equals in terms of their humanity. Women are not to be treated as inferior creatures and disparaging them is not acceptable. Both genders are bestowed with dignity and have rights over the other. Quran says in this regard.

"And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women"

3.2) Respectful Treatment:

Islam elucidates that women are to be respected through out different stages of life. Whether she is a daughter, wife or mother, Islam has kept the status of women in

high regard. The elevated status of women can be discerned by the hadith wherein Prophet ^{Pbuh} said:

"The Best of yous are those who are best to their women"

3.3) Financial dealings & property ownership :

Islam has given right to own property and to conduct financial dealings. Muslim women have the right to buy or sell properties that they own, or to invest to enhance their profits. Such dealing cannot be prevented in any muslim state as it is one of the fundamental rights conferred to women by Islam.

3.4) Right of Education :

The fabric of Islam accentuates education and this right is not only limited to males but also extended to women. Islam ~~not only~~ allows women to receive the best education. Underscoring the significance of education, Prophet ^{Pbuh}

said:

" Seek Knowledge is compulsory on every muslim"

'every muslim' in the above hadith explains that it is referred to both ~~man~~ man and woman.

3.5) Receive Share of Inheritance:

Islam permits women share in inheritance. Before the advent of Islam no similar right was granted to women. ~~but~~ Islam, not only permits women a share but also prohibits the denial of such ~~to~~ to women. The Quran states:

" For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much - an obligatory share."

3.6) Right to Divorce / Khula:

Islam Permits women to end the

marriage if she faces any problems with ~~mar~~ her husband. The right of divorce, albeit discouraged by Islam for any frivolous reasons but under serious circumstances, can be exercised by both male and female.

3.7) Freedom of Marriage:

Forceful marriages are prohibited in Islam. The assent of woman is compulsory for her marriage. Islam gives no one the authority to force any woman into marriage, not even her guardian. Highlighting the significance of a woman's consent in her marriage, Prophet ^{Pbuh} said:

"An ayyim must not be wedded unless she is asked, and gives her approval. And a virgin must not be wedded unless she is consulted!"

4) Conclusion:

In a nutshell, many rights that feminist movements have obscure through struggles, or the rights they are striving for are already endowed to women by Islam, and there remains no ambivalence of high status of women in Islam. Maxim.....