

Concept of Gender Equity: An Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

The concept of equality was not mandatory. The Holy Quran, a complete guide for Muslims, provides clear protection in the areas of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. This is a significant improvement over the situation of women in pre-Islamic societies where women were the burden of the family and women were the burden. Buried alive. Nevertheless, historical circumstances have often put Muslim women at a disadvantage for centuries. Pervasive traditions of male authority and honor make it difficult for women to claim the rights guaranteed in the Quran. Numerous reforms have taken place in this century to improve educational opportunities and promote the emancipation of women in general. However, certain patterns of difficulty still dominate, such as key issues, such as employment and political activity, or issues considered divisive. Western countries viewed Muslim women as "progress" and "problem" problems, pointing to clear inequalities in the relative status of men and women. This study argues that the relationship between women and men is largely incomprehensible unless one tries to examine it from an Islamic perspective. The Quran lists men as protectors of women, and women's justice is defined by their obedience to them. A major theme of modern Islamic scriptures is that women hold power through their innate qualities and traits and have well-defined roles in any society, preserving the roles assigned to men. This is well-explained and expressed for both men and women. Owing to the

nature of the situation, it cannot be used appropriately. Their physical and psychological differences determine each individual's different but complementary duties. Few Muslim women, even those who are critical of the restrictions imposed by Islam, understand many of the things that are considered characteristic of Western feminism. Islam frees women from many of the problems and worries inherited by men; however, women often do not give up this easily.

Keywords: Gender, Equity, Islamic perspective

I-Introduction

The concept of equity for women in Islam has been a subject of profound discussion and exploration, reflecting the multifaceted nature of gender relations within the Islamic framework. Islam, as a complete and the comprehensive religion, provides guidance and principles that aim to establish justice and equality among individuals, including women. It sets the stage to examine the concept of equity in Islam with regards to women, encourages and emphasizing the principles, teachings, and challenges inherent in this discourse. Islam the only religion that recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of both men and women, emphasizing their equal spiritual value and moral responsibilities¹. The Qur'an, the central religious text of Islam, affirms the fundamental equality of men and women in the sight of God, stating, "And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date seed." (Qur'an 4:124). The verses of the Holy Quran and many Ahadith of the Prophet (PBUH) serves as a foundation for the model of equity for women in religion Islam².

The Ahadith are the actions and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), offer further guidance on the treatment and rights of women in Islam the women are the role model for society³. The last prophet of Islam explicitly advocated for women's education, empowerment, and fair treatment as per the Islamic principles. His teachings highlighted the importance of respecting women's autonomy and granting them equal opportunities to thrive within their communities For instance; on seeking the education he further stated that to seek knowledge is for both the genders. The hadith

emphasis on the education for both Muslim men and women Islam never discourages any particular gender⁴.

However, the concept of equity for women in Islam has often been misunderstood or misinterpreted, leading to misconceptions about women's status within the religion. It is crucial to distinguish between the egalitarian principles of Islam and cultural practices that may vary across different regions and historical periods⁵. Many societies have intermixed cultural traditions with Islamic teachings, leading to patriarchal interpretations that restrict women's rights and opportunities⁶.

The growing progress in the world now in many Muslim-majority countries to promote women's education, participation in public life, and economic empowerment. Women have assumed leadership roles in various fields, including politics, academia, and business. Several Muslim countries have implemented legislation to protect women's rights and combat discriminatory practices⁷. These developments demonstrate the evolving discourse within the Islamic framework and the efforts to achieve gender equity and justice for women, the number of International and national organizations are also working for the progress and basic women rights. If we discuss about the Pakistan and other developing countries, challenges persist, including patriarchal mindsets, cultural barriers, and the need for further reforms.⁸ Ongoing efforts are crucial to address these challenges, ensuring that the concept of equity in Islam is translated into practical realities that empower and safeguard women's rights⁹.

The concept of equity for women in Islam embodies a multifaceted and dynamic discourse, rooted in the teachings and principles of Islam. While Islam upholds the fundamental equality of men and women, societal factors, cultural practices, and misinterpretations have posed challenges to realizing true equity¹⁰. However, efforts to promote gender equality and justice continue to shape the discourse and progress in many Muslim-majority countries. By exploring the concept of equity in Islam within this context, a deeper understanding of women's rights the number of steps have been taken in order to promote the concept of equity specially in muslim world ¹¹.

