

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

Outline

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- 2- Divine Foundation of Women's rights.
- 3- Social and economic rights of women.
- 4- legal and political rights of women
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1- Introduction

Islam grants women comprehensive rights based on dignity, justice, and balance. In the modern feminist wave, many demand

equality without moral limits. Islam, however provided rights fourteen centuries ago within divine guidance. These rights protect honor, identity, family stability, and social harmony, offering balanced solutions beyond cultural oppression and radical liberalism.

Human dignity
in Islam

Defined rights
for women

Balanced social
structure

Protection with
responsibility

Justice beyond
extremes.

④ ② Divine foundation of
women's rights.

2.1 → Dignity as fundamental
principle

Islam begins women's rights from
the principle of human dignity.
Women is honored as a
human being, not as property
or burden. This dignity forms
the foundation of all legal,
social, and spiritual rights. Islam
elevates her position, ensuring respect,
moral protection, and recognition of
her value in family, society,
and community.

Ayat

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ
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And we have certainly
honored the children of Adam."

2.2 → Spiritual equality before Allah

Islam establishes spiritual equality between men and women. In Introduction to Islam, Dr. Hamidullah explains that reward and punishment depend upon faith and action, not gender. Feminist debates focus on social equality, but Islam already confirmed equal spiritual status, ensuring justice without erasing natural differences between genders.

2.3 → Equal reward and accountability

Islam clearly states that men and women receive equal reward for righteous deeds. Each action is valued according to intention,

wealth, makes contracts, and exercises choice. This independence existed in Islam centuries before modern feminist legal reforms.

③ Social and economic rights of women

3.1 → Right to education guaranteed

Islam guarantees education for women as a religious duty.

Knowledge is necessary for faith, morality, and social development.

Educated women strengthen families and society. The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged learning without gender discrimination, establishing education as a universal obligation for both men and women.

Hadith

7 طلب العلم واجب
"Seeking knowledge is an obligation."

3.2 → Economic ownership and property rights

Islam grants women full economic independence. In Islam and the Economic Challenge, Umar Chapra explains that Islam allows women to own property, inherit wealth, and conduct business. Unlike past civilizations, Islam secured financial rights without forcing economic burden, maintaining dignity while preserving family stability and social balance.

3.3 → Rights to fair inheritance

Islam provides women a fixed share in inheritance, ending pre-Islamic injustice. Although shares differ, distribution is based on responsibility, not superiority. Feminist

critiques often ignore financial obligations placed upon men. Islamic inheritance ensures fairness while maintaining economic balance within the family system.

Ayat

" For women is a share "

3.4 → Right to marriage choice

Islam grants women the right to consent in marriage. In Islamic law and Constitution, Abul Ala Maududi explains that forced marriage contradicts Islamic law. Consent ensures dignity and emotional security. This protection contrasts with both cultural oppression and modern exploitation under the name of freedom.

④ Legal and political rights of women

4.1) Protection of honor and modesty

Islam protects women's honor through modesty laws, social regulations, and strict punishment for false accusations.

These measures safeguard dignity and social respect while ensuring women can participate safely in society.

Unlike modern trends that commercialize women's bodies, Islam protects moral integrity, promoting respect and trust in both family and social spheres.

Ayat

ولا تقربوا الزنا
And do not approach adultery.

4.2) Right to legal justice

Islam ensures women access to justice in courts and society. In Administrative Development: An Islamic Perspective, Muhammad Al-Buraey highlights fairness as a governance principle. Women may seek legal protection, claim rights, and demand justice. Equality before law ensures protection against oppression within family and society.

4.3 → Political participation allowed ✓

Women actively participated in public matters during the Prophet's (PBUH) time, including consultation, voting, and allegiance. Islam encourages responsible participation in governance and decision-making. Feminist narratives often ignore historical examples of Muslim women contributing socially and politically.

while maintaining modesty, ethics, and moral discipline, demonstrating Islam's early commitment to inclusive governance.

Ayat

7 وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ

7 لِبَعْضٍ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءِ بَعْضٍ

"The believing men and women are allies of one another"

4.4 → Balanced role within family

Islam defines complementary family roles instead of competitive equality.

In Khilafat-o-Malukiat, Maududi explains that stability depends on

cooperation, not rivalry. Feminist movements sometimes weaken family

structure, whereas Islam balances

rights and duties, ensuring harmony between personal freedom and

collective responsibility, nurturing both individual dignity and family cohesion.

⑤ Feminism and Islamic balance

5.1 → Protection without exploitation

Islam protects women without isolating them from society or assigning them burdensome roles. Unlike extreme feminist ideologies that equate freedom with imitation of men, Islam preserves dignity and identity while encouraging social and economic participation. Women can contribute meaningfully without losing moral values or compromising the family, ensuring balanced empowerment.

Hadith

” النساء شقائق الرجال “
” Women are twin halves of men. “

6.2 → Freedom within moral boundaries.

Islam defines freedom within moral limits. In Islam at the Crossroads Muhammad Asad explains that unlimited freedom creates social disorder.

Feminism sometimes removes ethical boundaries, while Islam preserves morality.

Balanced freedom ensures respect, protection, and stability without suppressing women's talents or identity.

5.3 → Justice instead of absolute equality

Islam emphasizes justice, not identical roles. Equality in worth does not require sameness in function.

Feminist discourse often demands uniformity. Islam acknowledges

biological and psychological differences while ensuring fairness. Justice based on wisdom provides long term social harmony and prevents conflict between genders.

Ayat

وَاللَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ
"Indeed, Allah commands justice."

5.4 → Timeless model beyond extremes

Islam presents a balanced model beyond cultural oppression and radical feminism. In Islam: The Misunderstood Religion, Muhammad Qutub argues that Islam protects dignity while enabling progress. Its framework secures rights without dissolving family bonds. This balanced system remains practical for contemporary societies, facing moral confusion.

and feminist challenges.

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Conclusion

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Islam granted women spiritual, social, economic, and legal rights centuries before modern feminism.

While contemporary movements challenge injustice, Islam already established justice with moral balance.

Its model protects dignity, ensures fairness, and preserves family

stability. True empowerment lies not in imitation but in

balanced rights guided by divine wisdom.

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