

CSS-2019

Describe the rights of women in Islam in the context of current wave of feminist movements.

Introduction:

Before, Islam women were living a miserable life, even deprived of their basic fundamental rights. They were considered the source and mother of all evils in the society. Moreover, many civilizations even did not consider women as humans, and always took them for granted. Although, even today, women have not been given their due rights by many societies and religions which might be the cause of feminist movements. But Islam is the true religion of love and peace which has given unprecedented, spiritual, political, economic and cultural status to women.

Women in ancient civilization:

Rome: Women were considered as a property and they were deprived of any right of property ownership.

Arab: There was a practice of polyandry in ancient Arab, where married women

had more than one husbands.

Egypt: Women were sold like commodities.

Hinduism: Women were inferior, were not given property share and were buried with the dead husband.

China: Men considered themselves superior to women.

Persia: Discrimination of rights among women
(Royal women had more powers than non-Royal).

Greece: Women were considered as subject and property of men.

Europe: Only sons were considered heirs.
Rights of vote was granted in
20th Century.

Even in present day, women in west are used in human-trafficking and majority are indulged in prostitution. A research by a western researcher in 1997 highlighted the miserable condition of women in the west and called it a life in hell.

According to Mosaic Law, women are taken as property at the time of marriage and are possessed by husband after their payment. It can be analyzed that the Christian churches have been influenced by the Mosaic Law, until recent centuries.

Women Rights in Islam:

→ EQUAL RIGHTS AND DIGNITY TO MEN & WOMEN:

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَكُمْ...

who created you from one soul and created from it, its mate. (4:7)

As this verse proves that men and women are equal because of the evolution from a single soul.

Another verse Allah says:

لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

And we have certainly honoured the children of Adam. (Al-Isra- 17:70)

Islam recognizes the personhood of women and grants them right to life. Unlike Christianity, Islam does not blame women for Adam's first mistake.

وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُٰ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ

So Adam disobeyed his Lord and lost his way. (Surah TaHa - 20:121)

TYPES OF WOMEN RIGHTS:

(A) Social Rights:

(1) As mothers: $(31:14)$ كَلِمَاتٌ أُمَّةٌ وَهُنَّ عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ ...

Their mothers carried them through hardship upon hard

Hadith: "Paradise lies beneath mother's feet."

(2) As daughters:

Daughters in many religions are not given the same importance as in Islam. Before Islam, Arabs were in practice of burying their newborn ~~child~~ female child.

It is condemned in Islam and is considered a murder.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ۝

And when baby girls buried alive are asked, for what crime they were put to death.
(8:81)

Hadith: Hazrat Fatima is the part of my body.

③ As sisters:

Brothers are obliged to provide for sister in the absence of father and husband.

They can inherit their brother's property after his death if there are no others with greater rights.

④ As wife:

قَالَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَزْوَاجًا ...

He has made for you, from yourselves, mate. (42:11)

Hadith: The best of you are those who are the best to their women.

a As a wife she has the right to mahr:

A marriage gift, symbolizing love and affection must be included in nuptial contract at the time of marriage.

b Right to Divorce/Khula:

Before, Islam women went through many hardships to get their freedom from an unsuccessful marriage but Islam has given the right to Divorce/Khula to women ~~with~~ through easy steps.

c Right to marriage (select their spouse)

Islam has given permission to the women to select their spouse and even to propose them for marriage. Women can't be forced for marriage according to Islam.

(B) ECONOMIC RIGHTS:

① Right to own property:

Islamic law acknowledges the independent ownership of women over their property. She is not considered minor, and can sell, retain, invest and lease any or all of her property.

② Right to get employment:

There is no decree in Islam which forbids women to seek employment, at the time of necessity and if she is required for the betterment of the society. Many scholars like Abu-Hanifa and Al-Tabari support this.

③ Right to do business

Hazrat Khadija is the best example in this regard.

④ Right to inheritance:

Women have share in her parents and kinsmen's property.

According to Surah Nisa Verse 11,

Allah says: "Allah decrees a will for your children the male gets twice the share of female.

If the heirs are women, more than two, they receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of the estate. If only one is left she gets one half."

⑤ RIGHT TO EDUCATION:

Both Quran and Sunnah emphasize on the right of women to seek education.

Hadith: Acquisition of knowledge is binding on all muslims.

⑥ Political Rights.

Can take part in political activities.

Women have the right of representation, association, protest, ballot.

Many Islamic ladies have been the head of states i.e Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh.

According to Al-Tabari women can claim political leadership.

(E) Right to keep their identity:

Women are allowed by Islam to keep the name of their family and father after their marriage.

Issues confronting women in Muslim countries:

The book "misunderstood religion" by Muhammad Qutb highlights the problems faced by muslims in women. Several factors are the hindrances for women rights i.e gender equality, forced marriages, female illiteracy, economic, political, violence against women Hijab/Niqab.

Feminism / Feminist movements: All the above issues are the reason and stimuli to urge the women in these part of the world, to march against the state and in favour of women rights. But feminist movement is not the solution and right way to fight for unachieved rights.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be seen that women are granted all sort of rights in Islam as compared to other religions. But the lack of Ijtihad and correct interpretation of Islam has deprived the women from their rights in some states & regions.