

Islam gives right to self-respect and dignity irrespective of socio-economic status. Prove this statement.

Q: Self-Respect and Dignity Granted by Islam

Islam gives right to self-respect and dignity irrespective of socio-economic status.

In Islamic civilization, human dignity is inherent, God-given honour bestowed upon every individual, irrespective of color, creed, race, sex, or socio-economic status. Islam considers piety as sole criterion of social honour. The human rights related to human dignity and self-respect granted by

Islam includes equal access to job opportunities, equality before the law, political and administrative participation, protection from discrimination and ^{right to} economic justice.
no

Allah Almighty says in Glorious Quran

“And We have created you from a male and a female and made your tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous.” (Surah Al-Hujurat)

1- Equality of Mankind: Foundational Principle of Islam

Islam considers self-respect and dignity an inherent right not earned through wealth or status. In fact, this respect is earned through piety. Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran

“And We have honoured the

Children of Adam."

(Surah Al-Isra)

Here the word Children of Adam refers to that Islam grants dignity to all human beings irrespective of socio-economic status.

2. Elucidating Institutionalized Status Based Hierarchy before Islam

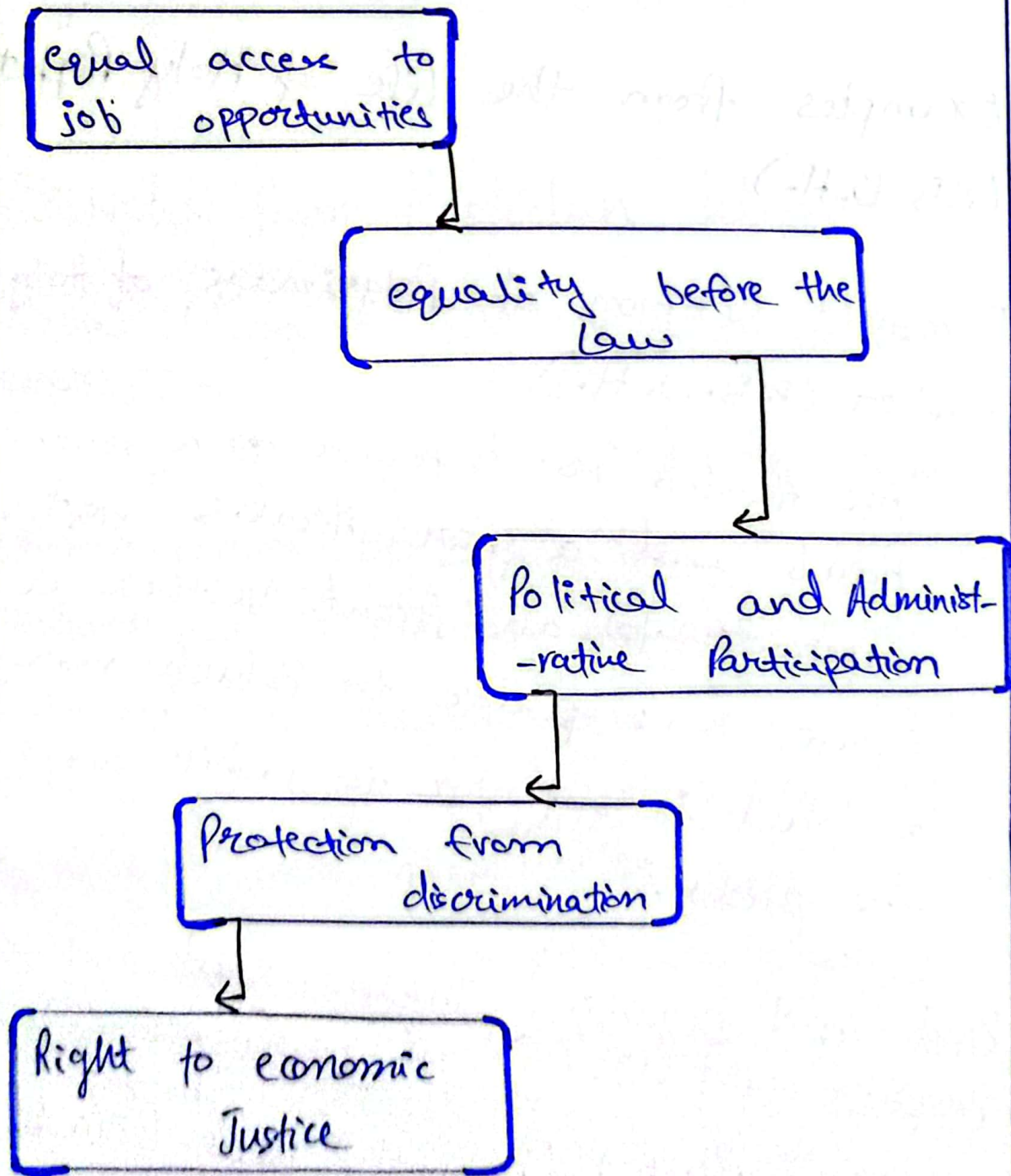
Before Islam, in ^{Makkah} (Quraysh) only wealthy merchant families had right to self-respect and dignity like Quraysh whereas the poor had no such right. Islam ended this institutionalized status based hierarchy in which slaves were treated as property.