2-Literature Review

Throughout history, women's roles and rights have been a subject of considerable debate and evolution. In the realm of religion, Islam has often

been a topic of discussion regarding its treatment of women¹². Misconceptions and misinterpretations have led to the belief that Islam oppresses women¹³. It is first encouraged by Islam to respect the women before the advent of Islam the new born daughters were buried alive it was Islam who introduced the concept of equity. This study aims to explore the concept of women's equity in Islam, highlighting the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as well as the examples set by influential Muslim women who during the life of prophet found as traders¹⁴.

Equality in Spiritual Worth

In Islam, the fundamental principle is that men and women are equal in the sight of Allah. Both genders possess equal spiritual worth and are equally accountable for their actions¹⁵. The Qur'an states, "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Qur'an 49:13). This verse highlights that piety and righteousness, rather than gender, determines one's status in front of God. Islam emphasizes that women have the same potential for spiritual growth and closeness to God as men, thus rejecting any notion of gender-based superiority¹⁶. The muslim world is following it and day by day the focus on women rights women protection bills are also passed by different countries including Pakistan.

Legal Rights and Protections

Islamic teachings recognize women's rights and offer them legal protections in various aspects of life. The Qur'an grants women the right to own and manage property, engage in business, and inherit wealth. Islam never supports the concept of marriage without any consent of female but Islam acknowledges a woman's right to consent in marriage and prohibits forced marriages¹⁷. It also safeguards women's financial security by mandating that men provide financial support to their wives and families. Islamic law, known as Sharia, seeks to ensure justice and fairness in matters of family, marriage, divorce, and inheritance, taking into accounts the specific needs and circumstances. Women are protected according to Islamic laws of women.

Education and Leadership

Contrary to popular belief, Islam encourages education for both men and women. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the pursuit of knowledge as a duty for all Muslims, regardless of gender. Muslim women throughout history have excelled in various fields of knowledge, including

theology, law, medicine, and philosophy. The Muslim scholar Fatima al-Fihri, she has a credit of founding the world's oldest university in Morocco, serves as inspiration for women's intellectual contributions. While cultural practices may limit educational opportunities in some societies, Such as in typical rural areas of Pakistan women are culturally bound but is not aligned with the basic principles of religion Islam¹⁸.

Social Responsibilities and Participation

Islam promotes active participation and social responsibilities for women within their communities. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the importance of women's engagement in public life and encouraged their involvement in social, economic, and political affairs. History witnesses that Muslim women have played significant roles as scholars, activists, leaders, and philanthropists throughout history. Their contributions in middle east and as well as in our society have ranged from fostering education and healthcare to advocating for social justice and charitable works¹⁹. These are the examples that highlight the women their role in education, business, healthcare and many other dimensions of life.

3-Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore and analyze the concept of women's equity in Islam. This study aims to find out the Islamic teachings and guidelines in terms of the women rights the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) examples, to understand the rights of women in Islam. The research will help out to further investigate the historical contributions of influential Muslim women to highlight their role in society as responsible women.

4-Data Collection

a. Primary Sources:

- The Qur'an: Examine verses related to women, their rights, and their equality in Islam.
- Hadith Literature: Analyze the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding women's rights, their social participation, and their position in society.

b. Secondary Sources:

The secondary sources include the already gathered data or the research on the available topic that includes the books, articles and research papers. The

available biographies are also part of this source like the influential women in the history and their social, political, religious contributions.

5-Data Analysis: Qualitative analysis techniques to interpret and analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis can be used to identify common themes and patterns in Islamic teachings regarding women's equity. Compare and contrast different perspectives and interpretations to provide a comprehensive view of the topic.

Historical Analysis: Examine the historical context and societal norms during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and subsequent periods to understand the application of Islamic teachings and their impact on women's rights and equity.

6-Ethical Considerations

Adhere to ethical guidelines by ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the sources used. Maintain respect for Islamic teachings, cultural contexts, and diverse perspectives.

7-Limitations

This study acknowledges the limitations of the study due to the social, political and security issues and it varies from region to region and country to country. However researchers covered all possible aspects

8-Discussion & Findings

Islamic teachings promote the concept of equity between men and women. By examining the Qur'an, Hadith literature, and the historical contributions of influential Muslim women, the following key findings emerge

Spiritual Equality: Islamic teachings emphasize that both men and women have equal spiritual worth in the eyes of Allah. Piety and righteousness determine one's status, not gender. Islam rejects any notion of gender-based superiority.

Legal Rights and Protections: Islam grants women a range of legal rights and protections. As the men are powerful in terms to manage their own property Women have the right to own and manage property, as men engage in business, and inherit wealth same way the women can inherit wealth²⁰. Islam also upholds a woman's right to consent in marriage and prohibits forced marriages. Financial support from men to their wives and families is mandated and its violation can be considered as crime as well sin as per Islamic laws.

