

# **Role of APWA for the Promotion of Feminist Approach in the Light of Islāmic Teachings**

**Doctoral thesis submitted for the degree of**

**Ph.D. Islamic Studies**

**Researcher**

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**Department of Islāmic Studies**

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## THESIS AND DEFENCE APPROVAL FORM

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has been submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD Islāmic Studies. The author of the study has completed the entire requirements under the supervision of **Dr. Munazza Sultana**. This thesis in its present form is the original work of the author expecting those which are acknowledgement in the text. The material included in the thesis has not been submitted wholly or partially for award of any other academic certification than for which it is being presented. The material in future would not be presented in any university or institute for academic degree

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## ABSTRACT

The present research aims at analyzing the women's rights NGO All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) in Pakistan and highlights their role in establishing different NGOs to raise women's status in society. After the creation of Pakistan, there came forward many concerns related women's rights in Pakistan, but few and far between gained attention by some associations and individual ladies in different perspectives. The present research aims at exploring APWA's relationship in the context of women rights, Western feminism and Islāmic perspective. It centres on secular and religious activists struggle in the context of women's rights promotion. The present research focuses on APWA's contribution in context of legal, political, economic, and social sector while working for women's rights in Pakistani society. Although, women activism in historical perspective has been given considerable concern, the present study not only examines the women's rights advocacy, but also elaborates those factors, concerns, and counter reaction of the public towards women's activism in a form of resentment. The research revolves around Islāmic thought, the concern of APWA regarding women's rights and feminist approach while dealing with these women related debates. The in-depth analysis is carried out and for strengthening the stance; further views of different scholars are incorporated into the study. The study concludes that these women's rights NGOs need to improve their policies and strategies to bring social change through public support for their sustainability and influential development.

**Keywords:** Pakistani woman, APWA, secular activists, religion, feminism

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## **DEDICATION**

**Dedicated to  
the pride of this universe**

**MUḤAMMAD (ﷺ)**

**and**

**the first renowned female Islāmic Scholar**

**Hazrat ‘Aishah (R.A)**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise to the ALLĀH! All grace is from Him and Him alone. The major source of researcher's inspiration, who "taught man that which he knew not". He enlightened the researcher more and more and made her able to accomplish this task successfully. The researcher would also like to thank and convey her respect and reverence to all of the respected teachers and specifically my supervisor Dr. Munazza Sultana. From beginning to end, I would like to extend my gratitude for her support, passion and canny eye. Particularly thanks to Islamic Studies department and to Professor Dr. Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi, Dr. Noor Hayat Khan, Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari, Dr. Irum Sultana, Dr. Riaz Saeed and Dr. Amjad Hayat for providing me a chance for the present study and their helpful suggestion throughout the research phase. I would like to say special thank you to my mentor, teacher, and guidance counsellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zia ul Haq(IIUI).

I feel humbled to Higher Education Commission, Pakistan for offering a wonderful opportunity through IRSIP to enhance our knowledge, cross-cultural learnings, and research skills. I am grateful to my foreign research advisor, Professor Dr. Robert W. Hefner (Boston University, USA) for providing me productive time and his unbelievable generosity. I admire his helpful nature and priceless suggestions that enhanced my research in many ways. Further, his help and guidance has led me to meet very kind and knowledgeable people, Dr. Kecia Ali, Dr. Shahla Haeri, Dr. Nancy Smith-Hefner. I am so much thankful to all of them for their time and day to day discussions. The academic support I have received from them is worth-appreciable. I also want to extend my gratitude to Professor Dr. Leila Ahmad and Professor Dr. Baber Johansen from Harvard University (USA) for their throughout academic support and hospitality. Special thanks to Dr. Longman Timothy and Arlene Brennen for offering finest environment and their kind assistance during my stay at Boston University, USA.

I am so much grateful to all those who participated in my survey study. My heartfelt gratitude to my brother Syed Mehmood Qadir and my sister like friend Zahida Abdullah for their help in conducting all the interviews and their consistent support in many other research related activities during my studies until to-date. It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the academic and administrative staff of my department specially Sir Muhammad Waseem Anwar for their kind assistance and providing us a calm environment throughout my PhD studies. I am so much grateful to my Ph.D. fellows specially to our mentor and very talented

Tafsir Abbas, Rabia Karam din, Muhammad Amin Uddin and Shumaila Mumtaaz for providing me invaluable information and new knowledge each day.

Last, I am aware that nothing would have been possible without the sacrifice made by my family and close friends. Much love goes to my family, my roommates and my close friends for their incredible support. My parents, my helpful and loving brothers and my amazing sister's support throughout my good and hard times is beyond description. Special thanks and love to my father Syed Sajjad Haider and my mother Syeda Rukhshinda Jabeen for their precious prayers, care and love all the time. Special thanks to Niaz, Alia, Dr. Ammara, Zara, Junaid, Mehmood, Ali, Asad, Zahida, Urwah, Sadia, Dr. Farhat, Wajiha, and Nazia for their hearty support throughout my studies. I am blessed to have them all in my life.

