**Current Social, Moral and Political Challenges of Muslims and**

**Their Solution in the Light of Islamic Teachings**

***GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN AQURING EDUCATION***



**ISLAMIAT PROJECT.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | **Manahil Waqar** |
|  |  |
| Reg # | **(FA18-BCE-088)** |
| Moderator Name | Sir Sadan |

**ABSTRACT**

*Gender discrimination continues to be an enormous problem within the Muslim society, is the unfair treatment of a person because their gender. It effects both men and women. Old-fashioned patriarchal norms have lowered women to secondary status within the household and workplace. This harshly affects health, financial status, education, and political involvement of women. They are married young, become mothers at an early age, and are then burdened by rigorous domestic and financial responsibilities. Women still face a gender bias, especially in the educational institutes, It is obvious in work situations where one gender is given special treatment or one gender receives less pay or job responsibilities because of unfair stereotype. This report is brief discussion on the Muslim Ummah being bedeviled by countless social, moral and political challenges. One of which is* ***Gender Discrimination in Muslim Countries in Acquiring Education.***

**Part 1: INTRODUCTION:**

Nowadays, the unity of Muslim Ummah is lacking in many places which is why we are facing problems in our daily routine such as social, moral and political. The Muslim society should be a whole community but there are many internal conflicts amongst ourselves. One of the reason of our downfall is Gender Discrimination in Acquiring Education.

Education is the basic acclivities in all human societies. The notion of education is not merely to teach instruction to the pupil in certain subjects but also and principally to bring them up or develop in them those habits and attitudes which may enable them to face the future that awaits them.

To seek knowledge is a sacred duty, it is obligatory forevery Muslim, male or female.

The first word revealed was ***“Iqra”***.

And Surah Al-Baqarah, ayah 269 reaveals:

***“Allah grants wisdom to those who he pleases and to whom wisdom is granted indeed he receives an overflowing benefit”***

The first and most crucial responsibility for us is to acquire knowledge and secondly to practice and orate this knowledge. No man becomes truthfully a Muslim without knowing the meaning of Islam*,****because he becomes a Muslim not through birth but through knowledge***. Unless we come to know the basic and necessary teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) how can we believe in him, have faith in him, act according to what he taught?

**GENDER INEQUALITY IN SCHOOLS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES:**

Muslim counties worldwide have problems with gender equality. They dominate the bottom ten countries in the ***Global Gender Gap Report*** and none of the ten most successful countries offering equal opportunities for men and women is Muslims.

***Girls*** lag behind boys in ***school attendance***, making up to ***54%*** of the out-of-school population in the ***Arab states*** and these figures have not changed since 2000. Of the ten countries that are the worst for child attendance rates, ***seven are Muslim.***

These are ***Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger and Yemen***: countries that are often considered hotspots for acts of violence against women and school girls.

The near-fatal attack on ***Malala Yousafzai*** by a Taliban gunman in ***Pakistan*** reminds us of the challenging circumstances in which girls attend school in many Muslim countries. Her subsequent fight for education for girls and children worldwide won her the Nobel Peace Prize.

Regular attacks on schools in ***Nigeria*** have forced many parents to take out girls from education. In some federations schools have even closed down for fear of rebel attacks.

 A ***Boko Haram-style armed group*** cautioned schools in ***Pakistan*** against co-education. One is shocked as Nigeria and Pakistan together account ***for a quarter of the world’s out-of-school children.***

**WHY THIS INEQUALITY IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES?**

In many Muslim countries women are subjected to masculine norms ***and varying degrees of restriction*** on their participation. This reduces the worth of women’s education in society.

Some people blame ***culture and religion*** for this problem. Others say the economic structure of some Muslim countries is not favorable to women’s development. They argue male-controlled norms persist because ***oil‐rich economies limit the role of women*** in the paid workforce and restrict women’s participation in politics.

