

Analysis of Woman' S Participation in the Educational, Political and Social Affairs in the time of the Holy Prophet (Saw)

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is about the analysis woman's participation in educational, political and social affairs in the times of the holy Prophet (SAW). Like men, women are also bound to obey and comply with the commandments of the Almighty Allah. They will be held responsible for their deeds and will be liable to punishment as well as reward. According to the teachings of Islam, women are not the opponents of men. They both are a source of perfection and consolation for one another. In the time of the holy Prophet (SAW) women's role in different fields and the extent to which they participated in educational, political and social activities have been discussed in detail. The paper ends with the conclusion that in the times of holy Prophet (SAW) women participated actively in every field of life, whether it was politics or social matters.

KEY WORDS: women's participation, education, politics, social affairs, holy prophet

INTRODUCTION

Statistically woman makes about half of the society but due to the influence upon her husband, children and surroundings, her role is more than half. In building strong people and great personalities, women perform major role.

Islam has introduced a woman in the form of a daughter, wife, mother and above all in the form of a human. A woman is as liable as a man. Allah's order and prohibition have been addressed to both men and women. In the same way, rewards and punishments are same for both men and women. Allah equally addresses men and women in His first speech.

"O Adam, dwell, you and your wife in paradise, and eat at pleasure .Whenever you like, but do not go near this tree. Else you shall join the transgressors"¹

According to Islam, woman is not confronting a man; on the contrary both complement and supplement each other. In Quran, Allah has declared them (man and woman) part of one another. "You are from one another"²

Holy Prophet (SAW) said that women are equal to men.³

Wrong conceptions and ideologies about women, unfortunately, penetrated into our Pashtun society. This resulted in negative attitude towards women's personalities and actions. Accordingly, men started crossing the boundaries drawn by Allah for them.

There is a famous proverb in Pashto language "چه خزه له ياکور او يا گور", means for woman there is either home or grave'. People confined women to their homes. They were not allowed to participate in any activity of human welfare, including getting of education. In Pashtun society a pious woman can leave her house just twice in her life: first, when she marries and second, when she dies. Woman had no role in social, cultural and political activities. Even she was denied to play her in the making of society. She was limited to kitchen and bed.

Question arises that what was the role of woman in the various fields of life like education, politics and social activities in the times of the holy Prophet. In the next section some Nasos (Quranic verses or sayings of Prophet) are given which show equality of man and woman in the above mentioned fields of life.

Equality between Man and Woman in the Field of Education

Getting knowledge is obligatory for both man and woman. The holy Prophet (SAW) says that, " seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim"⁴. In this hadith (sayings of Prophet) the word 'Muslim' is used which includes both man and woman. The holy Prophet (SAW) gave a warning to those who shun learning/teaching of knowledge and alarmed them from being tormented⁵. Further, it is said about the one who hides useful knowledge that he will be shackled with fire on the Day of Judgment.⁶

All these argument conform that in Islam learning and teaching knowledge is compulsory and is a duty for both man and woman. Seeking knowledge is equally ordered for man and woman because of two reasons. First, woman is like man according the teachings of Islam. Second, woman and man are equally entitled to reward and punishment in the life after death.

According to the injunctions of Islamic Sharia and rules, man and woman are equal because Islam has assigned equal responsibilities to man and woman, and both are equally accountable for prayers, fast, hajj, zakat, kindness, justice, good manners and bidding the fair and forbidding the unfair (*amarbilmaar of wanahianilmonkar*).

There are a lot of verses about the equality of man and women in their entitlement to reward and punishment in the life after death hence, proves their equality. Some selected verses are as under:

“And who ever, male or female, do good deeds and is a believer shall enter into paradise and shall not be wronged the least”.⁷

“I do not waste the labor of any worker from you, male or female (one rule for both), you are from one another (order for both of them is also same).⁸

“Surly, Muslim man and Muslim woman; believing man and believing woman; devote man and devote woman; truthful man and truthful woman; patient man and patient woman; humble man and humble woman; *sadaqah* (charity) giver man and *sadaqah* (charity) giver woman; fasting man and fasting woman; the man who guards his private parts (against evil acts) and the woman who guards her private parts; and the man who remembers Allah much and the woman who remembers (Him) ...for them, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.”⁹

Some Hadith are also given about female education:

The Holy Prophet (SAW) says that “if someone has maid and he gives her proper education and marries her after liberating her, he will be rewarded twice.”¹⁰

If Islam stresses on the education of a maid then how much importance will be given to the education of daughters. Morality (*husn-e-akhlaq*) is same in every age but knowledge changes from with the passage of time.

2 .Hazrat Ayeshanarrates the holy Prophet that whoever is in charge of (benefactor) daughters and treats them favorably then they (daughters) will act as a shield for him from the (Hell) Fire.”¹¹

3.Women’s demand of education from the holy Prophet:

The women requested Muhammad (SAW) that men are going ahead of us in utilizing his knowledge, therefore, to fix a day for them so that they might also be blessed with the knowledge of which he was blessed by Allah. Muhammad (SAW)acted accordingly and fixed a day for their education. In this Hadith we come across women’s desire of receiving education.¹²

ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE TIMES OF THE HOLY PROPHET:

Social activities here mean:

1. Some people in a combine form do something fruitful in cultural, religious, health or in the field of recreation for the betterment of society.

