

Explain the concepts of Human Rights in Islamic thought in specification of "Status of Women in Islam".

INTRODUCTION

"Islam affords women their rightful status and encourages them to work in all sectors, as long as they are afforded appropriate respect". (By Sheikh Zayed)

The concept of Islam about human rights is based on mutual respect and dignity. Islam gives equal right to both man and woman.

Islam has granted unprecedented spiritual, social, political, economic and cultural status to woman.

It has acknowledged complete personhood of woman but also safeguard her rights, keeping in view her vulnerabilities.

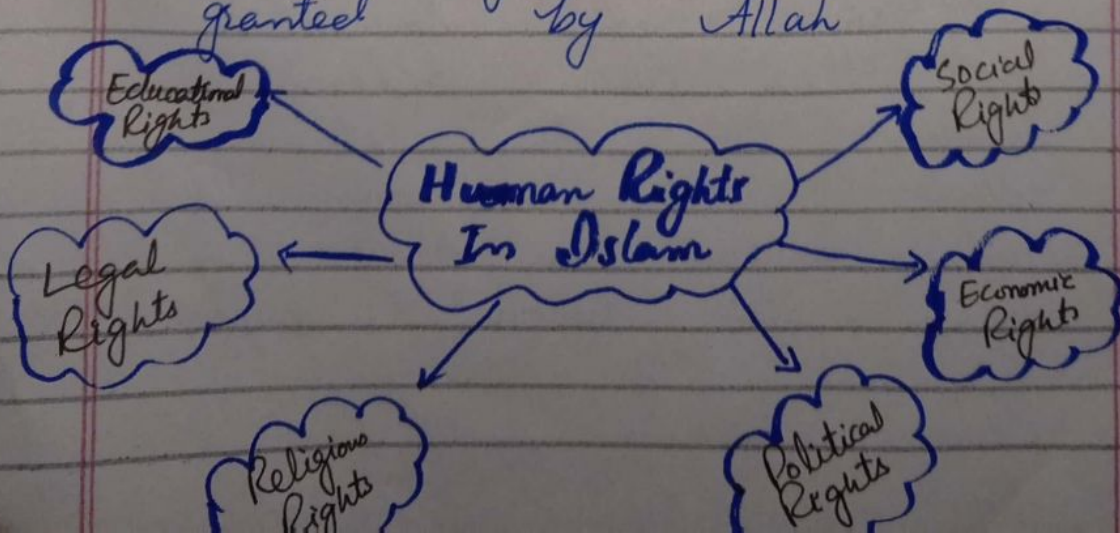
In the divine scheme of regulation of the relationship between men and women, Islam has assigned a position of dignity and honour to woman.

CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

"We have honoured the sons
of Adam"
(Surat - Bani Israeel: 70)

In Islamic context, the concept of human right is as old as Islam itself. Islam has laid down some fundamental human rights for humanity, as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances whether such a person is resident within the country of the Islamic state or outside it, where he is at peace or at war. When we speak of human rights in Islam we really mean that these rights have been granted by Allah



STATUS OF WOMAN IN ISLAM

"Observe your duty to Allah
in respect to the women
and recommend them to
be well treated"

(Prophet PBUH Last Sermon)

The status of women in Islam is one of the crucial topics and dominant theme in the modern era. In Islam, women have an honored position. She has special respect, love, affection and gentle feelings along with her legal and civil rights. She is seen as an affectionate daughter, a beloved wife as well as a compassionate mother. Islam recognizes all the basic, human rights of women including social, economic, educational and political rights. In Surah An-Nisa and Surah Al-Talag, precise ^{discussions} ~~discussions~~ are presented on the topic of women's rights and obligations.

1- WOMEN AS A DAUGHTER

Daughters are the blessing of Allah Almighty. Before the

Advent of Islam, the father of a girl feel ashamed to break the news of her birth. He feel embarrassed ~~to~~ ^{while} meeting the people. As Allah says about their behaviour:

"And when the news (of the birth) of a daughter disclosed to any of them, his face turn dark, and he suppresses grief."
(Surat-un-Nahal : 58)

i- Right as Daughter:

Before Islam, daughters were buried in infancy. Islam forbid such practices and consider it a crime like any other murder.

