

Q: Discuss the rights, role and status of women. How a Muslim woman is more empowered than the Western women. Discuss.

Explicating the Status of Women in Islam

Islam has given women a higher status of self-respect and dignity than man because woman is a daughter, wife and mother and it is woman that has been called as the most precious thing of the world by Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Women are given all rights in Islam as of men even 1400 years ago when women were treated as slaves. The definition of women rights defined by Dr. Hameedulh aligns with the teachings of Islam that ensure equal rights of women in every aspect of life. Even a Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because Islam has given rights to women 1400 years ago witho-ut

any efforts while in west women have got rights by a long struggle that started with Mary Wollstonecraft, an English philosopher who published "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in 1792. But Islam has commanded to respect and care women even 1400 years ago.

وعاشرهن بالمعروف
"Treat them Fairly."

Expanding the Role of a Muslim Woman than a Western Woman

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because it is the responsibilities of a Muslim woman that she accomplishes which actually give her superiority over a western woman. She plays a more key role in building family bonds and in the upbringing of a more responsible society. A woman is a daughter,

a wife and a mother. She plays all these roles but Islam has made a woman superior over man because of her self-less love for her family and for her virginity and protection of her chastity. Since a Muslim woman plays all these roles better than a western woman that's why a Muslim woman has a higher status and higher strength than western woman.

a. Role as a daughter

Islam has taught its followers to give love and care to daughters. But on the same side Islam has taught daughters to be kind, affectionate and self-less towards their parents because it is actually the self-less love of daughters that has made them superior to sons. Moreover, the daughters are bound not to break the trust of their parents that's why a Muslim daughter has more responsibility than a western daughter because she is not bound to do so. Even in West

the daughters are not bound to protect their chastity:

Allah Almighty says in Glorious Quran:

“ Tell the believing women to lower their gaze and to guard their chastity and not to reveal their adornments.”

Surah An-Noor Verse 31

b. Role as a wife

A Muslim woman is obliged to ^{be} respectful towards his husband, to be loyal with him in his absence and to be responsible in looking after his house. On the other hand, a Western woman is not bound by all these obligations.

Allah Almighty says in Quran

“ Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given ~~some~~ over the other and what they spend from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard.”

Surah An-Nisa Verse 34

c. Role as a Mother

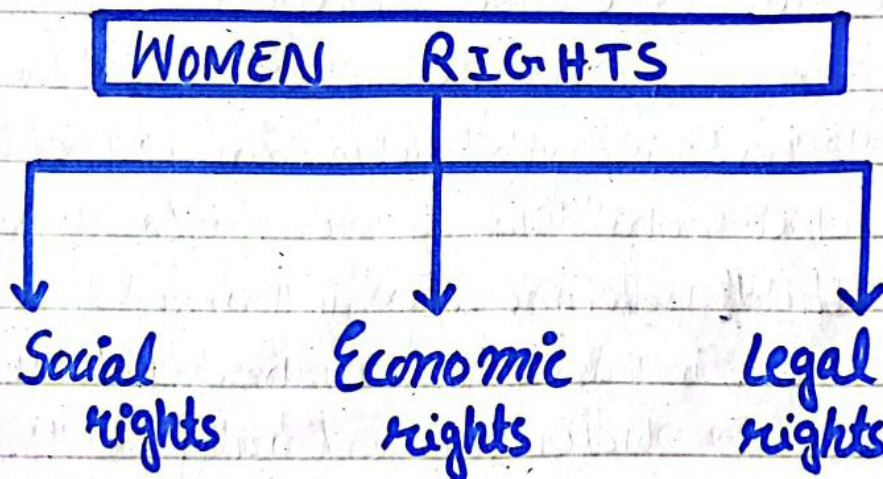
Islam has given mothers extreme level of importance and respect because mothers gave self-less care for children.

That's why Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has replied three times on the question of a person that who deserves his love and care for the most **"Your Mother."** On the other hand in west there is no such concept due to which children are raised up in children homes. For instance, there was an ^{9%} increase in number of children's homes for broken home family kids upto **2880** as compared to 10,818 of March 2022 (National Statistics, Children social care, March 2023).

Explicating the Argument that "Muslim Woman is More empowered than a Western Woman"

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because Allah has given all rights to Muslim woman without any efforts and at the time when Arabs were

treating them as embodiment of evil. Moreover, a Muslim woman gets all rights by Quran and Sunnah while Western women have got these rights due to feminist movements based on Judeo-Christian tradition. Islam has given all women rights a long time back this western struggle.



⇒ Social Rights of Women Bestowed by Islam while making comparison with Western Woman

- Right of self-respect and dignity

A western woman got the concept of self-respect and dignity by virtue of feminist movements that erupted in 1800s onwards. Before that in west even women of high stature and having

strong background were disgraced. **For instance**, Anne Boleyn the second wife of King Henry VIII of England faced disgrace due to her inability to produce a male heir.

