
A LITERARY PERSPECTIVE STUDY OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM IN VARIOUS FIELDS

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ABSTRACT

An incredible number of Muslim women, both in the East and the West, have drawn in themselves in featuring the sex libertarian part of Islam by calling for reinvestigation of what they call as a man centric perusing of the Quran and the Hadiths. Islamic Feminism, in contrast with different feminisms, is new and just a couple of decades old, because of which there are no major Islamic feminist speculations. Its backers mutually require a rehashing and stress the need to refocus on the dynamic, reasonable and moral premise of Islam. They have composed books, articles, and have gotten critical help from other Muslim writers and authors over the East and the West. Women wherever over the world desire for equivalent treatment and equivalent rights as that of their male partners. Misogyny is pervasive among people from hundreds of years and henceforth, women's liberation as a talk looking for a cognizant individual character for women, has thrived to offer voice to the unheard, unnoticed, and abused piece of mankind - women. As a development, woman's rights have served inestimable women in the historical backdrop of mankind from numerous points of view. Women through various articulations clarify the intricate situation of concealment by male centric approval. So in this paper we have attempted to trace the emergence of Islamic feminism and its implications on today's world.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women are detained in their sex which itself imposes on her specific constraints. Male man centric society is a socio-social wonder; from the very birth of a child, independent of sex, the socio-social pounding starts and distorts the mind of an individual for eternity. Women were seen as items in the fourteenth century with the expanding prevalence of "naked" works of art. The proposal on Women's Poetic Responses to the Male Gaze: Cutting Them Down by Nadine Yonka legitimizes that those works of art "in fourteenth century" were typically painted by men with their articles being wonderful, "stripped, latently situated women". In Ways of Seeing, Berger says that "men take a gander at women. Women watch themselves being taken a gander at", and depicts male painters' brain science while painting a woman, the "individual who is the object of their [male painters'] exercises – woman – [is] treated as a thing or a deliberation". What's more, more than this, "the 'perfect' observer is constantly thought to be male and the picture of the woman is intended to compliment him"

To comprehend the counterfeit and molded standards of conduct, Joy Schaverien, based on gathered social and anthropological research information, attests that gender characters recommend that gender has

no organic birthplace, that the associations among sex and gender are not by any stretch of the imagination "common" at all in *Desire and the Female Therapist: Engendered Gazes in Psychotherapy and Art Theory* in 1995. The way a woman (or a man) acts, sees, communicates, acts, and responds – isn't normal in any way. The male look has shown women what to look like, act and feel in a manner what women should. De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* as a proclamation of women's liberation surprisingly emerges which affirms that "one isn't brought into the world a woman yet winds up one". In quest for enquiry into women's enslavement around the world, she has unearthed subtleties from history, science, brain research, human studies, humanism, culture, rationality, writing, folklore, and so forth which decide and cause a lopsidedness and accordingly certify bad form between genders. Numerous feminist researchers all through the world have utilized her thoughts as a base for further examinations.

Consequently, determinants of gender are unnatural and transient as well. Sex affirms one is 'female' or 'male' naturally. Be that as it may, gender characterizes one is 'female' or 'manly' and along these lines make a polarity of 'woman' or 'man' in the general public as per their way of life. Furthermore, hence, the apparently regulating gender jobs are really built wonder.

So much discussion about female freedom and equivalent rights to women prompted the insurgency called woman's rights. In past parts we have examined about the root and scattering of women's liberation and in this section we will concentrate noticeably on the blossom of woman's rights in Islam and woman's rights as portrayed by muslim women.

2. ISLAMIC FEMINISM

In the course of the last three and a half decades there has showed up another region of grant that connects with Islamic hallowed writings (the Qur'an and Sunnah) and its interpretive custom (for example exposition, statute, Hadith accumulations, and so forth.), determined fundamentally by the subject of gender equity and methodological reform.¹ This grant comprises of concentrates that basically return to and unload overwhelming religious understandings that are man centric and biased against women, and plan to create new information that puts forth the defense for gender equity and equity from inside an Islamic worldview.