Educational Opportunities: Islam encourages education for both men and women. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the pursuit of knowledge as a duty for all Muslims. Throughout history, influential Muslim women have made significant contributions in various fields of knowledge, challenging the notion that Islam restricts women's education.

Social Participation: Islamic teachings promote women's active participation in social, economic, and political affairs²¹. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged women's engagement in public life and recognized their contributions. Muslim women have played significant roles as scholars, activists, leaders, and philanthropists, contributing to their communities and society at large.

Misconceptions and Stereotypes: The findings address common misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding the treatment of women in Islam. The research reveals that these misconceptions often arise from cultural practices or misinterpretations rather than the true teachings of Islam.

Equity in Historical Context: The study considers the historical context and societal norms during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and subsequent periods. It highlights how Islamic teachings challenged and transformed societal norms to establish greater equity for women.

9-Recommendations

Based on this research study and the findings the future recommendations are included here that maximum concentration is needed on the education of women without education women rights can't be protected especially in rural areas of Pakistani society ,Islam encourages the women education as already discussed.

Findings & Conclusion

affirm that Islam upholds the concept of equity between men and women. Islamic teachings grant women equal spiritual worth, legal rights, educational opportunities, and social responsibilities. The principles of justice and fairness are embedded in Islamic teachings, emphasizing women's empowerment and their vital role in society

10-Conclusion

Throughout history, the concept of women's equity in Islam has been a subject of discussion, controversy, and misconceptions. However, a thorough

examination of Islamic teachings, including the Qur'an, Hadith literature, and the historical contributions of influential Muslim women, reveals a clear emphasis on equity between genders. Islam upholds the principle that men and women are equal in their spiritual worth and possesses the same potential for righteousness and closeness to God. In terms of legal rights and protections, Islam grants women various rights, including property ownership, inheritance, consent in marriage, and financial support. The women rights according to Islam protect and safeguarded and treated equitably in matters of family, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The different laws are there like civil laws, military laws in Islam the Islamic law, known as Sharia, aims to ensure justice and fairness, taking into accounts the specific needs and circumstances of women. The Islamic laws always found helpful in terms of women and according to that women are given the property and other fundamental rights.

Islam always encourages getting the education and that is essential for both the genders beyond any limitations of caste & creed. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) emphasized the pursuit of knowledge as a duty for all Muslims, irrespective of gender. Throughout history, Muslim women have excelled in diverse fields of knowledge, challenging the notion that Islam restricts women's educational opportunities. These women serve as inspiring examples of intellectual contributions and the potential for growth and achievement within Islamic teachings.

In Islam women are encouraged to participate in societal issues equally like men. Islam never discouraged women even the last prophet of Islam Holy Prophet (PBUH) always encouraged women's active participation in all the day to day affairs. Women played an important roles as scholars, activists, leaders, and philanthropists, leaving a lasting impact on their communities and society at large. Their contributions span a wide range of fields, including education, Medical, social justice, and charitable works. There are number of misconceptions against Islam in terms of status of women in Islam and their liberty. As already discussed after research study that there is major impact of culture and society on the rights of women, number of things which can be further investigated that the cultural effects on the women don't have any relations with the rights of women in Islam. By examining authentic sources

and understanding the historical context, it becomes evident that Islam places a strong emphasis on women's equity and empowerment.

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of women's equity in Islam. This study highlights that Islam values women's rights, contributions, and potential in all spheres of life without any discrimination. The principles of justice and fairness are deeply embedded in Islamic teachings, rejecting any form of gender-based superiority; it is further investigated by the researchers that Islam is the only religion in the world that encouraged women to raise their voice against any injustice. Islam promotes an inclusive and egalitarian society where men and women are seen as partners, complementing and supporting one another. By acknowledging and understanding the true teachings of Islam, we can challenge misconceptions, foster dialogue, and promote a more equitable and inclusive world for all, irrespective of gender. It is crucial to engage in open and informed discussions, dispelling biases and stereotypes, and working towards gender equality within the framework of Islamic teachings.

It is recommended to continue raising awareness about women's equity in Islam. Education and dialogue play crucial roles in addressing misconceptions and promoting a more accurate understanding of Islamic teachings. It is important for scholars, community leaders, and individuals to promote the principles of justice, fairness, and gender equality within their respective spheres of influence. Ultimately, by embracing the concept of equity between men and women, as espoused by Islam, societies can benefit from the diverse talents, perspectives, and contributions of women. Women's empowerment within Islamic teachings not only aligns with the core principles of justice and fairness but also paves the way for a more inclusive and harmonious society, where both men and women can thrive and fulfill their potential

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