**May Allāh Almighty bless all of them for their love and support. Ameen!**

**Syeda Mehmoona Khushbakht**

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIWC	All India Women Conference
AMP	Anjuman Muzareen Punjab
APWA	All Pakistan Women's Association
ASR	Applied Social Research Institute
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IWSL	Institute of Women's Studies, Lahore
IRI	The Islāmic Republic of Iran
LFO	Legal Framework Order
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MFLO	Muslim Family Law Ordinance
MMC	Muslim-Majority Countries
NCW	National Counsel of Women
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
PAWLA	Pakistan Women Lawyers Association
TQK	Takra Qabaili Khwendo
UFWR	The United Front for Women's Rights
WAF	Women's Action Forum
WIA	Women's Indian Association
WMNM	World Muslim NGOs Meet
WVS	Women's Voluntary Service

## Introduction to Research

The issue of women's status is neither a new issue, nor it is justly resolved one. The woman's status and its role are particularly affected by the uncountable legal, political, economic and social traditions that is ruled by the accepted perception of thousands of people. Although, in the era of globalization, many women in different societies around the world came out against the injustices and discrimination they bear out inside and outside the homes. They took these ideas from other parts of the world where a woman is enjoying their all-deserving rights. All considers themselves more over enthusiastic about the equality of woman in her rights leaving the other far behind in this race. In the last few decades, women related issues got much attention and Islāmic teachings have been thrown by the wayside by women's rights activists who want to pull women's roles out of sync with the Lord's teaching. For the purpose of women's rights, there emerged many NGOs, associations and NGOs to claim and gain the rights of women.

There are several organizations, Associations and NGOs working for the rights of women and to make women position better and stronger in society. Among these associations, All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) is one of leading association for women in Pakistan, whose said aim is to abolish discrimination against women, to encourage and assist women in all spheres of life.<sup>1</sup> Unlike western feminism, which has a history of being more individualistic, Pakistani women rights organizations have a deep connection to family and nationalism.<sup>2</sup> The women's organizations or any movement for the rights of women also need to understand the religious, social and cultural roots of the state and society where they are initiating their mission. In Pakistan APWA has started to seek further women's rights by redefining Islāmic views and focusing on the female-centric issues in Pakistan. Feminism and women's rights both are used interchangeably. Feminism basically is a, 'doctrine advocating social, political, and economic rights for women equal to those of men; a movement for the attainment of such rights.'<sup>3</sup> But yet it won't be wrong to say that many of these movements or associations working for the rights of women are more

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<sup>1</sup>Naz, Arab et al., "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)," *Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE Sociology & Culture* 13, no. 1 (2013): 21–26.

<sup>2</sup> Darraj, Susan Muaddi, "Third World, Third Wave Feminism(s)," in *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*, ed. Dicker, Rory, and Alison Piepmeier (Boston: North Eastern University Press, 2003), 195.

<sup>3</sup> Megan, Seely, *Fight Like a Girl: How to be a Fearless Feminist* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 2.

or less impressed by these western movements and are playing a vital role to promote the feminist approach in Pakistan.

In the west, the stereotypical image of Muslim women generally and Pakistani women particularly is not the real picture or the only evidence that tries to prove that women is kept deprived of her basic rights. The Islāmic foundation that is prevailing in Pakistan is not negating the role of women in social, political, economic, and domestic realm of life rather it is against the contradictory demands of women's rights in society which are more or less like western ideology. Muslim women must understand that in order to identify themselves on the basis of Western philosophies, they do not have to fully sacrifice their sociocultural ideals and identities and can instead reframe themselves within the true borders of Islām. Women's protests tend to be largely influenced by Western philosophies around the world, which at several ways challenge the spirit of Islām.

The current study will address the role of APWA for the promotion of the feminist approach in Pakistan in the light of Islāmic teachings. This research will explore APWA's activities in the present era to demand for women's rights that are awarded to them in religious teachings. It will also explore the APWA's active role in gender debate and legal, political and social struggles for women's rights in Pakistan. This study will examine the main purpose of establishing of APWA and its activities to identify the factors in order to see the significant results drawn from this association.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present study aims to determine the role of APWA for the promotion of the feminist approach in Pakistan in the light of Islāmic teachings. Religious belief, NGOs, and feminism together remained controversial in Pakistani state. The present research while focusing on NGO i.e., APWA, also put emphasis on different factors that cause controversies among these parties at certain level in context of religious limitations, social environment, and cultural structures. The study also deals with an APWA's debate on women's rights based on gender prejudice and its active role towards the feminist approach that is affecting Pakistani society and Islāmic teachings.

### **Rationale of the Study**

A movement for the sake of human rights in any part of the world always produces "echoes". Given this reality, it seems important, therefore, to assess the activist's voices and their roles

that arise from the change in society. People are not aware of basic Islāmic concepts related to women's rights and they often link social practices with Islām. The supposed voice rising for women's rights may result from lack of knowledge about the teachings of Islām. This is one of the important causes of unconsciousness of women's status given to them by Islām and it also led many women rights activists to portray a low-profile condition of women in the society. So, there is a dire need to clarify this misconception which is being promoted in Pakistani society by women's right activists. Moreover, there is a need to conduct such study, which could disclose the facts about the Women associations' inspiration from feminist movements and their consistency or inconsistency with Islāmic teachings regarding women's rights. There is also felt a need to provide research-based evidence regarding women activists demands related to women rights or gender equity, particularly in the context of Pakistan.

### **Objectives**

The specific objectives which this study required to achieve are:

1. To find out the key issues of contemporary debate on women's rights in Islamic perspective regarding feminists' approach
2. To investigate the role of APWA in Pakistan regarding promotion of feminists' approach
3. To identify the main factors behind the establishment of APWA in Pakistan
4. To analyse the APWA's debate on different women's rights issues in Pakistan
5. To examine the differences between APWA's demands for women rights and the Islamic concept of women's rights.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the key issues of contemporary debate on women's rights in Islamic perspective regarding feminists' approach?
2. How APWA is playing a role in Pakistani society regarding promotion of feminists' approach?
3. Why All Pakistan Women's Association has been established in Pakistan?
4. How many different debates related women's rights issues did APWA emphasize in Pakistan?