These investigations are being delivered dominantly by Muslim female researchers (and some male Muslim researchers) from various orders and nations. The new grant has been called Islamic woman's rights. A portion of the researchers who have been considering or participating in Islamic woman's rights see an incredible epistemic and political incentive in it, for Muslim women as well as for the change of religious convention. Different researchers have scrutinized Islamic woman's rights just like an unsystematic and heterogeneous collection of learning, as having frail methodological connects to traditional religious sciences and being politically unimportant, or even counterproductive, for women.

A portion of the women researchers undertaking such activities have additionally connected their generation of learning to building a worldwide Muslim development for gender correspondence and equity. For instance, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, the Iranian UK-based anthropologist, is, one of these pioneer researchers. She composes basic investigations of Islamic law to feature its dangerous development of

marriage and conjugal obligations and rights. In 2009, Mir-Hosseini and Zainah Anwar, the previous official executive of Sisters in Islam (the Malaysian women's rights promotion gathering), helped to establish the worldwide development Musawah, alongside other Muslim women activists and researchers from various nations. Musawah, which implies uniformity in Arabic, is a learning building development that is driven by Muslim women.

Utilizing a four-pronged methodology, Musawah joins grant with activism to deliver information that conveys new points of view to the Islamic interpretive convention, and enables advocates progressing in the direction of gender balance and equity. Through Musawah, Mir-Hosseini has been working with researchers, for example, Amina Wadud, the African-American Muslim scholar who attempts women-focused readings of the Qur'an; Asma Lamrabet, the Moroccan researcher who likewise thinks about the Qur'an; Sa'diyya Shaikh, the South African researcher who takes a shot at Islamic Sufi idea; Muhammed Khaled Masud, the Pakistani researcher who chips away at Islamic law; and Omaima Abou-Bakr, the Egyptian researcher who conducts genealogical investigations of Islamic analysis.

The early long periods of 1990s saw the development of another feminist talk called Islamic Feminism, which separated from destroying the male built religious elucidation, challenge the bogus suppositions the West connected with Islam. The year 1978 can be viewed as a defining moment in the historical backdrop of post-provincial just as Islamic Feminism.

Iranian-American gender scholar, Afsaneh Najmabadi (b.1946), South African women's rights lobbyist Shamima Shaikh (1960-1998) and others likewise utilized the term in their various discussions. These writers characterized Islamic Feminism as another feminist worldview that manages questions appropriate to the lives of Muslim women, establishing its contentions in the Quranic idea of gender balance.

3. CONCEPT OF EQUALITY IN ISLAM

Islamic Feminism as a discourse with the light of Quranic instances, its interpretations and reinterpretations from feminist point of view just as Hadith, its context and its suggestions set up a fact that this conviction system depends on equality for all irrespective of gender, class, race, nationality, riches and position among 24 humans. As Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says "Every single human being are sans born and equal in dignity and rights" is valid with Islamic ideology also.

Fatima Mernissi in her book *Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* in 1991, points out that there is no distinction among human beings based on their sexes. Prophet Mohammed, as a response to Umm Salama's inquiry (118-120), one of the lovable wives of the Prophet says that:

Lo! Men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give

alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and – women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember – Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.’ (qtd in Mernissi 119)

Plainly, it intends to influence believers to understand the idea of the religion; to the extent the believers are clung to the essential tenets of Islam, they are equal. No debasement is referred to the extent conviction system is concerned. At whatever point the Prophet was questioned by any of the member of his faction including his wives, through revelations, He replied with explicit refrains with certain context. In this manner, the Quran proposes conditions of righteousness in conduct, conviction and modesty for the two men and women alike to grant equality and reward. Amina Wadud, a prestigious Islamic feminist scholar, confesses in the wake of suppressing and demoralizing readings and practices during her time of contemplations:

Mercifully, the more research I did into the Qur’an, unfettered by centuries of historical androcentric reading and Arabo-Islamic cultural predilections, the more affirmed I was that in Islam a female person was intended to be primordially, cosmologically, eschatologically, spiritually, and morally a full human being, equal to all who accepted Allah as Lord, Muhammad as Prophet, and Islam as Din.” (Wadud “Quran and Woman” ix-x)

She has dealt with the exegesis of existing interpretations with exceptional spotlight on androcentric language. The extremely startling concern for these tafasir is that they were only written by males. To paraphrase her understanding with references cited from various Hadiths and their contexts, one may not deny that men's experiences and perceptions were included and women and women's experiences were either rejected or interpreted through the male vision, perspective, want, or needs.