**ALL MUSLIM NATIONS DON’T SUFFER GENDER INEQUITY IN EDUCATION:**

Within the Middle East, a region widely considered to lack progress in girls education ***Turkey*** is very close toeradicate the gender gap in education. In ***Quwait, UAE, Bahrain and Libya,*** more girls are in secondary school than boys and there is gender parity in primary admission.

Much vibrant success stories are emerging outside the Arab world. In ***Indonesia***, the world’s most populated Muslim country, equal ratio of girls and boys are in school. In ***Malaysia***, boys even lag behind girls at almost all levels of schooling.

In the Borno state of ***Nigeria***, half of ten-year-old girls stay out of school, a situation Malaysia overcame nearly three decades ago.

A similar outline is visible in ***Bangladesh*** where girls outnumber boys in primary as well as secondary school. Neither religious belief nor income insufficiency could keep girls away from schools in this Muslim majority country.

**IMPORTANCE OF GIRLS EDUCATION IN ISLAM:**

Women are victims of countless power struggles for hundereds of years societies and cultures around the world.

This dominance over women has been exercised within the kind of Sati, Hitobashira, Karo-Kari and also the killing of witches, that are solely some to say.

Sadly, several societies as well as some Muslim societies still exercise this social system in numerous forms like the denial to education, unequal salaries compared to men in workplaces, forced marriages and prostitution, among many others.  
Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) came at a time when the Arab society, like so many patriarchal societies at that time, was rife with abhorrent practices against girls. He preached Islam, liberating women and girls in every walk of life, education being a prime aspect.   
 The first Quranic revelation:

“Read within the name of your Lord United Nations agency created, created man from a clinging form. Read!

Your Lord is that the Most Generous, who taught by means of the pen; taught man what he did not know.” (96:1-5)

These verses address humankind to seek knowledge and delve in critical thinking.

The emphasis set within the acquisition of information, in the above verses, surpasses any statement or action denying girls’ the right to education.

Had these verses solely been for men, it might be impossible to imagine the extent of progression that the society created in a very mere twenty-three years — the whole

duration of the revelation of the Quran.  
In another verse in the Quran, Allah says:  
**“(This is) a Book (the Quran) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.” (38:29)**

It is necessary to say that the word “men” within the higher than verse refers to human race because it will thus in many alternative places within the Quran once God addresses humanity.

These and alternative verses inform the readers that participating in crucial thinking could be a responsibility on each men and ladies. The al-Qur'an repetitively reminds individuals to contemplate, think, analyze, therefore victimisation their mind power to ponder and perceive, while creating no distinction between men and ladies.

**DOES ISLAM PROHIBIT EDUCATING WOMEN?**

The answer is no. There is a gross misunderstanding in the West that women in Islam are not allowed to seek education. The frenzy media most often show a poor village in a Muslim country, where Muslim girls are not allowed to seek education. Then, they connect it to Islam. They portray that Islam is to blame for this. Critics need to stop mixing culture and religion together. A person who denies a female education, and the person so happens to be Muslim, does not represent Islamic teachings. Nowhere in the Quran or Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) is there any restriction on girls seeking education. There are many evidences where females in Islam are actually encouraged to pursue education.

**Sunan Ibn Majah:**

It was narrated that Anas bin Malik said: *‘****Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim****’*. (Sunan Ibn Majah volume 1, Book 1, Hadith 224)

Three important themes around education are emerging in the above traditions. From the first Hadith we infer that education is not a right but a responsibility on every Muslim, **male or female**. In a Hadith, emphasis is laid on the quality of education imparted to the girl slave and the latter part deals with the encouragement to free slaves (Islam denounced and later abolished slavery). Another Hadith speaks volumes about the superiority of the person who seeks knowledge over the one who does not. The reference here to superiority is to the **person**who seeks knowledge, man or woman.

We shall now examine information about the intellectual abilities of two wives of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H): ***Khadijah and Aishah***.

