

Describe the rights of women in Islam in the context of current wave of the feminist movement. (2019)

(i) INTRODUCTION :

The rights of women in Islam have long been a subject of debate, especially when viewed through the lens of the current wave of feminist movement. Indeed, Islam, centuries ago, granted women legal, social, and economic rights that were revolutionary for the time. However, with the current global wave of feminism demanding gender equality in all aspects of life, there is a renewed interest in how Islamic principles align with or differ from, modern feminist ideas. By exploring the Quranic perspective on women's rights and comparing it with contemporary feminist movements, we can better understand the unique position of Muslim women today and how Islamic teaching can contribute to ongoing discussion on the women's rights.

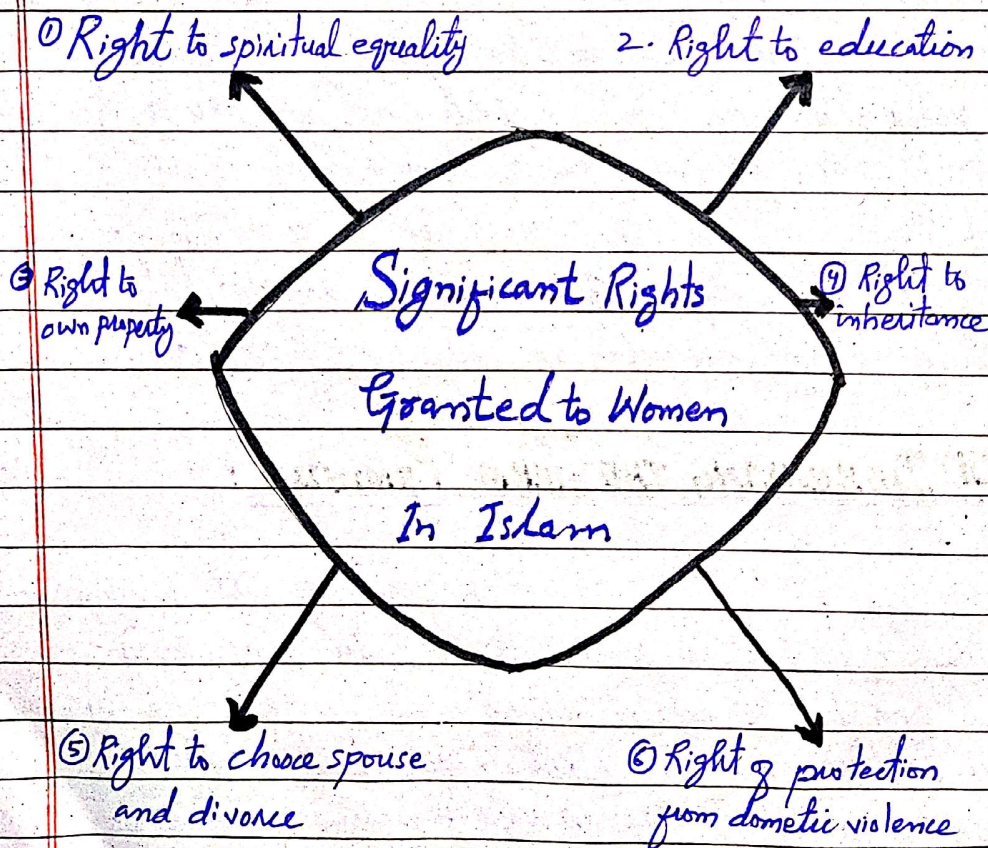
(ii) DEBUNKING THE TERM FEMINISM :

Before going deeper into the matter, it is pertinent to debunk the term 'Feminism': its core objectives and gender equality and challenging patriarchal norms. The current wave, dubbed "fourth wave feminism", emphasizes intersectionality, inclusivity, and social justice. It addresses issues like reproductive rights, body -

autonomy, and systematic inequalities. Despite its positive intentions, feminism faces backlash from misconceptions and extremist factions. Mainstream media often amplifies radical voices, distorting the movement's image. As a result, many individuals, including women, shy away from identifying as feminists. Clarifying feminism's true purpose and goals is essential to promote genuine understanding, unity and progress toward gender equality.

(iii) SIGNIFICANT RIGHTS GRANTED TO

WOMEN IN ISLAM :



① Right to spiritual equality:

First, Islam grants women spiritual equality, recognizing their equal potential for spiritual growth and closeness to Allah.

