

Women's Role in Modern Religion – Islam

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Introduction

As a religion, after Christianity, Islam is considered the second largest religion in the world. Islam has a worldwide population of about 1.8 billion Muslims. The stated facts interpret the creation of Islam took place in the early seventh century, which makes Islam the youngest of all other existing religions. This religion “Islam” was started in Mecca, which is on the land of Saudi Arabia. Islam was started in the life of Prophet Muhammad. There are many followers of this religion which are making their lives with the beliefs shared by God and Prophet Muhammad. Islam means “voluntarily obedience of God”. The followers of Islam are called Muslims, they are monotheist and believes in living their whole life worshipping the only God, “Allah”. The common belief of Muslims is, the only God has the power of making everything happen and nothing could happen without his permission. History tells, the word “Allah” was first revealed on Prophet through angel Gabriel. According to Muslims common belief Prophet was send on land by God with a purpose of spreading the right teachings of Islam. Further, different angels, and several angels were also sent on earth for human guidance and spread God’s law. Most of the same prophets are respected in other religions too; including Jews and Christianity. These prophets include; Abraham, Moses, Noah, and Jesus. According to Muslim belief, Prophet Muhammad was the last of all prophets. The holy book “Quran” has permanent lessons for Muslims till the end. The basic information present in Quran is found similar to Hebrew Bible including the revelation on Prophet Muhammad. The holy holds lessons for all mankind, emphasizing on human rights, ethics, politics, wisdom, discipline, education and most importantly women rights. The holy book, “Quran” and the practices of Prophet Muhammad gives clear lessons and teachings regarding the role and right of women in Islam.

Discussion

As researched, a great importance is given to women in Islam. There are various evidences and practices which portrays the importance of women in the religion “Islam”. The further study shows the Islamic principals were made in the right direction, it is seen that in earlier times men are seen in dominant position and women were expected to follow obediently to their family men (including father, brothers and husband). It seem more of a cultural norms than the actual teachings of Islam. The researches and studies conducted in previous times show that the lack of education and sensitization made people of Middle East consider women as their property, with no rights and freedom to perform actions according to their will but with the widespread of Islam and the teachings through Prophet Muhammad, made people aware about the value and respect given to women in Islam.

Interpretation through Quran

As stated in Quran: **“And for women are rights over men, similar to those of men over women.”** Qur’an 2:228. The great importance to women regarding equal rights, opportunities and education is vibrantly seen in Quran. As stated by Bayes and Tohidi (2016), in the early of 1930, the scholar Annie Besant quoted; that Islam gives equal rights to women regarding property, she further claimed that Christian England has only considered such rights in last twenty years which depicts that Islam is a religion which preaches about complete women rights in modern world. Islam gives the lesson of equality in all aspect, the teachings of Quran and Prophet Muhammad gives teaching about the provision of equal rights to men and women, it is evidently seen at many occasions that Islam gives value to equality. The God promises to judge all humans (men and women) equally. **“Never will I allow the loss of the work of any worker amongst you, male or female; you are of one another.”** Qur’an 3:195

Women Role in Modern Islamic World

With the change in time, the role of women in Islam has also changed simultaneously. In the recent years the increase in education and literacy, the accessibility of educational activities for both genders, availability of jobs and opportunities has directly and indirectly empowered the role of women in the modern Islamic world. Similarly, Muslim women have proved themselves as modern individuals with their knowledge, resourcefulness, creativity, dedication, and honesty (Hannabuss, 2010). Today, with respect to the Islamic teachings, Muslim women are moving forward all around the world. They are rising as doctors, teachers, mentors, and scholars. Islam gives women complete rights to move forward and educate themselves like men. As in Islam men and women are encouraged to seek knowledge, according to Prophet Muhammad, "Education is obligatory for every Muslim men and women." There are many other occasions and events which reflects the importance of men and women both educating themselves to go with the changes taking place in the environment. The wife of Prophet Muhammad, Khadija herself was a business women. Such practices and actions of Islam encouraged women to involve themselves in all right measures to make their life better. The common perspective of Muslim towards modernism and the role of women in Muslim world varies in different regions. Today, in the modern world Muslim women should identify the driving forces which helps them in building themselves, their families and even making substantial changes in the society. Modern Muslim women has come out of self-centered individualism, exploring themselves, unleashing moderation while opposing destructive practices and biased traditions in the name of Islam. While setting their priorities modern Muslim women are seen actively contemplating their security, rights, education, opportunities and taking part in associated processes (Sharma, 2016). As seen in the history, the exemplary women figures of Islam, most prominently Khadija and Aisha, are respected by Prophet Muhammad. Their opinions

and suggestions were taken and given high respect by Prophet. Such attributes and practices of Prophet Muhammad has displayed the importance of women and their role in earlier times. These teaching are exactly followed in recent times where women are respected and permissible to work for their needs and growth. These teachings have made women capable of understanding and responding to the needs of modern time (Rizzo, 2017). Muslim women in today's modern world are playing some great significant roles, respecting and considering the main teachings of Quran and Sunnah and making their position in the modern world.