5. Are there any key differences between APWA's demands for women rights and the Islamic concept of women's rights?

### **Significance of the Study**

There are a variety of self-constructed or accepted customs that control the thoughts and practices of many Muslims, and that influence the status and role of women in Islāmic culture in general. Exploring this will help us recognize the central problem that affects the position and responsibilities of males and females, and how we can react to NGOs trying to change the position of women in some of the world's nations. The study will be significant for all those NGOs, that are working for women's rights as by bringing this contemporary debate on women's status in Islāmic thought. This study will provide an analytical background in accordance with Islāmic teachings for taking a closer look at various discourses on women, gender equality and religion. This study will be able to shed new light and bring a new atmosphere to all NGOs working in co-ordination with APWA regarding feminist approach. The results drawn from the analysis may be productive for the NGOs and other social institutions to set better consistent strategies regarding women's rights by limiting themselves to the periphery of Islāmic teachings.

### **Literature Review**

1. Farida Shaheed has discussed women's rights movement and their activism through her research in a book to differentiate between many different terms that are in current era utilized for the women rights struggle.<sup>4</sup> She also focused on those activists who might work for women's rights, but do not consider themselves as a feminist or their women's rights activism as a feminist movement. Relatively, she observed Pakistani women's activism for women's rights in the context of its effectiveness, outcomes, opposition and further opportunities for working specifically women's rights. Further, she has examined women's activism in Pakistan by comparing it to the other social movements and explored those issues and hurdles that are faced by the women's

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<sup>4</sup> Shaheed , Farida, "The Women's Movement in pakistan: Challenges and Achievements, "in Women's Movements in Global Era The Power of Local Feminism, ed. Amrita Basu (USA: Westview Press, 2010) doi:10.4324/9780429495557.

movement in Pakistan. She also highlighted the disputes between women's rights group and Islāmist group within the framework of human rights.

2. Afshan Jafar in her book examined different responses and strategies applied by women's NGOs in Pakistani community to counter with traditionalism.<sup>5</sup> She illustrated through the critical analysis of strategies applied by these NGOs that how can they better change the position of women in Pakistan and can be more productive. She has discussed their possibilities of bringing such changes in society and also highlighted the limitation and hurdles these NGOs have confronted with while working for women's rights in certain areas of Pakistan.
3. Amina Jamal in her research paper, endeavored to bring into light the different readings of texts by many leading Pakistani feminists who believe that the textual interpretation is patriarchal and does not make women equal to men. In the background of political-religious activists, she also discussed the subject status of Muslim women. She also explained that within the context of rights and freedoms in an Islāmī society, equality and the status of women was assured and dealt with comprehensively. She further developed the relationship between women and Islām, which has repeatedly been a central topic in public discussions in Pakistan since its foundation in 1947.
4. Arab Naz, et al, in their research paper, focused on historical analysis of the women's movement and gender reforms in Pakistan. The study basically constructed upon secondary resources with regard to the development and social change by following an evolutionary perception.<sup>6</sup> The study focuses on how long historical process and many factors, including conservative forces leads to develop gender reforms and women's movements. Besides, many challenges, she concludes that the advancement, changes, gender reforms and women rights struggle clearly can be seen in Pakistan.
5. In the research paper, Margot Badron clarified two main feminist frameworks pointed as Islāmī feminism and Secular feminism. According to the report, the basic moment of Islāmī Feminism, can be dated back to the late twentieth century, whereas the rise

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<sup>5</sup> Jafar ,Afshan, *Women's NGOs in Pakistan* (Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), doi:10.1057/9780230339316.

<sup>6</sup> Naz, Arab et al., "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)," *Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE Sociology & Culture* 13, no. 1 (2013): 21–26.

of secular feminism became visible in the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> This study finds that various conceptions, particularly secular nationalist, Islāmic modernist, humanitarian/human rights and Islāmic feminism, formed secular feminism, and that Islāmic feminism is embodied in a single or primary religious discourse that takes as its core text the Qur'ān. She revealed these two types of Middle East feminism in this research, secular feminism and Islāmic feminism, and explored what separates them from each other and how they relate at certain points.

6. The intercultural incompatibility of Western feminism was defined by Lois Lamyā'al Faruqī in his research paper. The key theory is according to the report, that many of the aims of feminism as formulated in Western culture are not inherently cross-cultural borders that are applicable or exportable. On the other hand, the form of Islāmic feminism was also discussed in this review. It pointed out that the activism must recognize that while in the West, religious belief has been seen by the mainstream of the women's movement as one of the greatest opponents of its advancement and well-being, Muslim women see the teachings of Islām as their best friend and supporter.<sup>8</sup> He elaborated that the messages reflected in the Qur'ān and in the Prophet Muḥammad's (ﷺ) example, are viewed as the standard that contemporary women want to adhere.
7. Nazia Latif in her research dissertation namely, *Women, Islām, and Human Rights* has argued that both human rights advocates and Islāmic law regarding human rights can be implemented together for the betterment of woman's status in society.<sup>9</sup> She believes that the need is to redefine and levelled the criticism that is currently faced by human rights activists for the implementation of these combined theories. She also explored those restrictions placed on them by Islāmic law and the way it is dealt by human rights advocates. She examined specific issues concerning family, political and social life and the issue of the veil, especially in context of Pakistani and Iranian society.
8. Rubina Saigol in her country study, "Feminism and the women's movement in Pakistan: actors, debates and strategies", has analyzed the struggle of NGOs and women rights activists in strengthening women's status in Pakistan beginning of the

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<sup>7</sup>Badran , Margot, "BETWEEN SECULAR AND ISLAMIC FEMINISM/S Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 6–28, doi:10.2979/mew.2005.1.1.6.

<sup>8</sup> Lois Lamyā Al-Faruqī, "Islamic Traditions and the Feminist Movement: Confrontation Or Cooperation?," *Islamic Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1983): 132–39.

<sup>9</sup> Latif, nazia, "Women, Islām, and Human Rights"(University of Newcastle, 2002).

pre partition to until now in reference to the feminism and women's movement. She examined the woman's rights activist's journey from nationalism to the emancipation of their own subjugation in many spheres. She also shed light on Islāmic women rights activists and secular activists. She took into the account the activities, constraints and achievements of many NGOs in Pakistan, including APWA in context of women's rights and their empowerment.