Indeed,

"the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the believing men and the believing women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the charitable men and the charitable women, the fasting men and the fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard their private parts, the men who remember Allah often and the women who remember Allah often - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (33:35)

This verse emphasizes equal spiritual worth, using parallel language for men and women. Hence the repetition of "men and women" underscores their equal potential for spiritual growth, obedience, and righteousness.

② Right to education

Second, Islam emphasizes the right to education for women, recognizing its significance in their intellectual, spiritual, and personal growth.

Indeed,

"Recite in the name of your Lord who created,

created man from a clot of blood. Recite, and your Lord is most generous, who taught by the pen, taught man what did he not know". (96:1-5)

This verse commands seeking knowledge without gender distinction. Thus, the emphasis on the pen highlights the importance of literacy and education.

③ Right to own property :

Third, Islam grants women the right to own and manage property, ensuring financial autonomy and security. For instance,

"And for men is the share of what the parents and relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and relatives leave, whether it is little or much, a specified share". (4:7)

This verse established women's inheritance rights, ensuring they receive a designated share of property. The use of 'specified share' emphasizes women's entitlement to property, regardless of marital status or family relationships. Hence, Islam has consistently emphasizes on the women's property rights.

④ Right to inheritance :

Islam grants women the right of inheritance, ensuring financial security and protection.

Indeed,

"Allah commands you regarding your children: For the male, a share equal to that of two females. If there are only daughters, two or more, their share is two-third of the estate. And if there is only one, her share is half." (4:11-12)

These verses establish women's inheritance rights, specifying their share in relation to men's. Therefore, Islam protects women's financial future through inheritance rights, ensuring their security and well-being.

⑤ Right to choose spouse and divorce:

Islam grants women the right to choose their spouse, ensuring autonomy and consent in marriages. For instance

"And when you divorce women, and they reach their prescribed period, then either retain them in kindness or release them in kindness" (2:231)

This verse emphasizes mutual consent in marriage, highlighting the importance of women's. However, Islam assures women the right to divorce, providing a safeguard against unhappy marriages.

⑥ Right of protection from domestic violence:

Islam prohibits domestic violence, ensuring women's safety and dignity.

"Live with them in kindness, even if you dislike them, it is possible that you dislike something, and Allah makes therein much good." (4:19)

(IV) CONVERGENCE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN

ISLAM AND THE CURRENT WAVE OF FEMINISM

Taking a balance at some major similarities between Islamic rights for women and current wave of feminist ideology in the ways of emphasizing equality and justice, education rights, economic rights, and social rights, all are discussed below in detail:

① Economic rights of women:

Feminist movements continue to fight for equal pay and financial independence. Islam has given all the women the right to own and inherit property.

② Education rights:

Feminist movement striving for equal opportunity for women in education. Islam has given this right 1400 years ago.
"Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim"

③ Social and Marital Status:

Current wave within of feminist movement regarding bodily autonomy and marital rights. Islam already offers women social rights, particularly within marriage. In Quran, "Live with them in kindness; for if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in Allah has placed much good." (4:19)

(V) DIVERGENCE OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

AND THE CURRENT WAVE OF FEMINISM

① Modesty and dress code for women:

Islamic rights for women emphasizes the hijab, whereas the current wave of feminism critiques patriarchal control over women's bodies. Islamic teaching prioritize modesty (hijab) as a means of protecting women's dignity and preventing objectification.

② Family and Motherhood rights for women:

Modern feminism emphasizes individual autonomy and career goals, while Islamic teaching prioritize familial responsibilities and childcare.

"A mother's paradise for kids are at her feet" (Bukhari)

③ Political and leadership rights:

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participated in battles, whereas in the current era, Pakistan is the developing country but due to religious affiliations with Islam, a female leader Benazir Bhutto became a PM. In contrast, the US has never had a female president.

(vi) CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

Critically, the rights afforded to women in Islam are unparalleled, surpassing those offered by modern feminists. For example, despite widespread recognition, no female leader has ever ruled America, the UN's headquarters.

(vii) CONCLUSION:

Wrapping ~~up~~ the above debate, the rights granted to women in Islam over 1400 years ago have laid a strong foundation for gender equality, offering spiritual, social, economic and political rights and sparked intense debate amidst the current feminist wave. As the feminist movement continues to evolve, there is growing recognition that Islamic principles can contribute to modern discussions on women's rights.