On the other hand, in Islam women were given self-respect long time before feminist waves. Allah Almighty says in Glorious Quran
"We have honored the children of Adam." (Bani Israel Verse 7)
Here the word 'Adam' is mentioned means both men and women.

• **Right of Security of Life**

A western woman was unsafe and even she has no right to live before the spread of feminist waves. **For example**, in Ancient Rome female infanticide was a common practice. Western women did not (give) get right of security of life because the non-muslims do not believe in teachings of Allah who has taught humans to give respect and right to live with the advent to women

of Islam.

Allah Almighty says in Quran

“

When a female infant, buried alive, is asked: 'For what crime was she killed?'” Surah Takwir Verse 8-9

• Right of education

A western woman did not get right of education even in 19th century till first feminist wave. On the other hand, a Muslim woman was bestowed with right of education in 7th century. So a Muslim woman is more empowered

than a western woman. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) says:

طلب العلم قریضۃ علی کل مسلم

It is mandatory for every Muslim male and female to seek knowledge.

(Ibn e Majah)

• Right of having Consent in Marriage

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman as she had got the right of having consent in

in marriage in 7th century. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) says:

“Do not marry a widow until she asks herself and do not marry a virgin woman until she has permitted.” (Ibn-e-Majah)

On the other hand, a western woman could not get this right even in 19th century. For instance, during the Victorian England the widows were forced by society to remarry soon after the death of their husband.

Economic Rights of Women bestowed
by Islam Making Muslim

Woman MORE EMPOWERED than

a Western Woman

a. Inheritance Rights

In 19th century, western women were not even allowed to get education or to get property rights. They got property rights in 1830s due to a long struggle. On the other hand, Islam has given inheritance rights to Muslim women in 7th century.

Allah says in Glorious Quran:

“For men, there is what his parents leave and for women there is what her parents leave.”
(Surah An-Nisa)

On the other hand, in 19th century in west, the western women were suffering due to **coverture doctrine** that deprived women of their inheritance ^{rights in} west.

6. Right to Join Profession

A western woman struggle hard to get this right. Even in 16th and 17th century, 10 centuries after the advent of Islam when Muslim women have (achi) been blessed with right to join profession, western women were suffering from **Witch Trials**. The western women were struggling to live while long time back during the reign of Caliph Umar (R.A.) a Muslim woman was empowered so much that Hazrat Shifa bint-e-Makhzomia was lady police in Kufa.

- Right of having equal wages as of Men

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because Allah has commanded to give equal wages to women as of men in 7th century.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) says:
"Pay the wager his/her ^{wage before his/her} sweat dries."

Here the word wager is mentioned

that could be a man or a woman. But a western woman suffered a lot even till today because of gender biasness in ^{their} capitalized societies. For instance, in US in 2022 an American woman earned 82 cents for every dollar earned by a man. That was about the same as in 2022 when women earned 80 cents to dollar earned by men (Pew Research Center, Gender Pay inequality, March 2023).

Legal Rights Bestowed by Islam Making Muslim Woman More empowered than Western Woman

a. Right to Divorce

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because she has right to divorce her husband if he is cruel to her and this right was given in 7th century. Moreover, Allah has

commanded not to accuse the wife during divorce proceedings. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had set an example of khula by allowing a female Jamila to file divorce with her husband Thabit ibn Kiyas. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) strictly forbade ^{husbands} to accuse their wives of unethical charges in divorce proceedings.

On the other hand, in west even in 20th century a western woman like Duchess of Argyll was not enough empowered to protect herself from these false accusations because Duke of Argyll accused ^{her} of adultery during their bitter divorce proceedings.

6. Right of Acquiring Equal Justice

A Muslim woman is empowered enough by Islam to acquire equal justice even before 1400 years. On the other hand, a western woman is not empowered to get equal justice that has led US to a situation where every 65 seconds an American woman is assaulted in this 21st century (Pew Research Centre, Female

Harassment in US, March 2023). On the other hand in Islam, Allah has commanded not to torture or punish a woman without strong strong evidence.

Allah says in Glorious Quran

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Those who launch a charge against chaste woman and do not produce four witnesses - flog them with eight stripes; and reject their evidence ever after. ”

Surah An-Noor Verse 4

Concluding Thoughts

A Muslim woman is more empowered than a western woman because Allah has bestowed upon women with all rights 1400 years ago while west do not follow teachings of Allah due to which a western woman is not as much empowered as of a Muslim woman. Moreover, it is the role that Muslim woman plays in society according to teachings of Quran and Sunnah that give them higher status over western women.