

CSS 2019

Q4 Discuss women rights in Islam in the context of current Feminist Movement.

## Introduction to Women Rights

Mary Wollstonecraft often considered one of the earliest feminists, in her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" 1792, argued that women should have the same fundamental rights and opportunities as men, including access to education and the ability to participate in politics and society on equal footing. But it is not an overstatement that Islam is the first religion in the world to offer a system for protection and well-being of women and their rights. This Islamic system offers her dignity, respect and equal status as men.

Allah Almighty, the Exalted,  
says in Glorious Quran

“ He created you from <sup>one</sup> ~~single~~ soul  
(pair) ~~male and female~~.

Then <sup>of</sup> He made from it its  
mate. ”

(Surah Az-Zumar: Verse 6)

# Two Extreme Views On Status of Women

## ⇒ Comparative Approach

### \* Western approach

#### Feminism

According to Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy:

“The approach to social life, philosophy and ethics that commits itself to correcting biases leading to the subordination of women or the disparagement of women's particular experience and of the voices women bring to discussion” is called feminism.

This liberal view is drawn from the origins of Judeo-Christian traditions.

\* **Islamic Approach:** In Islam women are bestowed with all the equal rights as of men but in feminism there are no boundaries related to ethics of women

While in Islam there are certain  
"boundaries" for women like dress-code.

Because in Islam the <sup>literal</sup> meaning  
of women is "pardah" (screen or  
veil). Islam has defined all  
these boundaries for their own  
safety and well-being.

## ② Right of Education

Unlike 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century of feminist movement that was focussed on education rights of women; Islam has forced on those rights a long time before this movement. In Islam it is mandatory for both men and women to acquire knowledge.

Almost 1400 years back, Allah has forced Arabs to make their daughters

educated because it is woman who grows the generations and brings them up. So it is really important for a woman to be educated so that she can bring-up her children very well as it has become a fashion of the modern world to focus on education. But Islam has focused on it even a long time back.

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in his Hadith says that

“

It is mandatory for every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge.”

### ③ Equality in Islam

Unlike “Second wave of feminism” (1960s to 1980s) that was focussing on “equality” and discrimination; Islam has been focussing on equality of men and women while challenging the status of women in Arab times. Allah Almighty has not

ever preferred men to women.  
All humans are equal in front  
of Him.

“O mankind! We created you  
from a single pair of a male  
and a female.”

Surah Hujuraat

Verse: 13

## ④ Inheritance Rights

In first wave of feminism (1830s  
to early 1900s); women fought  
for their equal contract and “property”  
rights. But Islam has bestowed  
women with this right even  
before this struggle.

Allah <sup>the</sup> exalted stated in Glorious  
Quran:

“Allah instructs you concerning  
your children: for the male, what  
is equal to the share of two  
females.”

(Surah Nisa: Verse 11)

In Islam, financial responsibilities are on the shoulders of men but women still gets share from inheritance despite of the fact that Islam has not put any financial responsibility on her.

## ⑤ Justice for Women

Islam has declared launching a charge against chaste women unless supported by four witnesses is a punishable offence.

Allah Almighty says in Quran

“And those who launch a charge against chaste women and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations), - flog them with eight stripes; and reject their evidence ever after.”

(Surah An-Noor : Verse 4)

On the other hand, in West



had fought a long struggle starting from 1830s to get even basic rights of equality, justice, political rights and education.

## ⑥ Rights of Wife

<sup>the advent of</sup>  
Before Islam, wives were treated in an ill-manner. They were thought to be material things and slaves. But Islam has introduced the concept of rights of wife that both husband and wife are **garments** of each other and husbands must **respect** them.

Allah Almighty says that

ee

They are your garments and ye are their garments"

(Surah Baqarah: 187)

### Difference with Feminism

In Islam it is the duty of wife to give loyalty to his husband but in Western concept there is no concept of **loyalty** towards husbands.

## Key Take Aways from Farewell Sermon

“It is incumbent upon them (wives) to honor their conjugal rights and not to commit acts of impropriety which if they do, you have authority to chastise them, yet not severely.”

### ⑦ Prohibition of Fornication and Adultery:

Fornication and adultery are crimes in Islam for which specific punishment is prescribed without gender inequality.

Allah says in Holy Quran

“The woman and man guilty of adultery or fornication, - flog each of them with a hundred stripes.”

(Surah An-Noor: 2)

On the other hand; Western liberal movement of feminism <sup>has</sup> justified

every sort of sin for women. Even the family system is destroyed in west because of non-prohibition of adultery. It is the main difference b/w Islam and feminism.

## ⑧ Right of Divorce

In Islam divorced is allowed as it is a right of women but it is the only right of woman that is strongly disliked by Allah.

Allah Almighty has given the right of divorce in case of extreme conditions when no settlement could be made.

Islam never allows women to tolerate injustice or cruelty of her husbands.

Difference between Islamic perspective and Feminist perception

All current feminist movements are provoking women to intolerance and not to make any sort of settlement. All so-called so-called ego or self-respect lessons given by these feminist movements are discouraging women to show patience

in their married life. Due to which the idea of marriage as a lifelong commitment has changed significantly, gradually evolving into an emphasis on individual fulfillment and satisfaction.

In Surah Nisa Verse 128  
Allah says that

ce

And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them - and settlement is best. And present in (human) souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah - then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.”

## 9) Respect for Mothers

Islam has introduced the concept (and faith) of “Paradise” under the feet of a mother. All children are ordered to respect their mothers abundantly. Its clear example

can be seen from the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

A man came to Allah's Messenger and said "O Allah's Messenger! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) three times (forced) him the same replied

"Your Mother". The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said "Your father". This example clearly depicts the importance of status of mother in Islam.

## Difference with Feminism

Islam has given a mother such a magnificent position because of her **self-less** love for her children.

But feminism is promoting desires of **individual fulfillment and satisfaction**.

A survey <sup>by</sup> Gallup and Gillani on divorce rate in Pakistan, October 2023

has revealed that the divorce rate in Pakistan is at an all-time

high. The study found that the primary reason for divorce was

lack of commitment, closely followed by infidelity and conflict in

the family. All these divorce cases are causing an increase in

the number of **Broken home family children**. These children usually

belong to elite class families and due to weak bonds with

their mothers, most of the children when they <sup>are</sup> grown up, leave their

mothers in old age homes. That's why there is a rapid increase in

the number of mothers in old-age homes.

## ⑩ Hijab

The concept of Hijab is totally opposite to Feminism. Feminist movement are trying to justify that women could wear anything but they should be respected no matter how much unethical clothes they wear. Recently, in Pakistan

(i) Mee too campaign was started where high celebrities stepped forward to justify their all sorts of clothes and fornication in the name of women rights.

(ii) "Mera Jism Meri Marzi"; this campaign was aimed to exploit women rights and to given them a totally different face in an Islamic state. Through this manifesto women were provoked to wear any kind of clothes contrary to Islamic teachings.

While in Islam both men and women are instructed to their gazes and dress in a

decent and modest fashion to guard their integrity and chastity.

## Conclusion:-

The concept of women rights that feminist<sup>is</sup> trying to protect for women <sup>movements</sup> is different from Islamic concept in terms of boundaries that Islam has designed for ~~both men~~ women for their safety and respect. But all other rights that feminism is trying to secure for women like education, inheritance, political and equality rights; have already been bestowed upon women 1400 years ago. It is Islam that has actually challenged the pagan Arab traditional system of disrespecting women, and given women rights of dignity, honour, self-respect and equality. So, Islam is a complete religion that protects women and also encourages them to move abreast of men, but within their boundaries.