Wadud in her another book, *Inside Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* in 2006, states all the more explicitly that:

It is primarily male thinkers that have produced what passes as fundamental paradigms in our religious heritage. Many ordinary Muslims have come to consider these narrowly produced paradigms as universal – even divine. Yet the vision of past scholars was limited in two particular ways: (1) by their social-cultural and intellectual spiritual circumstances; and (2) by the noticeable absence of women’s ideas and reflections in considering what Islam means or what it means to be human in Islam. (Wadud “Inside the Gender” 115)

Women are not considered as equals despite the fact that fulfilling every one of the preconditions recommended in the Quran. According to Wadud, slender interpretations with politically degenerate thought processes without considering women's voice have misshaped the very embodiment of the holy words. Why the contradictions appeared convey the fundamental bearing on the research constituents here. Other than the Quranic refrains, Hadith additionally has experienced tremendous manipulations. Mernissi claims that each group, seeking "authenticity in and through the sacred text" had their own interest in interpreting the holy words. Furthermore she writes:

We can now appreciate in their true measure the two contradictory tendencies that were at odds with each other in the elaboration of the Hadith: on one hand, the desire of the male politicians to manipulate the sacred; and on the other hand the fierce determination of the scholars to oppose them through the elaboration of the fiqh (a veritable science of religion) with its concepts and its methods of verification and counter verification. (Mernissi 43)

She essentially rejects the false justification behind pompous and narrow interpretations or misinterpretations of the Quranic text which manages justice, equality and humanity. Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud argue regarding the matter of inequality as an oxymoron to Quranic verses; promoting and declaring that all are equal according to Islam. Quran, a moral direction, relates the gender roles with morality and have details regarding their distinct roles. In the fourth section, 34th verse speaks to the inequality with explicit reasons. Wadud with Azizah Al-Hizri's investigations on the words uncover and elucidate the misconceptions prevailing from ages with the interpretations given by Pickthall, Zamakhshari and Maududi as well. The controversial verse says:

Men are [qawwamuna'ala] {superior/accountable for...} women, [on the basis] of what Allah have [preferred] (faddala) some of them over others, and [on the basis] of what they spend of their property (for the help of women). So great women are [qanitat], guarding in secret that which Allah has watched. With respect to those from whom you dread [nushuz], counsel them, oust them to beds separated, and scourge them. At that point in the event that they obey you, look for not a path against them. (4:34).

4. EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Mary Wollstonecraft, the English author and regularly considered as an early feminist, in her 1792 book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, basically argues and questions "a false system of education" for "the conduct and manners of women which demonstrate that their minds are not in a healthy state" (6). The system of education comprised of any subject knowledge is seen mainly by men who at last have become universal and in this way there is no female perception. The education system itself 29 has been manipulated in favor of male gender from time prehistoric. Virginia Woolf quotes an untitled poetry by Lady Winchilsea (1661):

How we are fallen! Fallen by mistaken rules,

And Education's more than Nature's fools;

Debarred from all improvements of mind,

And to be dull, expected and designated;

And if someone would soar above the rest,

With warmer fancy, and ambition pressed.

So strong the opposing faction still appears,

The hopes to thrive can ne'er outweigh the fears.

(qtd. in Woolf 64-65)

To restrict females from gaining knowledge and understanding of any ethicalness had become a piece of each society, religion and culture by and over the time. Like untouchables, women were avoided from learning the 'Vedas' and the sacred texts in Hinduism. Women were prevented access to centers from securing knowledge and education. Muslim women are as yet not allowed to enter in Mosques where Namaz is performed with one of the views that they are not physically pure to enter in a house of Allah and can distract men from their worshipping.

Muslim women are still limitedly open to attain knowledge. Many think that education to women is a danger to the patriarchal society. The case with Malala in Pakistan demonstrated how fundamentalists feel compromised from the demeanor of progress in terms of education and understanding among Muslim females. According to Islamic traditional education in Historical Dictionary of Islam (2009), two levels were existed in initial crossroads: elementary and secondary; unequivocally – kuttab or maktab and madrasah. Education was informally given in homes or in mosques or in any building joined to a mosque.

