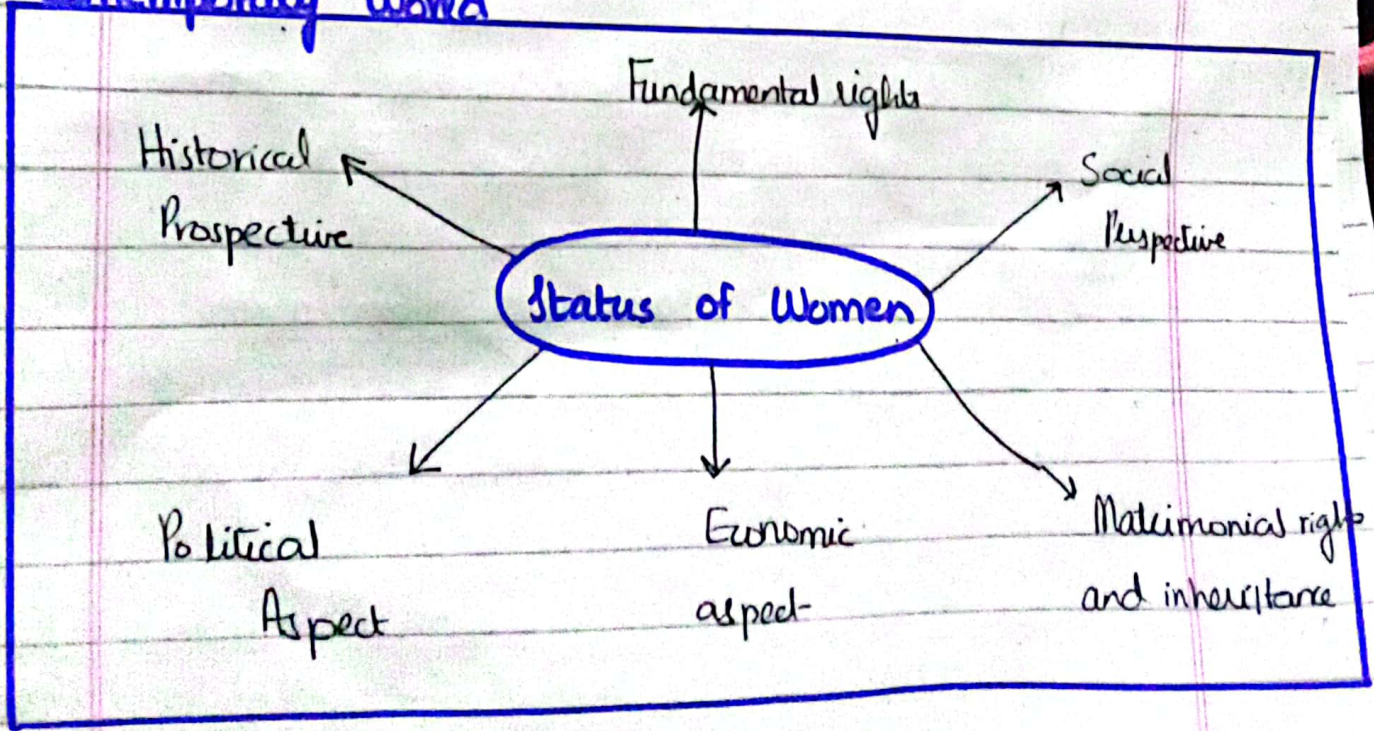


Q1: Describe the rights of women in Islam in context of current waves of women rights?

Introduction:

Greece is known as the birthplace of democracy but even in Athens, women rights were ignored just the same as Arabs on Indian sub-continent. Islam became the first religion to stop all malpractices focusing women and grant them equal status in society. Their rights were / are the same as men. The Arabs who used to burn female infant alive and used women as a reproductive tool only were schooled. The suffrage movement starting in late

Contemporary World



nineteenth or early twentieth century vocalised the need for women rights. Even today, multiple movements of the west have not been able to grant women the equal rights that Islam promised.

"And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) above them. And men are a degree above them."

(AL-Quran)

Rights of women in Islam in contemporary world:

① Historical aspect:

Before the women rights movement originated in west, women were not given right in inheritance, right to vote, to work at par with men and so on. Even the right to life was snatched in many societies. Islam granted women equal rights and status as that of men except for the financial burden upon men to provide.

② Fundamental rights of women:

(i) Right to life:

Islam grants women right to live. Today, when ills like honor killing and domestic violence are prevailing, it goes against Islamic principles.

(ii) Right to dignity/Respect:

The dignity of men and women are separate and different in Islam. Women has the right to have an honorable status in society. The current wave against honor killing in Pakistan is based on this principle.

(iii) Right to have better health:

Women have a right to better health. Islam even granted women the decision making power to decide the size of her family i.e. children.

(iv) Freedom of expression:

Islam granted women freedom of expression in an age when women were confined in houses. Women's opinion was valued as much as Sahabas. Today women are fighting for this right.

3) Social rights of women and women workers

(i) Right to education

"Repealing of education is binding on all Muslims" (Hadith)

The pursuit of education especially for women made haram by Islam is still incomplete today. In Pakistan more than half women population is illiterate.

