

Q. Women rights in Islam, and how do they differentiate from the western concept of feminism?

Ans.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history, the manifestations of Eve usually ignored even of their existence. Women were merely objects that can be treated the way their male wanted. Let it be the Roman empire or Great Mongols, women were used to satisfy desires or expand power. - such as the daughters of Genghis Khan married to invaded prince or kings. Even great philosophers like Aristotle ~~ex~~ did not consider women even as a citizen of the state. This world was an abyss for a woman until the arrival of Islam through Muhammad (SAW) that empower the women in all walks of life. Islam considers women as equal as man. Therefore, Islam provides individual, societal & state-level rights to women. This empowerment of women became universal when Muslims expanded their rule to different continents in 8th century, converting many to Islam while enlightened others. With the advent of time, however, influence of Islam diminish and world started own perception and movements on the issues that were discussed in the Islam in the first place like, feminism movement. The western feminisms that started

over political deprivation of women has now reached in every social domain of women in 200 years. This concept demands all the things Islam has to offer except almost freedom of a women that mainly lead to conflict, making Islam to differ from western feminism. Nevertheless, through practical approach a balance society can be formed, addressing both the genders impartially. After all, Islam is universal and complete code for life.

2. WOMEN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

2.1 INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OF A WOMAN:

Islam provides women right to life, right to education, right of financial need, right to shelter, as well as of clothing. Prophet (SAW) once said, the contextual meaning of which is, "do not bury your daughters as Allah dislikes it." Along with it, Islam grants women to choose her spouse by herself. Its greatest example is that Prophet (SAW) only married his wives with their consent. Along with it, women in Islam are allowed to earn for their ourselves; also, no one has right over their salary. Lastly, women have rights to live separately after marriage and it's the obligation of her husband to fulfill it.

2.2

SOCIETAL-LEVEL RIGHTS OF A WOMEN:

Women rights in society are equal than that of man. They are allowed to have a property share as a daughter, sister or even as a widow. Women are not obliged to take care of her husband's parents for example, to cook for them. Along with it, women ^{are} encouraged in Islam to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, instructing man to respect them. Prophet (SAW) said on it, "lower your gaze when you see a woman as Allah is the most forgiving." Islam further supports women as a mother daughter and sister as it guides males to treat them well. "The best among you is the one best with their wives." - Prophet (SAW).

2.3

STATE-LEVEL RIGHTS OF A WOMEN:

Islam provides women to choose their representative on state-level. This can be understood with this that during the reign of four pious caliphs, women were considered in selection of Hazrat Usman (RA). Along with this, "Women were included in the Shura of Hazrat Umar (RA)." Furthermore, women are allowed to engage in battles too. Its example is Nusaybah Bint-e-Kab. So, Islam covers socio-political rights of women too.

3. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF WOMEN RIGHTS AND WESTERN CONCEPT OF FEMINISM:

3.1 WESTERN FEMINISM DEMANDS SUPERIORITY OF FEMALES OVER MALES

Feminism want to dominate society turning patriarchal society into women-dominated. This can be seen when they consider male of no worth and hate their instructions: While, Islam, on the other hand, depicts equality for both. "As revealed in the Quran, "And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women." (2:226)

3.2 WESTERN FEMINISM DEPICTS WOMEN AS INDEPENDENT OF MAN

Western feminism was made women believe that they have been exploited for years even centuries; now, the only solution is to get away from male-dependency. This concept of independence makes male as extra element of society. However, being independent, according to Islam, has never been to discriminat but support counter-parts.

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As Allah says in Surah, "Men are caretakers of women... tasked with supporting them financially." (-Surah Nisa).

3.3 WESTERN FEMINISM PORTRAYS MAN AS A BEAST THAT NEEDS TO BE CHAINED

Man has no-doubt used culture to benefit his position in society. But, to avoid this, a society needs psychological transformation rather than turning the tables. Feminist are made to believe that male are the exploited part of society. Slogans like 'Mera Pisu Meri Marzi' is its manifestation. Islam on the other hand says, "And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with." (-Surah-Nisa)

3.4 WESTERN FEMINISM HAS PROMOTED INDICENCY IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

Western concept of feminism has further inculcate freedom as a way of being immoral. Wearing hijab or cover oneself, therefore, is consider a blockage to their life. The Islamabad feminist rally where on police crackdown a women went naked is its example. Surah guides, however, is Surah-Noor, "believing women lower their gaze, guard their charity and not to reveal their adornments..."

3.5

WESTERN FEMINISM PROMOTES DISUNITY AMONG GENDERS

Feminism are considered the fighters of lost glory and the morals of a society are considered rigid to mold. This has created disunity among both genders as males feel insecure if a woman is a feminist and vice versa. The misconception that he/she will be rigid as he/she does not align with my mindset has given a rise to homosexuality. The trust deficit has created a gulf fulfilling by LGBTD. While Islam loathes it and says in Qur'an, "He has created you in unity," then at another place Allah says, "He has created your mates among you and put love and mercy between you."

3.6

WESTERN FEMINISM GIVES WOMEN A VIEW THAT THEY CAN SURVIVE ALONE

No doubt that there is an increase of late marriages in a society, followed by surging rate of divorce. This belief that women can live alone has created a mistrust even before spouses. This misconception has created a suspicious for man and a fake hope for women. However, Allah says, "we have created you in Pairs," and at another place in Quran, "your wives are your garments and you're a garment for them." (- Al Quran).

4. WAYS THROUGH WHICH THE LOST UNITY IN UMMAH BECAUSE OF WESTERN FEMINISM CAN BE RECLAIM

4.1 PROPER TEACHINGS OF ISLAM FOR ALL:

Only if the teachings of Islam have had inculcated in the minds of Muslim youth than this concept of feminism would not inflicted them even a bit. Proper religious teachings addressing socio-political issues should be a matter of concern. Otherwise, youth will indulge itself in western concept mainly because he has no grounds from Islamic perspective. Religious scholars and state both needs to work on it, addressing concern of women.

4.2 SEPERATE DEEN FROM CULTURE.:

Many males impose vague rules over women in the name of religion for example, living in a joint family or live like a servant to them. However, these are cultural traits and got no grounds or justification in Islam. Because in Islam women are at apex position of a society. Prophet (SAW) said, "treat your wives with just manner and care for them as Allah loves those who are good with their women."

5. CONCLUSION

Islam is a complete code of life for Muslims as well as for all the humanity. Therefore, unlike other religions, it has not distinguish between male and female, rather gave equality. Islam prioritizes women right and its implementation by all means. The western concept, however, that once evolved to make-sure the existence of women has now made them cross ethics of human-kind. Therefore, Islam makes distinction from western concept of feminism in number of issues. That is why a practical approach is needed to unify both segments of a society that are put apart by the western concept of feminism, ~~for~~ hence, promoting an ideal society to live-in.

"Wives are twin halves of men." - Prophet (SAW)