9. Roces and Louise conducted a study titled, "*Women's Movements in Asia*" a comprehensive study based on different papers on women's activism across Asia. This study has explored the history of feminism in twelve countries, including Pakistan in the context of women's rights movements.<sup>10</sup> The study examined those factors which became the basis of change in cultural, political, social and religious practices. The study also explored the effect of globalization, the influence of international women's rights movements on a national level, colonialism and international agencies. The Asian women question in perspective of global feminist approaches has been illustrated in following study.
10. Farida Shaheed in her recent research paper, "*Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan*", has briefly examined some of the conceptual issues surrounding notions of women's movement and 'Aurat March in Pakistan'.<sup>11</sup> The centre of her study is basically to give priority to 'politics of sexuality'. She examines feminists of new generation in her study and their focus in bringing change in societal practices and personal lives through achieving specific goals.

Many studies are done internationally with different aspects related to women's rights and feminist's debate. So a massive share of literature is available, but there is found no research based evidence related to the role of All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) in terms of promotion of feminist approaches in the light of Islāmic teachings. The need of the time is to investigate the women rights NGOs in the context of cultural and religious parameters to

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<sup>10</sup>Roces, Mina and Louise Edwards, ed., *Women's Movements in Asia*, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 166–88, doi:10.4324/9780203851234.

<sup>11</sup> Shaheed , Farida, "Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan," *Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (2019): 159–72, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.601553282&site=eds-live>.

differentiate between the Muslim and western precepts in universal angle. Hence, this study examines those factors which make any NGOs activities significant or contested matter and it leads towards the lack of interest of the community to participate in its activities, appreciate their work and cooperate with them during their projects. The reason of choosing APWA's work is because it is the pioneer organization of Pakistan and the time it started working for women's right in Pakistan was the time when the first wave of Western feminism has been developed around the world. This research analyses the work of APWA and its contribution towards the women's rights in Pakistani society. Particularly, the present research is different from the mentioned researches on the basis of its focus, theme and objectives.

### **Research Methodology**

Following methodology will be adopted for this study:

This would be an analytical and qualitative research in nature. This research will be based on different published literature including books, article from journals, magazines, and newspaper articles to expound the topic of "The role APWA for the promotion of feminist movements in Pakistan in the light of Islāmic teachings." Besides this APWA's reports and speeches referred in various books, journals and newspapers will also be consulted. To explore the Islāmic perspective, the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, are the mandated resources along with secondary sources, including books, articles, etc. The researcher would, therefore, analyze these resources further and build up the ongoing grass-root conflicts prevailing between Islām and women rights activists regarding women's rights debate. This will be explored through the close evaluation of religious and scholarly texts.

Furthermore, the researcher will collect data through semi structured interviews. The present qualitative study will also be strengthened through 12 interviews of different scholars. In fact, this is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research.<sup>12</sup> A purposive sampling technique will be utilized. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a respondent due to the obvious characteristics the respondents possess. It is a tool that does not require underlying assumptions or a fixed number of respondents. The researcher simply determines what needs to be identified and aims at locating individuals who by merit of expertise, knowledge and

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<sup>12</sup>Jamshed, Shazia, "Qualitative Research Method-Interviewing and Observation," *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy* 5, no. 4 (2014): 87–88, <https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942>, 87.

professional experience can and are willing to provide the data.<sup>13</sup> Interviews would be conducted in person and involve both social and religious scholars within the field of current study. Data collected through interview will be analyzed by emerging themes formation. The relevant data collected from various sources will be analyzed with a view to make a justified selection of materials that will go into this research.

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<sup>13</sup>Etikan, Ilker, "Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling," *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>, 2.

## CHAPTER 1

### Woman's Status from Islamic Perspective

#### 1. Introduction

The woman has been the subject of discussion, in all ages from older to modern times. Women's rights discussion is a difficult one, full of stereotypes, misunderstanding and uncertainties. Through the influence of social customs common in ancient and mediaeval times, many of the social and legal practices propagating the status of women have actually developed with the passage of time. The prevalence of superstition and self-created myths became the reason of discrimination and ill-treatment not only towards women, but almost on all relations that are related to each other.<sup>14</sup> It must be observed as a fundamental fact that Islām and traditional cultures are not one and the same. Accordingly, they should not be confused in the interpretation of these social phenomena. Such considerations are invariably in error.<sup>15</sup> By considering them one or the branches of each other is definitely something that leads towards misrepresentation. In some societies, these practices and traditions are so deeply rooted in their routines that they become their core norms and if individuals go against them, the drastic consequences are significantly visible. It makes them at somehow, culprit in the prospect of societal laws, norms and traditions. The basic problem is the "misrepresentation of divinely and culturally" norms by diminishing the distinctions between these two sets of laws.

In between religious laws and cultures, there are important unique variations. It is not valid and sensible to hold responsible Islām for any injustice towards women, nor any other religion, but the need is to explore those social practices that have been misunderstood as adopted from religious values. It is evident that women's social subordination to men was typical in most civilizations of the classical times. Although the complexity of gender was begin to be systematically explored.<sup>16</sup> By the 1920s and 1930s, carrying to an extreme the peculiar representation of women initiated the century before, authors of nationalist texts and

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<sup>14</sup>Khan, Maulana Wahiduddin, *Woman Between Islām and Western Society* (Islāmīc Center, 1995),p. 41.

<sup>15</sup>Saleh , Saneya, "Women in Islām: Their Status in Religious and Traditional Culture," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 2, no. 1 (1972): 35–42.