(ii) Right to movement / social gatherings

Islam grants women right to displacement without being sexually harassed or raped. The recognition of Muslim women in their safety shield. Sadly, women today are not so safe.

(iii) Equal representation in laws:

Women have equal legal rights as that of men. The representation in several matters is challenged and dismissed today.

(iv): Rights as mother, wife and daughter:

A mother has heaven under her feet, a wife makes a home into heaven and a daughter is a gateway to heaven. Islam has granted such high value to women in every era.

Q2, Islamic identity

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4. Matrimonial rights and inheritance:

i) Right to marriage

The Hurat march highlighted how women are oppressed and married forcefully. The right to choose to get married has been granted to women in Islam.

ii) Right to choose partner:

Hazrat Khadija (RA) was proposed for marriage to Prophet (PBUH). Today women are forcefully wed to Qwan in some societies.

iii) Right to children/mehar:

Women have rights to choose the mehar amount and reproductive rights. Women in west raising feminist slogan fight for these rights

iv) Right to inheritance:

Islam has granted women half share in inheritance in comparison with men because of financial responsibility upon men to provide. Women are free from this burden. However the fourth wave of feminism, still fights for inheritance rights and prenuptial agreements

(5) Economic Aspect of women rights:

(i) Financial responsibility upon men:

Women have right to money through inheritance, mahr etc but her money is her own while men are made the financial provider for the family.

(ii) Right to business/employment:

Today, women are fighting for equal representation in job market and employed and fighting against glass ceiling. Islam has granted women right to work but not made an obligation.

(iii) Right to ownership.

Women have the right to own property and asset. In west, women have fought through several waves of feminism to be granted this fundamental right. But even today in Pakistan, women are not granted right to ownership and patriarchal mind-set prevails.

(i) Political Aspect

(i) Right to vote:

In USA women were granted voting rights in 1920, but still women lack political participation in electoral process. The "Aurat March" of Pakistan also focused on this aspect.

(ii) Right to political participation/representation:

Women represent half the section of society. The first female PM of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto set a precedent that women can also lead and represent their interest at a big level.

(iii) Participation in Defence/war:

Hazrat Aisha (RA) also participated in war. Women in Islam have aided in war through different means. The current wave of feminism also seeks women participation in defence activities.

Importance of Islam in current wave of feminism:

The current wave of women rights focuses on gender equality within existing political system, constitutional equality, justice, economic representation, ban on violence against women and so on. Islam granted all these rights to women, more than 1400 years ago.

Conclusion:

Islam is a complete code of conduct. It dictates solution to every aspect of life. Women who make more than half the world population, were given equal representation in rights under Islam. The west fighting for women rights is a practical example of difference between Islamic principles and liberalism.

Q2: Islamic civilization has a unique identity - Elaborate its characteristics.

Introduction:

Civilization is a complex society characterised by development of state, urbanization, social stratification and a symbolic communication method other than verbal/oral communication (documentation etc). Where else Islamic civilization or Islamic world is an Islamic community based on people (Ummah) who follow / believe in one faith i.e. Islam.

'Ummah' follows the teaching of Islam, (i.e. Quran and Sunnah) to their day to day life.

They believe in supremacy of one God i.e. Allah and His last prophet (PBUH) - Islamic civilization is different from Muslim civilization and considers religion as guiding principles, not culture. The components of Islamic world includes religion, morality, knowledge, law and justice etc.

Characteristics of Islamic Civilization

① Tawheed :

Islamic civilization is based on the Islamic faith i.e. Tawheed (Oneness of God) -

"~~There~~ There is no God but Allah."

(Al-Quran)

This is the founding principles of Islam. Anyone with doubt in this is exempted from the circle of Islam.

② Self-Purification :

Islam focuses on purification of soul (Tazkiyah). Human beings must keep both their bodies and soul clean in every form. A pious person is not who keeps himself dirty and attends to religious obligations.

"The best amongst you are the best in character."

(Hadith)

Contributing one's help against evil is part of 'warrior's duty'.

③: Dignity of Human:

Man is created to be the Naib (representative) of God on Earth. Allah made men with dignity to uphold amongst all other creation on Earth - All human activities should lead to happiness and welfare of men and depict this quality.

"We have certainly created man in the best stature."

(Quran)

④: Tolerance:

An Islamic civilization is a tolerant society.

"Islam is a religion of tolerance but also a religion of justice."

Sheikh Anwar (R)

Islam has emphasized the need to be tolerant towards one another as provocation to bad deeds is a sign of intolerance - An intolerant society always suffer.

⑤ Equality

In Islam, everyone is equal. Thus Islamic civilization is based on equality principle among all human no matter what caste, race or background they come from.

"An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab ..."

(Hadith)

⑥ - Social Justice:

Islamic civilization is based on the concept of social justice.

"One who strives for widows and poor is like one who fights in the way of Allah".

Everyone in the society are given right to justice and everyone is equal in the eyes of law. Quran, Sunnah and Ijmaah are to be the guiding principles of Islamic civilization.

Conclusion:

Beginning with the eight century, Muslim culture in Islamic civilization became a focal center of world progress. Focus on moral perspective of life, Islamic civilization is based on logic and reason which encourages scientific progress. Quran, a guiding principle is also based on many scientific revelation.