Islam gave privileges to daughters that they never had before. The Holy Prophet said: "Don't dislike daughters, no doubt they are (for parent) more caring and loving". In another Hadith,

"He who up-brings two girls properly to the age of adolescence, that person will be with me side by side in the Heaven".

2- WOMEN AS A WIFE

As regard the women as wife, the well known saying of Prophet (PBUH) is: "The best among you is the one who is best towards his wife." In his last pilgrimage, the Prophet (PBUH) spoke about woman at length and said:

"Well then people! verily these are rights in favours of your rights women which are incumbent upon you, and there are rights in favours of yours which are incumbent upon them".

i- Right as Wife.

A wife has many rights on her husband. Generally, these rights are divided into two categories: One of financial rights like Nafqa and secondly, human rights like support, justice and good treatment. In the Holy Quran Allah said:

"And among His signs is this that He created for you wives from among

yourselves, that you may
find repose in them, and
He has put between
you affection and mercy,
verily in that are signs
for a people who reflect."
(Surah Ar-Rum: 21)

ii- Right to marriage

In Islam, women have the right to accept or reject the marriage proposals, and are given the rights to even marry a person they, if their parents agree to it. These teachings have unfortunately, not been followed and many women does not have the right to marry as per her wish. A great example of letting a woman to marry with her choice is when Prophet (PBUH) asked Hazrat Fatima (R.A) before Hazrat Ali (R.A) had demanded for her hand.

iii- Right of maintenance

In Islamic Shria, Mehr is a right of a woman and it is the compulsion on every husband to provide

it to his wife according to Nikkah agreement. The 'Mehri' could be in the form of cash or kind that husband is obliged to pay to his wife upon marriage. Allah says in Quran.

"And give to the women (whom you marry) their Mahr with good heart".

(Surah - Al-Nisa: 4)

iv - Polygamy allowed on basis of equality

The practice of polygamy was rampant before Islam. Men used to have a good number of wives in addition to have marital relations with slave women. Islam put restriction on these women practices and forbidden the Muslims to go for more than four wives. As said in Quran:

"But if you fear you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or that you right hand possess".
(Surah - Al-Nisa: 3)

v- Rights to Divorce

The right of a wife to get divorce from her husband is known as Khula in Islam. Any wife can exercise this right of Khula whenever she desire so. She can go to avail the same right on medical, ethical, and religious or any other grounds which might evolve after marriage or in a situation when she feels her unable to fulfill the rights of husband. At the time of Nikkah a wife can ask for the right of divorce to be given to her. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"A wife who demands divorce from her husband without cogent reasons, the aroma of paradise is Haram on her".

3- WOMAN AS A MOTHER

The position of mother is very exalted in Islamic tradition. The Prophet (PBUH) has gone so far to say; "Paradise lies underneath the feet of your mother". Al-Bukhari reported, Some body asked the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH

which work pleases Allah most? He replied; "The service of worship at the appointed hour". And when it was continued, "when afterwards" the Prophet (PBUH) replied: "To be ~~best~~ bounteous to your father and mother."

i - Rights as a Mother

Mother's rights include trust, respect, honour, good treatment, fairness, provision of food, cloth, shelter, special old age care and other daily necessities of life. There are numerous verses in the Holy Quran about the rights of mother. The Holy Quran says:

"And your lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parent".

