**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.**

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**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.***

**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.

**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****.*

**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.

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