* Khadijah Binte Khuwaylid, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was a wealthy tradeswoman, the richest woman in Mecca at the time, who exported goods as far away as Syria. To manage her large business, she employed several males and to do so then in Arabia, necessitated that you have a high level of understanding and wisdom.
* Aishah Binte Abu Bakr, the youngest wife of  Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was very talented and possessed an incredible memory. As a Muslim scholar, she is credited with narrating more than two thousand Hadith and was noted for teaching eminent scholars. She had a great love for learning and became known for her intelligence and sharp sense of judgment. Her life also substantiates that a woman can be a scholar, exert influence over men and women and provide them with inspiration and leadership. The example of Aishah in promoting education, particularly education of women in the laws and teachings of Islam, is a hallmark in female education in Islam. Because of the strength of her personality, she was a leader in every field of knowledge, in society and in politics.

**Part 2: SOLUTIONS TO COUNTER GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

With the goal to enhance gender equality in the region, we must:

* Better comprehend the source of gender discrimination, and use an evidence-based approach to advocate for strategy change
* Toughen the systems and networks of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) civil society groups, with a focus on the sustainability of new and developing movements, including those that are youth-led
* Support to the growth of innovative, community-led elucidations to advance gender equality

Some of the main factor that can help our society in countering gender Inequality for women are as follow:

**Women Empowerment:**

Women Empowerment by definition means a

***“Process through which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices.”***

Women’s empowerment consists of five components: their sense of self-worth; right to determine choices; right to to opportunities and resources; right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to impact the direction of social change to create a more just, social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

**1)Religious Aspect**

When it comes to empowering women, we find a divide between muslims, some are in support of women empowerment and majority are against it, but what can better advocate women empowerment then the words of Allah and his prophet, as they have made education compulsory for both men and women The need to acquire knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim whether male or female.

“It has been unanimously agreed by Islamic scholars that the first word revealed of the Qur’an was “Iqra” meaning “proclaim” or “Read””

Knowledge is an important part of the Islamic faith, and the Qur’an makes no distinction between the pursuit of education and acquisition of knowledge for men and women; it is a duty for every Muslim.

When it comes to women being side by side with men in helping the cause of Islam, they must be the greatest example, they showed that in hour of need a women can be as useful as men, Western world has proven this very fact, they have utilized the women in their society and developed whereas in our societies we have only created chaos and diverted from the path of Islam which was a message a **PEACE**

**2) Restrictions for Women**

In addition to governmental restrictions, in many countries private individuals and groups also try to impose norms related to religious attire. The Pew study finds that the number of states in which women have been harassed by individuals or groups for violating religious dress codes has increased in recent years. In the latest year studied, such social hostilities over religious were found in 50 countries (25%), including Sudan. Five years ago, such events were stated in just 14 countries (7%).

While there may not be a straight connection between government guidelines and social antagonisms involving religion, the data shows that harassment of women over religious dress occurs more often in countries where the wearing of religious symbols regulated by any level of government.

***“To close the gender gap, strengthen economies and empowering women is a must, it is imperative that religious freedom become a factor that is taken seriously and acted upon.”***

**Part 3: Recommendation to Overcome Gender Discrimination**

There is an urgent need to take initiatives for gender equality for women in Muslim countries, so that their rights are not damaged.

Unfortunately, at this significant pass, women's right to gender equality is being challenged in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, by the rise of modern fanatics, political agendas, commonly called holy "fundamentalisms". Cunningly using religion to disguise political agendas, these extremists seek to overshadow women rights by means of creating closed constituencies. At the same time, fundamentalist agendas are reinforcing existing laws that are also disempowering women. Women who resist these diverging impositions are condemned, disliked, threatened, abused and degraded, with culture and religion used to excuse the universal violence inflicted on them.

* **Creating awareness**

As WEMC and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) have pointed out, it is above all crucial at this time to disregard the use of culture and religion as a means to strengthen the disempowerment of women.