<sup>16</sup>Adas , Michael, ed., *Agricultural and Pastoral Societies in Ancient and Classical History* (Pheladelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), p. 116.

their feminist respondents moved the debate about gender.<sup>17</sup> In comparison to women's status in pre-Islāmic Arabian society, the role of women in classical times will be viewed in order to provide a perspective of women's improved and developed status after revelation of Islāmic text and commands.

Claiming firmly to end all kinds of discrimination and for the rights of a woman can never be possible without considering their responsibilities. In Islām, The duty of a female is not exclusive to child-rearing, in this world, fairly she requires to do several distinct acts as every other man deserves to do.<sup>18</sup> The fact that religious teachings has ordained specific rules for her equal rights, but not equivalent rights, shows that it takes her completely into account, respects her unique gender identity, obliged her to play her full role and grants her independent position in the society according to her competency. Rights always create some responsibilities in return. There is constantly a common misinterpretation of rights and responsibilities that must be extensively defined. There is nothing parallel between sameness and equality. On the other hand, a woman is female genetically doesn't destine her to oblige only to womanly labor and being male doesn't mean that you are just bound to do masculine work. With this distinction in mind, and this is ridiculous imagining that because of some specific roles and their unequal rights, women are inferior to men.<sup>19</sup> They definitely can help each other in their gender roles by making the relationship more beautiful and balanced. It won't hurt their roles or their identities. She would have been essentially a clone of him if her status had been compared to him, which she is not and can never be.

Islām, by the grace of Allāh, is equally revealed for whole creation and has no distinction and prejudice for gender roles and responsibilities. In the sight of Almighty Allāh, men and women are uniformly treated and on the day of judgement will be justly treated. Both will be subjected to divine mercy and punishment on the basis of individual's deeds. Neither has, nor is one of great significance and a higher value. The Qur'ānic verses and Prophet's (ﷺ) traditions explicitly demonstrate several times the equality of all mankind without any discrimination. Besides everything, the miracle of Islāmic teachings is only for those who want to understand the underlying principle of commandments.

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<sup>17</sup>Masiello, Francine, *Between Civilization & Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina* (U of Nebraska Press., 1992), p. 17.

<sup>18</sup>Zaw , Cho Cho and Mohd Omar, "The Status and Rights of Women Mentioned in Islām," *International Journal for Studies on Children, Women, Elderly And Disabled* 1, no. 1 (2017): 135–42, <http://irep.iium.edu.my/57638/>, 136.

<sup>19</sup> Masiello ,*Between Civilization & Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*, 19.



## 1.1. Women's Status Debate in Pre-Arabia

The status of women in society is very diverse worldwide. Woman status has been viewed controversially through the glasses of religions, all over the world. Woman status is influenced by the societal practices of certain nations. The oppression that women have faced in ancient times was not taught by any religion itself. These were self-created biased laws and regulations. It was basically pinned in societies because of unjust systems, warfare and lack of education. The varied practices across multi-societies can be noticed because of different cultural norms and societal traditions.

Conditions were worse for the women in the past. In the ancient and the medieval civilizations like those of Greek, Roman, Christians, Hindus, pagan Arabs and in Hebrews, the woman had no *locus Standi*<sup>20</sup>. She was not generally known to be a living being, let alone to have any rights. She got poorer treatment than the animals. Like a commercial material goods, she was a saleable asset and testamentary disposition subject.<sup>21</sup> The way they were survived within the pre-Islāmic era was full of suppression and humiliation. The treatment was totally beyond any comprehension of humanity and natural civility.<sup>22</sup>

In historical perspective, many speculations revolve on the basis of certain laws in pre-Arabian societies in terms of understanding the prevailing discrepancies. Such was the miserable and pathetic situation in which the women lived before the advent of Islām. The different societies and their deep-rooted mindsets have always discriminated and had hatred in their minds and hearts of the women just because of their femininity which didn't conform to social customs and standards laid down by them. At that time, misogyny became so apparent that it has given number of heart-wrenching stories of female victims in said civilized societies. Here is a precise detail of some ancient civilization's attitude about the status of women.

### 1.1.1. Greek Civilization:

Greek civilization is regarded as one of the most magnificent civilization of the history. In its early phase women was regarded as a sub-human creature, inferior to man. Women were

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<sup>20</sup>The right or capacity to bring an action or to appear in a court.

<sup>21</sup>Chaudry, Muḥammad Sharif, *Women's Rights in Islām* (Lahore: Sh. Muḥammad ashraf, 2007), p. xii.

<sup>22</sup>Tahirkhili, Sabir Ali Khan, *Woman's Status & Islām* (Houston: Shamsi Publishers, n.d.), p. 18.

confined to home with her chastity as a jealously guarded treasure. Male and female apartments in a same house were well segregated.<sup>23</sup> From the free and dignified position described in the Homeric Odes, the status of women has degenerated to that of captives or servants. Women were segregated in their households, had no literacy and little liberties, and were treated no better than chattels by their family men. Despite their low social position, women in Greek drama show remarkable dignity, character and independence of spirit.<sup>24</sup> This was actually based on gender segregated laws that have created a worse situation for women in the ancient Greece.

The most civilized nation of ancient times was Greece. One of its cities, 'Athens', was considered as the city of knowledge, philosophy, and wisdom. Besides this, the people of Athens also used to treat women as a commodity as they used to sell and buy her. A woman, according to their perception was nothing but a mere "defilement from the hands of the devil's handiwork." One would be surprised to know the Spartan woman was allowed to marry more than one husband, that is called polyandry and most of the Spartan women practiced polyandry.<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, this practice was the most abominable. At a later stage indulgence in the pleasure of the body came to be known as arts and aesthetics. This was the root cause that directly affected the women's low and priceless status in Greece.