Muslim Women and the Lesson of Equality

As stated in Quran,

“He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them.” Quran, Verse 21 Surat u Rum.

Islam has emphasize on the aspect of equality as well as define conjunction with men. Women has raised with rights beyond beauty and pleasure. They are not considered as the possessions but according to Quran men and women complement each other. The other aspect which is discussed in Islam is that there no competition between men and women for their personal and professional progression. Though, women cooperate with opposite gender for the common and mutual interest. According to the available facts, women and men are considered equal in Islam. The characteristics of equality, equity and integrity are considered the main determinants of defining roles and responsibilities of both gender in modern Islamic culture. As the half of the population, women in Muslim world are considered as the powerful, dynamic and self-motivated individuals to initiate personal and societal development.

Economic Independence

In Islam both genders are equal in all terms; including economic equality. Various verses of Quran and practices of Prophet Highlights the importance of financial independence. As stated the example of Prophet and His wife Khadija, served as a businesswomen reflects the practice of women working for their selves and family well-being. The modern laws and regulations does not give rights to women to distribute her husband's property. Similarly, Islam gives no right to men (husband) to distribute his wife's property or any possessions.

Women Empowerment

Islam has mentioned various events which has given the lesson of empowerment. The concept of empowerment has become a global concern. This concept was first evolved by Islam and Islamic laws, while in the modern world the main idea of empowerment is unfortunately misunderstood. This concept was introduced when women were not given equal rights. The revelations of few surah was seen specifically acknowledging the women empowerment. Surah including Surah Nisa and Al-Mayeda focuses on women rights and empowerment. The implication of such teachings has made the recent practices and roles of women quite defined and distant. They have also provided the right direction to the women striving to get their rights and moralities.

Women Education

Women in modern Islamic world are encouraged to focus on their education. From the past practices of receiving and delivery of education shown the value of education (Chowdury, 2018). According to historical facts; after the death of Prophet Muhammad different men and women used to visit Ayesha for the purpose of learning. His wife Ayesha used to be considered as the respected scholar. Now, with the passage of time few great exemplary women scholars and

educationists have marked their places in the modern world. Islam permits men and similarly to women to commit long travels in terms of getting education. There is no limit set in Islam for both genders when it comes to gaining knowledge. Today, women are playing various leading roles as educated mothers, teachers, guide and scholars. They are bring outstanding changes in the community and society.

Politics and Social Services

In the early times Muslim women were seen active in participating in the societal operations. Women were free to share their ideas and suggestions as like that even in today's modern practices women in Muslim community are encouraged to step ahead and share their opinions. There are practices which is seen history related to women serving in battlefields, trading in marketplace and even history tells, the second caliph Umar assigned a women as the supervisor of the market. Such practices reflects the liberal practices in Islam providing liberty to women to serve and work for their wellbeing. In Islamic history women are also seen participating in political matters, governmental affairs, public and social affairs, lawmaking and teaching. The representation of several roles tell the value given to women in Islam. In today's world Muslim women are serving as political figures and personalities, with the passion of bring positive change to the world through their positive practices and actions.

Conclusion

Women in today's world are no longer inferior to men. They are as capable, creative, determinant and educated as men. There is no other action which cannot be performed by women (Abrams, 2016). Women in modern world are seen embarking their positions at every stage of personal and professional life. In this paper the role of women in modern Islamic world is discussed, it shows

that Islam has given a great importance to women. The holy book of Muslims “Quran” and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad has shown and give various teachings regarding the importance and status of women in Islam. Even, today in modern world while following the teaching of Islam and sunnah Muslim women are performing various roles. They are serving as parent, teachers, doctors and many other significant roles and serving in the development of society. Women in this modern era are proving their knowledge and wisdom through making their visible positions in educational, political and many other fields (Göle, 2017). They are empowered, and has equal social, political, and economical rights.

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