BENEFITS OF HIJAB

# **1.0 Introduction**

The word Hijab is derived from an Arabic word ‘Hajaba’ which means to cover, conceal, or create a barrier. This is mandatory attire for Muslim women all over the world. The hijab has however elicited diverse opinions with some people supporting the religious attire while some like Isabelle Charest maintain that they find the hijab to be oppressive to women. Isabelle reiterated that religion should not dictate clothing for a person such as Islam dictates the hijab. The lack of freedom to wear for her is oppression (Philip Authier, 2019)The hijab is allowed by law in most countries under sections that cover the freedom of worship. This is because wearing the hijab is itself an act of worship among Muslim women. Many non-Muslims however view the wearing of the hijab as a political statement. Iran requires women to cover themselves in the hijab while most countries do not have specific laws on the hijab (Why Iran's Hardliners Are Tightening Enforcement Of Hijab?, 2019). They leave their citizens to choose for themselves (Hijab: Veiled in Controversy).

This paper aims to explore the benefits of hijab. It brings out Muslim women as chaste. This helps set Muslim women apart from morally incorrect behaviors and traits that are associated with women who dress indecently. The hijab, therefore, acts as a separation between clean pure women and other unbelieving women. The hijab serves to keep reminding the woman about being pure and chaste. The hijab cuts down on temptations and actions that may result as a result of indecent attire. The authenticity of the hijab as an attire does entirely rely on the behavior and morals of the wearers (Women Veiling: Social and Scientific Benefits of Wearing Hijab)

**A sign of purity**

In Islam, the hijab is taken to signify purity or dignity

**Shifting focus to intellect and character**

Most of the time physical appearances shift focus to the body appearance and forgets to also focus on intellectual character. Men tend to enjoy themselves by looking at specific parts of the female body. In some cases, this leads to harassment and sometimes abuse. The wearing of the hijab covers all the body parts of the woman and therefore eliminating such cases of harassment and abuse. The focus now shifts to the character and intellect of the woman. (TPRUSSEL, 2019) Instead of assessing a woman from just her bodily appearance and other physical traits. The woman can now get engaged intellectually and this also boosts the self-esteem of the woman and can now engage their male counterparts comfortably

**A symbol of commitment**

Another benefit of veiling is that it acts as a show of commitment to a man and the Muslim faith. Divine law is to be adhered to at all times and therefore following the commands of Allah is an act for worship. The Quran requires Muslim men to lower their gaze and requires women to avoid displaying their bodies. “And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments, except what (ordinarily) appear thereof.” (Quran ) Adherence to verses and directives from the holy book, therefore, is a show of commitment

**Eliminates competition amongst women**

In the modern world, women have gone to extreme levels of artificially improving the appearance of their bodies. This is fueled by the fact that women tend to be in a never-ending beauty competition with each other. Some of these body changes and improvements have a detrimental health effect on the body with some leading to death (Virginia Woman Dies After Getting Plastic Surgery in Colombia, 2020)Some people have even died during this body enhancement procedure. When covered in the hijab, it brings about decency that most of the other clothes do not offer. Women, therefore, look uniform and don’t have to worry about appearing beautiful to impress other people. (Benefits of Wearing Hijab, n.d.)

**Health benefits**

The hijab not only has social and religious benefits but also health benefits. Studies have proven that wearing a hijab prevents loss of body heat through the head.Whenever a woman covers herself in the hijab, this loss of heat is averted. Wearing a hijab also helps maintain cleanliness and hygiene. Hijab prevents minimizes body contact with contaminants and disease-causing organisms. This is proven because workers in other professions such as nursing and medicine also wear covering clothes to prevent themselves from pathogens and other hazards. Hair to women is very important. The hijab covers the head and hence prevents the hair from being exposed to direct sunlight and dust. The lengthens the lifetime of their hair and prevents it from getting damaged by direct and dust that damages hair. Covering the body also keeps the body shielded from the harmful rays of the sin and prevents the body from developing wrinkles. During cold seasons, women wearing hijabs also experience less cold as compared to women who have not covered themselves

**Misconceptions about Hijab**

There are several misconceptions out there about the hijab most of which is outrightly wrong. The first is that hijab-wearing women are voiceless and oppressed. This is not true. Wearing the hijab has certainly nothing with women choosing to be vocal or not. (Head strong: Muslim women say the hijab is a symbol of faith, not oppression, 2019)The second misconception is that hijab-wearing women are religiously conservative than non-wearing women. The fact is that veiling is just an appearance and religions have all to do with your daily deeds, way of life, and your relationship with the creator. Another misconception is that hijab-wearing women are quiet and traditional. This is not the case. A good example is British journalist Yvonne Ridley (HANIF, 2007). She wears a hijab and has managed to be very vocal in her line of work beating all stereotypes. The last misconception is that the hijab prevents women from participating in sports. The fact is that the number of hijab women participating in sports dropped due to a ban on the use of headscarves in the Olympics. The numbers are beginning to rise again as seen in the last Olympics.

**Conclusion**

The hijab offers more advantages than any know disadvantages. The hijab as discussed is not oppressive in any way. The hijab preserves the beauty of Muslim women, acts as a source of protection, and aims to please our creator. Hijab also acts as an identity of the Muslim faith. It is very easy to point out a Muslim adherent in public by looking at the dressing. It is therefore a public statement of not shying away from the faith. The hijab has been relevant in the past and will be relevant in the future

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