2. An individual or individuals together do something useful for the social uplift or grooming of the people and advise them to bid the fair and forbid the unfair (*amarbilmaar of wanahianil monkar*).

The basic purpose of social activities is to do good with everyone in society without any discrimination. In Pashtun society there is much backwardness and ignorance. They are the victim of poverty, deadly diseases, anarchy, conflicts, terrorism and unemployment. These conditions have made it obligatory for us to perform social activities in every possible way. Further, men and women working together should these activities to rural and urban areas equally to eradicate these evils and to convert Pashtun society into a progressive society.

INTERACTION IN MASJID (MOSQUE)

Mosque is the basic and fundamental institution in Islamic society. It is a place of worship. It is the center of knowledge and learning. Due to these important reasons the doors of Masjid (mosques) were open for women in the times of the holy Prophet (SAW). Hazrat Asma Binte Abu Bakar says that solar eclipse occurred in the times of Prophet. I came to the mosque. Prophet (SAW) was offering prayer. I also joined him. He prolonged the prayer. When we finished the prayer the solar eclipse had disappeared.¹³

The participation of women in prayers wan not limited to Masjid-e-Nabvi (The Prophet Mosque). Women were allowed in other mosques of Madina as well. Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar: While the people were offering the Fajr prayer at Quba (near Medina), someone came to them and said that it had been revealed to Allah's Apostle tonight and he had been ordered to pray facing the Ka'ba. So turn your faces to the Ka'ba. Those people were facing Sham (Jerusalem) so they turned their faces towards Ka'ba (at Mecca).¹⁴ This was also stated by Hazrat Sowelabinte

Aslam. She said that men and women replaced their places of prayers and offered their remaining prayers towards Ka'ba.¹⁵

As mosque was a place of worship and center for social and traditional activities, therefore, women used to come to mosques. Women's participation in daily, Friday, Eid, Funeral and Kasoof (sonar eclipse) prayers revealed in the Hadith.¹⁶

PARTICIPATION IN WELCOME FUNCTION:

Hazrat Abu Bakarsays thatduring Hijrat-e-Madina (Madina Migration) we reached Madina late night. Everyone wished that the Prophet (SAW) should stay with them at their house. The Prophet (SAW) stayed with Banu Najjar (his maternal relatives). Men and women of Madina mounted roofs of their houses, and children and slaves scattered in the streets and were shouting 'Muhammad Messenger of Allah, Muhammad Messenger of Allah'.¹⁷

WOMEN IN MARRIAGE FUNCTION:

Hazrat Anas says that the Prophet (SAW) saw some women and children coming back from attending a wedding. He stood up and said tree times 'you are the most beloved people to me'.¹⁸

WOMEN'S HELP IN GOOD DEEDS:

'A'isha, the Mother of the Faithful, says that some of the wives of the Prophet (SAW) met him and said that who would meet him first. Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) said: the One who has the longest hands amongst you. They (the wives of Allah's Apostle) measured their hands with a wooden plank. Hazrat Sooda had the longest hands among them.

Among the wives of the Prophet (SAW), Hazrat Zainab Binte Hajash died first. It means that she was the first to meet him. 'Longest of hands' meant the one who give sadaqa (charity). She loved to give charity.¹⁹ Another Hadith reveals that in charity and in the works of Divine nearness (qurb-e-Ilahi) she even negated her own self.²⁰

FARMING, AGRICULTURE AND PLANTATION OUT SIDE THE HOUSE:

Hazrat Asmabenti Abi Bakkar says, "When Az-Zubair married me, he had no real property or any slave or anything else except a camel which drew water from the well, and a horse. I used to feed and water his horse, dough and carry lumps on my head from Zubair's land given to him by Allah's Apostle and this land was about two miles from my house. I continued serving in this way till Abu Bakkar sent me a servant to look after the horse, whereupon I felt as if he has set me free."²¹

Jabir bin Abdullah reported: My maternal aunt was divorced, and she intended to pluck her dates. A person scolded her for having come out (during the period of 'Idda). She came to Allah's Prophet (may peace be upon him.) and he said: Certainly you can pluck (dates) from your palm trees, for perhaps you may give charity or do an act of kindness from these dates.²²

Hazratjabir says that the Prophet (SAW) went to meet Ume Mobasherul Ansaria in her date garden and inquired about the person who had planted the garden-Muslim or non-Muslim. She replied 'Muslim'. The Prophet said, "If a Muslim plants any plant or do any farming and a human being or an animal or any other thing eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity."²³

SERVICE IN MUSLIM ARMY:

Rabi binte Maood says that they used to take part in holy battles (ghazwa) with the Prophet by providing the people with water, taking care of them and bringing the martyrs and the wounded back to Medina.²⁴

PARTICIPATION IN ENTERTAINMENTS:

Hazrat Aisha narrates, "While It was Eid, the Ahl al-Habash were playing with their swords and shield. I asked the Prophet (SAW) or he asked me would you like to watch. I replied in positive. Allah's Apostle screened me behind him and I watched (that display) while our faces were touching and kept on watching till I got fed up. The Apostle said you might go now". So you may estimate of what age a little girl may listen to amusement.²⁵

WARDING LIVESTOCK:

Saad bin Mu'adh narrates that a slave girl (maid) of Hazrat Ka'ab used to graze some sheep on Sl'a (mountain). Once one of her sheep got injured and she slaughtered it with a stone. The Prophet was asked, and he said, 'Eat it.'²⁶

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCE:

Sahl bin Saad said that a woman brought a Burda (sheet) to the Prophet. The Prophet asked the woman, "Doyou know what a Burda is?" The people replied, 'It is a 'Shamla', a sheet with a fringe'. That woman said,

"O Allah's Apostle! I have brought it so that you may wear it." So the Prophet took it,. The woman said that O Prophet of Allah I made it with my hands.²⁷

Hazrat Jabir reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) came to his wife, Zainab, as saw that she was tanning a leather.²⁸

Hazrat Ayesha says that among us Hazrat Zainab was a long handed (skillful) woman because she used to do her work with her own hands and gave would charity (sadaqa).²⁹

Hazrat Zainab was a skillful woman. She used to tan, stitch and repair leather and gave charity.

THE ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE TIMES OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Social activities naturally become ground for political activities. Social activities bring awareness in the people about their social problems. If social activities belong to the role of men in relation to social problems, so political activities belong to the role of government in these problems, and they have durable harmony.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN TAKING OF ALLEGIANCE FROM THE PROPHET (BAI'AH)

Allah says:

O Prophet, when the believing women come to you seeking *bai'ah* (a pledge of allegiance) from you that they will not commit polytheism, theft and fornication, will not kill their children, will not come up with a false calumny between their hands and feet, and will not disobey you in what is recognized (in Shari'ah), take pledge (bai'ah) from them and pray Allah for their forgiveness. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful.³⁰

Prophet's(SAW) taking allegiance from women signifies several things:

1. Woman has inimitable status in Islamic laws. Men and women take allegiance alike.
2. Women's allegiance was the obedience of the Prophet (SAW) as well as Islam.
3. Prophet (SAW) took allegiance from women on two bases: as a messenger and Imam-ul-Muslimeen.

WOMEN GRANTING REFUGE TO A NON- MUSLIM:

Um Hani binti Abu Talibnarrates, "I went to Allah's Apostle on the day of the conquest of Mecca. 'He said, Welcome, O Um Hani'. I said, O Allah's Apostle! My brother Ali has declared that he would kill a man to whom I had granted asylum. Allah's Apostle said, 'O Um Hani! We will grant asylum to the one whom you have granted asylum'."³¹

WOMEN'S ADVICES TO MEN IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS:

Al-Miswar bin Makhrama and Marwan say that Allah's Apostle set out at the time of Al-Hudaibiya (treaty). When Suhail bin Amr came, the Prophet said, "Now the matter has become easy." Suhailbin Amar said to the Prophet "Please conclude a peace treaty with us."... When the writing of the peace treaty was concluded, Allah's Apostle said to his companions, "Get up and slaughter your sacrifices and get your head shaved." By Allah none of them got up, and the Prophet repeated his order thrice. When none of them got up, he left them and went to Um Salama and told her of the people's attitudes towards him. Um Salama said, "O the Prophet of Allah! Do outwent your order to be carried out? Go out and don't say a word to anybody till you have slaughtered your sacrifice and call your barber to shave your head." So, the Prophet went out and did not talk to anyone of them till he slaughtered the sacrifice and called his barber who shaved his head. Seeing that, the companions of the Prophet got up, slaughtered their sacrifices, and started shaving the heads of one another.³²

CONCLUSION:

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion:

1. The teachings of Quran and Hadith are basically directed to both men and women. In honor and dignity and criminal laws both are equal. There is difference but in very meager things. All the instructions are equally directed to both of them. In some places women are directly addressed with men. These in reality show Allah's grace and equality of men and women.

2.The proper educations of women is necessary so that she can fulfill the two basic responsibilities. First, understanding her responsibilities after marriage and looking after of her children. Second, the ability to adopt any suitable individual or collective profession in the time of need

3. In times of Holy Prophet (SAW) women participated in educational, social and political activities of life as per the need of the time and situation.

4. Women equally participated in jobs, business, warding livestock, farming, small domestic industries, looking after of the ill, sanitation and hygiene and other domestic chores. It gives two important benefits. First, in the absence of guardian they can support their family in an honorable manner and secondly, they can earn high position in Paradise by giving alms and charity which is the true aim every Muslim.³³

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