3. Human Rights Related to Self-Respect and Dignity Granted by Islam

Islam grants following rights related to self-respect and dignity: equal access

to job opportunities, equality before the law, political and administrative participation, protection from discrimination.

Fig: Human Rights Related to Human Dignity and Self-Respect granted by Islam



4. Examples from Islamic Civilization that clearly show "Islam gives right to Self-respect and Dignity irrespective of Socio-economic status"

i- Examples from the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

(a) Farewell Sermon of Pilgrimage of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

"An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not superior to an Arab. Neither a white is superior to Black nor a black is superior to White except for piety."

(b) Kind and Dignified Treatment of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) with Slaves

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made ^{Hazrat} Bilal

ibn Rabah (R.A.) - an Abyssinian slave - his companion. Even Ans ibn Malik (R.A.) said

“ I served Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for more than ten years but he (did ^{never} not) scolded me. ”

This shows that Islam gives right to dignity to everyone irrespective of socio-economic status.

(ii) Examples from Rashidun Caliphate

(a) Equal Access to Job Opportunities for everyone

During the reign of Caliph Abu Bakr (R.A.), Usama ibn Zayd (the son of formerly enslaved man of African descent) remained Commander of Muslim force. This shows that in the reign of pious Caliphs, job opportunities were given to ^{equally} everyone irrespective of socio-economic status, for preserving dignity of all.

(b) Equality before the law: During the reign of Caliph Ali (R.A.), when there was a conflict between Caliph and a Jewish man over the ownership of armor, the decision was given in the favor of Jewish due to lack of evidence by Caliph Ali (R.A.). This preserved dignity of a common man.

Case of Coptic Christian Egyptian during the reign of Caliph Umar (R.A.):

During the reign of Caliph Umar (R.A.), when the son of Amer ibn al Aas (governor of Egypt) lost a ^{horse} race against Coptic Christian Egyptian, he got furious and struck Coptic Christian Egyptian. The Christian complained to Caliph Umar (R.A.) who gave him a whip and ask him to strike governor's son in front of public. This protected the dignity of a poor against the rich.

(c) Right to Economic Justice

(*) During the reign of ^{pious} Caliphs, the system of stipends ^{from public treasury} for the poor was established.

During the reign of pious Caliphs, public treasury was used to provide stipends to the poor, thereby ensuring equal access of all to resources of state so that everyone could meet his basic needs in a dignified manner.

iii- Examples from Abbasid Caliphate

Disencouragement of Monopoly of Ruling Elite on Economic System

In Abbasid Caliphate, everyone was given right to economic security irrespective of socio-economic status. For ensuring equal access of all merchants to resources of market, (and) Muhtasib used to regulate markets for discouraging monopoly of ruling elite on markets. This

preserved dignity of everyone.

iv. Examples from Andalusia (Umayyad Caliphate)

Equal Political and Administrative Participation

In Andalusia, Saqaliba (slaves of European origin) were appointed to top military, political and administrative positions for protecting dignity of all individuals irrespective of socio-economic status.

v. Examples from Mughal Empire

Equal Right to Justice: Jehangir's Golden Chain of Justice allowed everyone, irrespective of socio-economic status, to seek personal redress for an injustice.

Concluding Thoughts

Islam grants right to self-respect and dignity to everyone irrespective of color, creed, race or socio-economic

status. In Islamic civilization, the equal access of all to job opportunities, equality before the law, equal political and administrative participation clearly show that Islam gives right to self-respect and dignity irrespective of socio-economic status.