(Surah Bani - Issa'ed - 23)

ii - Right of Foster Mother

Islam has given similar rights to those Foster mother (Ladai mother), who breast-feed babies of other mothers. This means any mother who breast-feed a baby, holds the

same respect from the concerned child as his or her real mother. Allah has said:

"Forbidden to you (for marriage) are: your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your brother's ~~sister~~ daughters, your sister's daughters, your foster mothers who suckled you"
(Surah An-Nisa: 23)

4- ECONOMIC RIGHTS

The test of civility in a society is the position of women in a society. Islam has granted her economic rights; get inheritance; own property, and run business. Islam has recognized an independent economic status of women and gave her right to own, use and enjoy it in her own way without any mediator.

i- Right to Inheritance

Islam has given inheritance rights to women in their capacities as mother, sister, daughter, wife and even as a baby. They all are entitled to get a fixed share in the property of their ancestors.

From a total of inheritance of 12 possible heirs, 8 of them are at least for women. These eight women may be a wife, a daughter, a mother or any bloody relative. Allah has said.

"There is a share for men and share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether, the property be small or large - a legal share."
(Surat An-Nisa: 7)

ii - Right to do job

If we look at history we find that Hazrat Khadija (R.A) the Holy Prophet (PBUH) first wife, was a famous trader of Quraish. Hazrat Kaiba Bin-i-Saad Al-Aslamia was the first ever female doctor or nurse in Islam. During war a tent was installed in mosque and wounded soldiers were brought to her for treatment. In Hadith, the Holy Prophet said, "A skilled person is the friend of Allah"

Considering this, women should involve themselves in the type of work they can accomplish properly and easily.

5- EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

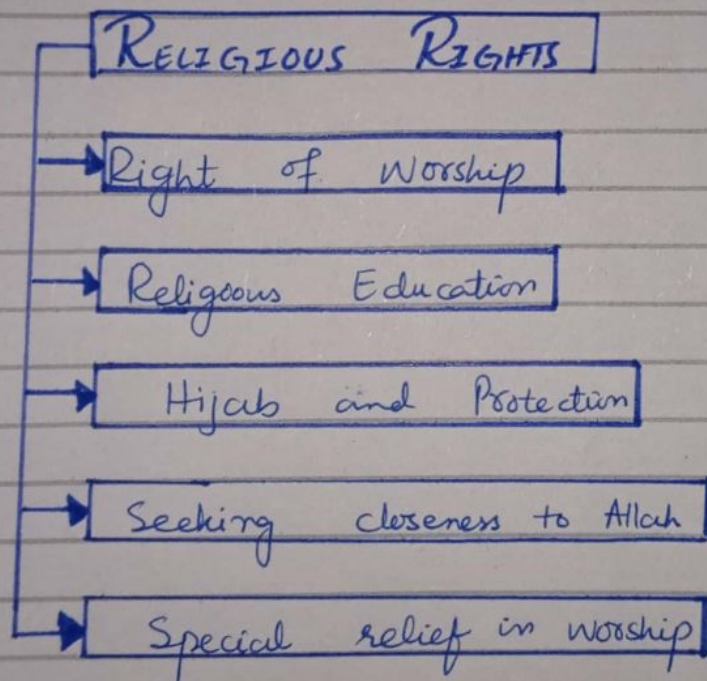
Women makes more than half of human population and perform an important role in society development. This role of women in human society is recognized by Islam. Islam urges both men and women to become aware and acquire knowledge that they needed in life. The Divine commands have made it compulsory duty of women to learn. In addition they are entitled to acquire and learn certain skills that are necessary for them in their personal lives or she is required by the state to perform a job under Farze. kifayah. Allah said says in Quran;

“My lord! increase me in knowledge”

8- RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

Both males and females have similar rewards for obedience and penalties for disobedience in this world and here after. Islam gave a special relief to women in prayer and fast on their menstrual leave and forty day after the birth of baby. Also,

Islam provided a great protection to women. Women are independent in taking of hijab in all Islamic states. Whereas countries like Germany, Spain and France where women are prohibited to take hijab in their institutions. Islam is the only religion that gives a woman a complete freedom.



9- Conclusion

According to Islam, God created the mankind the earth to secure his or her share of world's wealth and subsistence. Women in Islam have certain rights supported by the Quran to protect them financially, emotionally and physically. However, these rights are not only dependent on different

interpretations of sculpture, but also
on Women's social and legal
protection.