Despite all the other restriction and acts of discrimination, Women in ancient Greece were allowed to take divorce, etc. But for these actions, as she was not considered as a citizen of Greece, her father or male relatives had to represent her in such matters to initiate divorce. These were the causes that led Greece women towards feminist movement. When around the world, women's rights movements begun in nineteenth and twentieth century, Greece women also appeared to demand many rights and they achieved many of them including many social, political, and legal rights.

### **1.1.2. Roman Civilization:**

Women's less visibility and participation in public, political and social matters, the historians of Roman history did not mention their role clearly and in detail. In the earliest phase, we find women totally dependent on men. Gradually, however, women gained a better status in

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<sup>23</sup>Iqbal , Muḥammad, *Women in Qur'an* (Lahore: Aziz Publishers, 1985), p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Benton , William and Hemingway Helen, eds., *The New Encyclopedia Britannica Micropedia, 1943-1973* (Chicago: Helen Hemingway, 1983), p. 909.

<sup>25</sup>Tahirkhili ,*Woman's Status & Islām*, pp.18-19.

society. While exploring the traditions and culture of ancient civilizations, it is evident that the status of women in almost all spheres of life around the globe was much inferior and subordinated. The New Encyclopedia Britannica notes the inferior status of women in ancient Rome was very much patriarchal, firstly in the hands of father and brother's power and after marriage in the husband's hand. The ancient cultures and traditions considered the position and role of women as subordinate to that of men in almost each populated part of the planet. The legal position of a woman was one of utter subservience in ancient Rome, first to the authority of her brother or father, and subsequently to that of her spouse, who had dominance over his wife in every matter. In the light of their statute, they were viewed as mentally challenged or ignorant.<sup>26</sup> In Roman law, the legal status of women was much degraded. Even in historical times, a woman was absolutely reliant on Roman rule. She and her assets transferred to her husband's control when she was married. The woman was her husband's purchased estate, and only for his personal gain, captured like a servant. A woman was ineligible to hold either public or political office. She was unable to be a plaintiff, a guarantee, an instructor, or a curator; she was unable to embrace or be admitted, or a power of attorney. Women, among the Scandinavian races, married or unmarried were under permanent security.<sup>27</sup> The Romans didn't consider that she does have a soul, a body and feelings.<sup>28</sup> They used to torture women by pouring on them boiled oil and dragging them behind their horses. The status of women in the family was more alike women's status in Greece civilization. They were purely obliged to take care of family and household. The case of upper class women was a bit different. They were allowed to study academic subject like literature or philosophy. But all other financial and legal matters, they were dependent upon their male partners.

Despite the fact, the role and original status of women in ancient societies, including Roman civilization is considered to be less demonstrated in literature due to ancient male writers, and because of the biases of nineteenth and twentieth century history scholars on the reason of gender discrimination. But in the modern era, many recent scholars are trying to rewrite the historical facts concerning women's segregation, rights and duties through the help of art and by extracting the facts from male exclusive writings in all aspects.

### **1.1.3. Christian Europe:**

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<sup>26</sup>Benton , New Encycl. Br. Micropedia, 1943-1973 ,p. 909.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 28, 783.

<sup>28</sup>Tahirkhili ,*Woman's Status & Islām*, p. 19.

Until recent times, Women's position in Christian Church was not much different to that of other societies and their cultural traditions. It is assumed that Christian Church have been affected by the extreme thoughts and by the Mosaic Law that were dominant in their cultures at that time. Women were secluded from all public matters. Women must keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.<sup>29</sup>

It would be very hard to find more degraded status of women than the fathers of the church have provided. She was symbolized as the hell's door (mothers of all human ills). Being a woman is something disgraceful for her. The church has not only represented her as an inferior creature of the universe, it also deprived many rights, including legal rights that she has enjoyed once in the past.<sup>30</sup> St. Paul says: "*For the man is not of the woman; but the woman for the man.*"<sup>31</sup> Tertullian, a religious leader of the early period of Christianity portrayed the women a gate for devil's entrance, the one who brought the man to the forbidden tree and as a God's law breaker.<sup>32</sup> In short, like other ancient civilizations, women have no worth in Christian old tradition too. She was regarded as a mere creature that is cursed and disgusted. She was considered nothing but a valueless, soulless and worthless being of the world.

#### **1.1.4. Pagan Arabs**

Before the mission of the Messenger of Allāh Almighty, women have suffered great injustices, subjected to humiliation, and treated as a mere worthless inferior creature in the Pagan Arab society. Under the unending power of male protector, they were just treated as disposable material property. They were not entitled to any right including inheritance.<sup>33</sup> The subordinated and discriminated status of women in pre-Islāmic period creates diversity between various perspectives of women with elevated status, changes in their role and responsibilities, initiated by Qur'ānic rulings to strengthen their identity. In an ancient civilization, female infanticide was common mindset and considered as a burden for the

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<sup>29</sup>Benton, New Encycl. Br. Micropedia, 1943-1973, pp. 19, 1910.

<sup>30</sup>Mace, David Robert and Vera Mace, *Marriage: East and West* (n.d.: Doubleday, 1960), 80-81.

<sup>31</sup>Bible, I Corinthians, 11:8, [https://biblehub.com/1\\_corinthians/11-8.htm](https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/11-8.htm), Retrived on 11/1/2020.

