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

Introduction:

The rights of women in Islam have long been a subject of debate, especially when viewed from the aspects of current wave of feminism. Islam, centuries ago, granted the women legal, social and economic. However, with the current wave of feminism demanding gender equality in all aspects of life. By exploring the Quranic perspective of women rights and comparing it with the current wave of feminism, we can better understand the position of women today in the world and how Islamic teaching can contribute to the discussion of women rights. And Islam has granted unprecedented spiritual, social, political, economic and cultural status to women.

Rights of Women prescribed by Islam:

Right to Live:

whether, a boy or a girl, the first right as human being is that to "life". Before the advent of Islam, some Arab tribes followed the cruel custom of infanticide whereby they would kill a girl as soon as she is born. Islam was the first to put a vehement end to this custom. Allah Almighty said:

"Whoever kills a person, unless it is for murder or corruption on earth, it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; and whoever save it, it is as if he saved the whole of mankind."
(Al-Maidah-32)

Right of having consent in Marriage

Islam gives the woman the right to consent to the marriage of their own free wills.

The Bureerah R.A who was the wife of Musheeth R.A. After accept Islam she was set free. she legally obtained the right either to live with her husband or to seek a separation from him. Bureerah decided

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in favor of separation.

"A previously married woman must not be married till she is consulted, and a virgin must not be married till her consent is asked."

They asked, "O Allah's Messenger, how is her consent indicated?" He replied, "It is by her silence." (Muslim - 1419)

Right to education

Islam emphasized on the education of women.

Hazrat Aisha R.A is a prime example of a education is not only permissible in Islam, but also highly encouraged.

"seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim." (Ibn-e-Majah - 224).

Right to re-marry

Islam give the right to women to re-marry.

A Muslim women has the right to re-marry after divorce or the death of her husband.

However, a woman must observe a waiting period (iddah) before re-marrying. The prophet

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SAW himself married all women who were previously married with the exception of Asba R.A.

Right to Khul'a / divorce

Before Islam woman had to adopt a round about and crooked course to free herself of her husband who held her in a state of perfect subservience, for neither the law of the land nor the common law gave her the right to leave her husband by securing separation. Islam gave her this right in clear and unequivocal terms which she could exercise whenever she had a mind to do so. So, if a woman is in an abusive marriage or is not getting the fulfillment of her rights, and her husband also is not divorcing her, she has the right to seek khul'a from the courts.

Right to own wealth

Islam decreed a right of which woman was deprived both before Islam and after it, the right of independent ownership. According to

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Islamic Law, woman's right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledge. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married.

" For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned." (An-Nisaa-32)

Right to trade and do Business

Muslim women have played a vital in every walk of life. The mothers of the Muslims (wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW)) are glaring examples in this regard. Hazrat Rafida (R.A) and Hazrat Aslamah (R.A) were authority in the knowledge of Mohammedan law as well as medical and surgery. Hazrat Zainab bint Jahash (R.A) cousin and wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW) excelled in handicraft. Dr Tahira Qadri writes in this regards:

Syeda Sharifa Fatima remained the ruler of Yemen, san'aa and Najran. Umme Atya (R.A) participated in seven Ghazwat with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

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Right to inheritance

The perfect and complete individuality of the person of the women is manifest in a most striking manner in the matter of property.

According to the Islamic law, the women possess a most absolute right over her property.

A woman has the same rights as man for acquiring property. The property of a woman

cannot be touched even if her husband or any other relative has liabilities exceeding

his assets. Surah Nisa (verse 11-12) prescribes the inheritance shares for both the genders and not just men.

Right to being provided with all basic needs

It is also the responsibility of the father to bear the expenses of his born or unborn child.

"Men are caretaker of women, since the Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because of the wealth they have spent."

(An-Nisaa-34).

Two examples to elaborate the points.

(i) Right to charge for Breastfeeding (in case of divorce).

The expenses of a divorced pregnant woman are also to be paid by the husband only because of the soon-to-be born child.

"Then if they suckle the child for you, give them their fees, and consult each other with fairness,-

(Al - Talaq - 6).

(ii) Right to child maintenance in case of divorce.

Even if the mother gets custody of the children, the father will be liable to all financial expenses.

**Common rights given by Islam
demanding by feminism movement**

First, taking a glance at major rights of women which similar between Islam and current wave of feminism.

Economic rights of women

Islam has given all right to own and inherit property.

" For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of

what they have earned" (An-Nisaa - 32).
 The Islam has given the ^{financial} fundamental right, providing the women to engage in all business, earn their own income, and manage the financial affairs without male interference. For instance, current wave of feminism also fight for equal pay and gender equality. Women like Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, a Pakistan film maker and activist, have used their platform to challenge the gender based economic disparities and uplift women rights.

Right to education

women have the same rights as men in the acquisition of knowledge and education. It was Islam which stressed the importance of, and need for, knowledge

"seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim." (Ibn-e-Maajah - 224):

For instance in the current wave of feminism Malala Yousafzai focused on education of girls. She illustrating that the pursuit of knowledge is right for all,

regardless of gender.

Right to marriage

Marriage, according to Islam, is a bilateral contract, based on the free consent of the two contracting parties. Prophet (S.A.W)

all emphasized on the consent of women in marriage. And said if they don't show their consent and then indicate by her

silence. The current wave of feminism also focus on the marriage rights of

women. According to Mary Wollstonecraft, "I do not wish to have power over men, but

over themselves."

Women's rights demanding by feminist movement denied by Islam

There are some major differences between Islamic rights of women and current wave of feminism ideology.

Modesty and dress code of women

The modesty and dress code of women in Islam diverge from current wave of feminism movement. Islam emphasize on

veil and complete covering of body, whereas

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feminism criticize it as patriarchal control over women, showing the body and considered it as modernism. The feminism focus on the individual liberty and islam considered veil as a woman protection from evil eyes and save dignity.

Family and motherhood rights

Islam teaching of family and motherhood rights was different from that of feminism ideology. Islam gives a great honor of children care and family unity whereas feminism criticize the breastfeeding. Feminism criticize on the mother alone caring of child and prefer hiring a nurse from the beginning. Islam generally permitted contraception but feminism focuses on women autonomy including abortion rights.

Political and working rights

Islamic rights of women and current wave of feminism differ significantly. Islam assigns positive role of women and the men advisory role. Despite of granting

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the proper rights of women in politics, the feminism fail to deliver it in western countries. The Pakistan is the developing ^{Islamic} countries, has female leader Benazir Bhutto as prime minister. But there is no female president in America. so, the rights of women vary in islam and current wave of feminism.

Critical Analysis:

critically, the rights by islam are unparalleled, surpassing those by offered by modern feminism movement. Despite of complete recognition of women, no female leader ruled over America.

Islam gives permission of abortion to women in case of rape-pregnancy, but there is abortion banned in some countries.

Moreover, feminism disturb the family system, and criticize on the child care by ^{disturbing} equal rights and surpassing the men. In contrast, islam promotes equal rights while balancing the both genders.

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Conclusion:

From the above debate, the rights giving by Islam to women has strong foundation in terms of social, political and economic aspects. As, the feminism movements continues to grow, there is growing recognition that Islamic principles would contribute on modern discussion of women rights.