5. WOMEN IN POLITICS AND ISLAM

Many historians mention that women rulers in pre-modern era could sustain themselves because of their tremendous knowledge and skills in many fields. Khayzuran governed the Muslim Empire under three Abbasid caliphs in the eighth century; Malika Asmabint Shihab al-Sulayhiyya and Malika Arwabint Ahmad al-Sulayhiyya both held power in Yemen in the eleventh century; Sittal-Mulk, a Fatimid queen of Egypt in the eleventh century; the Berber queen Zaynab al-Nafzawiyah (r. 1061 - 1107); two thirteenth-century Mamluk queens, Shajar al-Durr in Cairo and Raziyah in Delhi; six Mongol queens, including Kutlugh Khatun (thirteenth century) and her daughter Padishah Khatun of the Kutlugh-Khanid dynasty; the fifteenth-century Andalusian queen Aishah al-Hurra, referred to by the Spaniards as Sultan Madre de Boabdil; Sayyida al-Hurra, governor of Tetouan in Morocco (r. 1510 - 1542); and four seventeenth-century Indonesian queens.

In the contemporary world as well, Muslim women have successfully reigned with enormous leadership skills in the Muslim worlds. Benazir Bhutto was Prime Minister of Pakistan (1988-90, 1993-96), Tansu Ciller was Prime Minister of Turkey (1993-96), and Shaykh Hasina is the present Prime Minister of Bangladesh (1996-2001, 2009 -). (Esposito "Women and Islam")

The question of women's leadership in Islam has excited seemingly many controversies as strains remain between traditionalists who advocate continued patriarchy and reformists who advocate continued liberation of women. This Hadith supporting prohibition of women from politics is the most well known weapon with the fundamentalists and traditionalists wherein they claim: "The individuals who depend their issues to a woman will never know prosperity!" This appears to be shocking to the individuals who believe in Prophet's inclination with equal treatment and respect to women. In any case, indeed it appears in al-'Asqalani's thirteenth volume where he quotes al-Bukhari's Sahih, that is, those traditions that al-

Bukhari named bona fide after a rigorous process of determination, checks and counter-confirmations. (Mernissi, 9)

How and why any Hadith was quoted and who did as such is particularly investigated research field in many Muslim countries. One should know the commitments of the Prophet's wives in politics with uncommon reference to A'isha, his youngest spouse. Her political life after the Prophet's death is a sheer case of bravery and leadership which consequently was denounced by many scholars of Hadith and Sacred texts who were chauvinists and misanthropes. "The Battle of Camel" was driven by A'isha at 42 years old on December 4, AD. 656 and she assumed a key role in many political choices. Mernissi legitimizes why the name of a battle was not referred to by the person who battled it by saying that:

"The historians called this confrontation "The Battle of the Camel," referring to the camel ridden by 'A'isha, thereby avoiding linking in the memory of little Muslim girls the name of a woman with the name of a battle." (5)

The Oxford Dictionary of Islam demonstrates that historical records delineate that the Prophet Muhammed counseled women for their opinions. Umm Waraqah was appointed Imam over her household by him. Women could correct authoritative ruling of the Caliph Umar on dowry. The dictionary furthermore sings the golden time of women who pledged a promise of devotion to Muhammad independently with their male kins. Some courageous women changed over to Islam prior to their husbands - demonstrates the Islam's recognition of their capacity for independent action. Caliph Umar appointed women to fill in as officials in Medina. The early Islam demonstrates a generally more liberated and autonomous status for women while no woman held religious titles in Islam.

6. MUSLIM WOMEN AND HIJAB

The burqa clad woman has become a symbol of Islam which is viewed as a patriarchal, misogynist and anti-feminist religion. The very image of woman in 'purdah' or 'burqa' makes a bloody impression of regular, orthodox, suppressed and confined Islamic ideology. The time a man looks a woman in a 'burqa', automatically or states conditionally, the perspective changes. A man looks at a female, in most of the cases as an object of joy. In any case, here in this case, the woman in 'veil' as indicating being 'Muslim' becomes somewhat lesser than the image of an 'object'. The ultimate function of a veil, according to alleged leaders of Islam, is to protect a woman from sick intentional male look however conflictingly it fills the contrary need wherein the 'veil' symbolizes her doubly muted generalization. The compulsion of 'purdah' hides these women's real beings, pounds their individuality and freedom, and makes them real captives to misogynist system.