<sup>32</sup>Tahirkhili, *Woman's Status & Islām*, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup>Abdul Rahman, Al-Sheha, *Women in Islām & Refutation of Some Common Misconceptions*. Edited by Abu Ayoub Jerome Boulter, and Abdurrahman Murad, (World Wide Association for Introducing Islām, 2011)p.,16.

entire family and further challenged by famine and starvation. The capacity and mobility as compared to male baby was much dishonored.<sup>34</sup> Its existence is attested to in the Qur'ān:

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ- يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ ۚ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ<sup>35</sup>

*“And when one of them is informed of the [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”*

In the days of ignorance, when a daughter born at home, his face becomes dark with grief and distress. The intensity of grief was so much that he becomes silent, and he does not want anyone to see him.<sup>36</sup> In a nomadic society, since males were considered stronger and more versatile than women because of their abilities of being warriors, animal killers and earner of the family. The tribal household liabilities, childcare was considered as a part of woman's life and also woman was considered as comparable to their male counterpart as a weaker creature because of her fear and easily getting defeated by forces. Often they used to become an embarrassment for the entire family when captured by enemies or taken off as their wives or concubines. There were many factors that were contributing to their inferior status in society, the most prevalent was unrestricted polygamy, based solely on the ability of males to sell them or make them as their slaves. Such privileges to almost all men in society were existed throughout in Persia, Syria, Byzantium and Arabia.<sup>37</sup> Polygamy and polyandry were practiced among the ancient Arabs. There was no uniform law for regulating marriage and divorce and this created serious complication in the social life of the Arabs. In pre-Islāmic Arabia it was regarded as a disgrace to have daughters, as they used to bury them alive. Woman was considered as a mere plaything.<sup>38</sup> It is examined that among the pagan Arabs, women were considered like chattels. The widows descended to his son or sons by the rights of the

<sup>34</sup> Mace, *Marriage: East and west*, p. 229.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Qur'ān, An Nahl 16:57-59

<sup>36</sup> Ibne Kathīr, Allama Imad ud Din, , *Tafīr Ibn Kathīr*, Abridged by Safiur Rehman Al-Mubarakpuri (Riyadh:Darrussalam,2000) vol.5,p. 480-81.

<sup>37</sup> Esposito, John L., “Women's Rights in Islām”, *Islāmic Studies* 14, no. 2 (1975): 100.

<sup>38</sup> Iqbal, *Women in Qur'ān*, 4.

inheritance.<sup>39</sup> Woman has been never a free agent in marriage. The number of women a male may have was not reduced. Divorce was a subject of a few words, and marriages had multiple ways of separation, some of which were embraced by Islām. It was the honor and privilege of her father, her brother, or any other male guardians to give her whomever they prefer without her option in marriage. At the moment, he had no right to live free of his own choice.

## 1.2. Women's Status and Role in Islām

On the other hand, the Islāmic perspective contributes to a greater recognition of ethical values and good behavior. It encourages people to highly respect values such as moral conviction, fairness and integrity, which are also the terms on which his union with Almighty Allāh was actually based.<sup>40</sup> Islām is the only religion which treats family, society and, fundamentally, humanity as a whole on an ethical basis. In the context of gender roles and distinctions, it is neither a privilege nor an indignity or embarrassment to any of the sexes. Therefore, it's insignificant to believe that Islām does not enjoin obligations, rules and regulations for men while exploring about the status of women in Islām.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to the other living beings on earth, the nature of the human being and bestowed quality of "willpower" is a unique characteristic that makes him more prudent, physically and mentally powerful. On the basis of natural demands, males and females can better perform in the context of their natural capabilities towards the performance of their specific responsibilities.

The Qur'ān states the law of nature very clearly that as long as long people preserve their system of life on the basis of goodness, liberty, justice and everyone enjoy their free legal and social status without any interruption, whole community moves towards advancement and moral progression.<sup>42</sup> The Qur'ān is the only religious Book in the world that does not include or treat expressions of disrespect for women as an inferior being. In contrast, terms such as "*believing men and believing women*" continuously unite males and females

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<sup>39</sup>Ali, Syed Ameer, *The spirit of Islām: A History of the Eevolution and Ideals of Islām*. (Newyork, Cosimo, Inc., 2010), p.228.

<sup>40</sup> Qutb, Syed., "*In the Shade of the Qurān*, trans." Adil, Salahi, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2003), vol. I, p.56.

<sup>41</sup> Badwi , Jamal A., *The Status of Woman in Islām*, (US and Canada: International Islāmic Publishing House, 1997), p.8.

<sup>42</sup>Afzal-ur- Rahman , Muḥammad., *Encyclopaedia of Seerah* (London, Muslim Schools Trust, 1986), p. 333.

together on the grounds of personal equality with respect to their obligations, rights and merits beyond any distinction.<sup>43</sup>

The warning injunctions concerning prejudice against individuals are repeated 299 times and the word equality and justice appeared almost 16 times in the Holy Qur'ān and respect to all citizens is the basic concept of Islāmīc teachings. Without any doubt, Islām is not only the consistent, supportive instead founder of the notion 'equality for all'.<sup>44</sup> In the sight of Almighty Allāh, the Creator of humanity and the entire world, the things that make a man valuable is not one's richness, beauty, intellect or physical abilities except one's *taqwa* (piousness). However, the differentiation between men and women in Western culture and in societies influenced by it can easily be noticed, there is a greater need to explicitly state the role of Islām on important issues. The divine revelation echoed in the midst of the darkness that consumed the world with a new, noble, and the universal message to humanity in the wide desert of Arabia.

Fourteen hundred years ago, Islām launched a revolution with the sole aim of freeing women from the restrictions and empowering them to live a life like any other human being should have a right to live in any society. At the advent of Islām, when the individuality of the woman was denied by many people; some were dismissive of it; and still others admitted it, but regarded the woman as something created for the humble service of the man. The Prophet of Islām Muḥammad (ﷺ) has further clarified the point in his farewell speech during the *ḥajj*;

“No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab. Nor does a white man have any superiority over a black man or the black man any superiority over the white man. You are all children of Adam and Adam was created from clay.”<sup>45</sup>

In his farewell sermon, the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to the past practices of the evil and categorically hit hard the pre-Islāmīc practices of discrimination between man and woman on the basis of race, color and financial status. Truly speaking, he discarded the nobility of decent of man over man and Prophet (ﷺ) ordained that no man could claim any specific

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<sup>43</sup>Saleh, *Women in Islām: Their Status in Religious and Traditional Culture*, p. 36.