As part of this effort, UNIFEM has a major campaign on "Say No to Violence" and WEMC observed the International Day for the Riddance of Violence against Women, with the theme "No excuses for violence against women". These promotions seek to gather public opinion on strategies for mobilizing the State, society and the international community to reject cultural reasons for violence against women.

* **Freedom of speech**

So it is of utmost importance to ensure that women's rights advocates and women proclaiming their rights are not silenced.

Such silencing would make acceptable, false claims that women's rights and gender equality are outlandish and illegitimate in Muslim countries and would disregard the use of violence as a tool of to control women.

It is more important than ever before to amplify women's voices and give support to their national strategies for individual and collective enablement in ways that would promote our nation from the inside out. This will promote the right to gender equality as the unchallengeable right of the 600 million women who constitute half of the Muslims in the world.

**Conclusion**

Time has come for the world to start taking women empowerment seriously because if we will leave women of our society behind in attaining knowledge we will not only do bad to the society but also move away from the guidelines given to us my allah, which is to get education, as it is a must.

# References

Adams, R. (2008). Empowerment, participation and social work. newyork.

Daley, E., & Englert, B. (2010). Securing land rights for women. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*.

Department, S. (2002). *https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1102*. Retrieved from Europa.

Empowerment theory: Psychological, o. a. (200). Women Empowerment. In M. Zimmerman. US.

Kuokkanen, R. (2012). Self-Determination and Indigenous Women's Rights at the Intersection of International Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*.

Meinzen-Dick, R., Brown, L., Feldstein, H., & Quisumbing, A. (1997). Gender, Property Rights, and Natural Resources. *World Development*.

Union, E. (n.d.). *https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1102.*

Ali, Syed Mubashir, Siyal, Hussain B. and Sultan, Mehboob (1995). Women's Empowerment and Reproductive Choices. The Pakistan Development Review, 34(4), 1137-1150.

Amin, R., Becker, S. and Byes, Abdul. (1998). NGO-Promoted Micro credit Programs and Women’s Empowerment in Rural Bangladesh: Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence, The Journal of Developing Areas, 221-236.

Chaudhry, I.S. and Nosheen, Farhana (2009). The Determinants of Women Empowerment in Southern Punjab(Pakistan): An Empirical Analysis. European Journal of Social Sciences, 10(2), 216.

Fargues, P. (2005). Women in Arab Countries: Challenging the Patriarchal System? Reproductive Health Matters, 13(25), Implementing ICPD: What's Happening in Countries: Maternal Health and Family Planning, pp. 43-48 Published by: Reproductive Health Matters Stable. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3776227

Although earlier scholars graded this hadith as weak, later scholars of Hadith said there are enough chains of narration to be strengthened to the level of hasan or sahih (authentic), a view which is stated by al-Mizzi, al-Iraqi, Ibn Hajr, al-Suyuti and al-Albani. [Kashf al-Khafa, no. 1665: Sahih al-Jami al-Saghir, no.3913-<http://www.thereligionislam.com/islamicideology/scienceofhadith.htm>

Elementary Education and Motivation in Islam: Perspectives of Medieval Scholars 750 – 1400 CE [Copyright 2010] By Eeqbal Hassim  
<http://www.cambriapress.com/cambriapress.cfm?template=6&bid=405>

The Everything Understanding Islam Book: A Complete and Easy to Read Guide to Muslim beliefs, practices, traditions, and Culture By Christine Huda Dodge page 227  
An Insider’s Guide to Islam By Dr. Yushau Sodiq is an Associate Professor of Islamic and Religious Studies at TCU page 299  
<http://www.rel.tcu.edu/faculty_sodiq.asp>  
 Encyclopaedia of Women in South Asia: Afghanistan [Volume 4] by Dr. (Mrs.) Sangh Mittra, and Dr. Bachchan Kumar

The Islamic World and the West: Managing Religious and Cultural Identities in the Age of Globalisation by Scholar Christoph Marcinkowski page 221 <http://www.mei.edu/profile/christoph-marcinkowski>