TulikaBahuguna in Panorama of World Literature, in her article "Purdah and Zanana: Re-visioning shows", has quoted many of scholars' views on 'Purdah'. (127) She has quoted Eunice de Souza's words defining 'purdah' as "the burqa... however the intricate codes of detachment and feminine modesty used to protect and control the lives of women." Jasbir Jain and Amina Amin calls it "dividing line among tradition and modernity" while Zenana (a separate place for women to stay in a house) is, in Separate

Worlds: Studies of Purdah in South Asia, "the physical isolation of living space" when Burton calls Zanana as "shorthand for Muslim women's imprisonment". (127)

The 'purdah' and 'zanana' seem to be a codification of male dominance over female freedom. It's a sharp example of the generalization of female body. The hegemonic verses from the Quran on 'veil'/hijab' are utilized to inflict power over the women in Muslim societies. As its been seen that Quran alludes to Arab societies at specific time and the 'veil' for women in that set up where women were very insecure among merciless Arab men seems influential. However, the questions to those verses and their verification with referential interpretations are very recommended. Again referring to Mernissi's groundbreaking research on the revelation of the verse on hijab implies many angles identified with power political interpretations and their engendering with extreme inclination as final worlds. She argues that "the hijab – literally "curtain" – "descended" not to put an obstruction between a man and a woman, yet between two men." (85)

7. WESTERN IDEOLOGIES ON ISLAMIC FEMINISM

In the West, Islamic Feminism emerged as a platform to address the dilapidating condition of the Muslim women, for whom there was no extension in secular and western feminism. With the turn of the century, Islamic feminists in the West propelled a jihad (holy war) against the gender inclinations and inequalities. In 2005, AminaWadud, with an end goal to reclaim the religious rights of the Muslim women, drove Friday prayers in Manhattan.

This act was intensely criticized by the religious leaders who argued that it would be inappropriate for a woman to pray before men as Muslim prayers include kneeling, bowing and can, along these lines, make the two men and women uncomfortable in the mosque. Islamic feminists, because of this criticism, displayed the example of Umm Waraqabint Abdullah, one of the learned Quranic scholars of the seventh century, who, according to them, frequently headed prayers during Prophet Muhammad's (peace arrive) time.

Prior to the 2005 prayers, another Islamic feminist, AsraNormani (b.1965) raised the issue identified with the Muslim women's right to pray in the mosques. Islamic feminists believe that women in the seventh century enjoyed an extraordinary religious authority and that about portion of the Islamic jurisprudence was made by Um Salama and A'isha, however with passing time women were generally avoided the religious undertakings. Along these lines, their knowledge of the religion was limited just to what their men educated them regarding it. What's more, they would pass that knowledge on to their daughters. Islamic feminists argue that what women actually believe and pass on to different generations isn't the true message of Islam yet merely a male interpretation of it.

They argue that Muslim women's estrangement within their societies is the result this patriarchal interpretation of Islam which denies them their appropriate rights and role. They believe that the segregation of women is just rooted in the traditional notions of male superiority and not in the teachings of Islam. Aside from this, they feature the innate customs and discriminatory practices conveyed against

women in the name of Islam, for example, in Egypt, Sudan and many African countries, they endeavor hard with the issue of genital mutilation.

8. CONCLUSION

The objective investigation and examination of the history of Feminism and feminist theories existing from a significant lot of time with a focus on Islamic Feminism endeavors to recognize the naked realities prevailing in the society in the name of Allah. The aim of historical review is to make up the scene of need of feminism globally just as nation savvy. The practical methodology towards theories and practices are reciprocal. It is seen that the theories are utilized to write fictions and fictions are utilized to set up theories. The connection between theory and fictional work is complementary. Also, in this way, Islamic Feminism as a discourse, as broke down, ought to be utilized as a focal point to assess fiction which strives to set up the similar fact that Islam as a religion does not square ways for women's liberation; yet the misconceptions because of patriarchal interpretations assume a crucial role in subjugating women from each conceivable advancement.

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