<sup>44</sup>*Human Rights in Islām*, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup>Musnad Ahmad, *Aḥādīth Rijal min Ashab an-Nabi (Aḥādīth from some companions of the Prophet)*, *Ḥādīth* no. 23489.

decent except from Adam, the father of mankind.<sup>46</sup> The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) clearly demonstrated on the equality of all human beings without any racism or inferiority. It shows that every human being is created by the same Creator, Almighty Allāh by the same source and at the same time without any distinction with the exception of male and female's division and it makes them more unique not inferior or superior.

The one constant feature of the human history is a transition. Throughout the historical process of human development, economic, social, educational, and technological change have all been a part of human existence. Change can be incremental or rapid. One thing that commonly tries to shift across all borders is the development of society.<sup>47</sup> With the passage of time, the situation also transformed as Islām started rising around the world. The preservation of the position and freedom of women has been introduced. Islām specifically affirmed her ability to carry out Allāh's commands, her responsibilities without any differentiation, and her adherence of the orders leading to paradise. With a proportion of society equal to that of men, Islām considered women as worthy human beings. Both are two independent branches of a tree, and two children of the Adam (ﷺ), and of Hawwa' (ﷺ). The Islāmic point of view clearly states an equal reward, equal penalties and identical rights and responsibilities that lead towards equal dignity without any biased demands. The most important and relevant teachings are offered by the Holy Qur'ān through the elimination of all the evil customs and tradition which directly or indirectly makes women's status inferior to that of men. The Qur'ān says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا رُؤُوسَهُمَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا رَقِيبًا ۝<sup>48</sup>

*“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.”*

Through worshipping Him alone without partners, Allāh orders His creations to have taqwa of Him. Allāh has created many males and females from Adam (ﷺ) and Hawwa' (ﷺ) and

<sup>46</sup>Mansoori, Muhammad Tahir, *Family Law in Islām Theory and application*, (Islāmabad: Sharī'ah Acadmy,2009), p. 35.

<sup>47</sup>Aquil, Rajaa "Change and Muslim Women." *International journal of humanities and social science* 1, no. 21 (2011): 21.

<sup>48</sup>Al-Qur'ān, An-Nisa 4:1.



dispersed them in different forms, features, colors and languages across the world. Ultimately, their reunion and return to Allāh would be in the end.<sup>49</sup> It is only Islām that has presented an accurate model of rights obligations. If we see in other religious teachings we always found imbalanced rules. For example, in Hindu classical texts, biased emphasis is presented on the duties of women towards their men, and it becomes silent on the duties of men towards their women. The true justice always requires a balanced model for mutual obligations.<sup>50</sup> Islām presents a unique set of equivalent obligations, same rewards and same punishments for both men and women.

Among the Arabs, if they had a slave woman, there were also some people who would order her out to engage in illicit relations and charge money for what they would take from her every time. When Islām arrived, Allāh Almighty explicitly prohibited to believing men not to do so by announcing that, *“and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity,”*<sup>51</sup> the reason of the revelation of this verse is according to the reports is that Abdullah bin Ubbay bin Salul had slave girl whom he used to forced in to prostitution for earning but she refused.<sup>52</sup> If the slave girls express wish to avoid adultery and remain chaste, then pressurizing them is shameless, as injunction revealed to avoid the shameless act.<sup>53</sup> This clearly shows that in any attempt, women’s consent and her desire of doing something or restraining from it is always preferred by Islāmic teachings. Islām always stressed out for her honor, dignity and individuality. Man and woman, it had proclaimed, both come from the same essence. Stressing this noble and natural conception, the Qur’ān states:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيًّا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَتَتْ دَعَا  
اللَّهُ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ -<sup>54</sup>

*“It is He who created you from one soul and created from it its mates that he might dwell in security with her. And when he covers her, she carries a light burden and continues therein. And when it becomes heavy, they both invoke Allāh, their Lord, “If You should give us a good [child], we will surely be among the grateful.”*

<sup>49</sup>Maududi, Sayyid Abul A’la, *Tafhimal-Qur’ān: An Understanding of Qur’ān* (Liecester ,The Islāmic Foundation,1989) vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Rambachan , Anantanand, “A Hindu Perspective,” in *What Men Owe to Women; Men’s Voices from World Religions*, ed. John c. Raines and Daniel c. Maguire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 17–40, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Qur’ān, An-Nur 24:33

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol.5, 623.

<sup>53</sup> Shafi’, Maulānā Mufti Muḥammad, *“Ma’āri’ful Qur’ān”*(Karachi,MakatabaDarurrul Issahat,2003) vol,6, 293

<sup>54</sup>Al-Qur’ān, Al- A’raf 7:189.

Another verse states the most basic belief of Islām that is Tauḥīd and then it brings out the falsity of believing in more than one God at the same time. In the beginning of the verse Allāh Almighty has mentioned the creation of Sayyidna ‘Ādam (ﷺ) and Sayyidah Ḥawwā’ (ﷺ) which was a ‘manifestation of His perfect power’.<sup>55</sup> Unlike other religions of the world, Islām has removed the stigma of wickedness and impurity which has been placed upon women. The Qur’ān states in many verses that it is God who originally created the human beings.

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يُذْرُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۚ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْبَصِيرُ -<sup>56</sup>

“[He is ] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves, mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”

Islām revealed that the responsibility of being real and obedient disciples of Allāh can only be fulfilled by both men and women, if they perform good deeds, and then both would be honoured by Allāh. Another place that begins with the statement of the relationship between both male and female, Qur’ān demonstrates that all human beings belong to the same race and the female is not any inferior creature. There is no need to get ashamed of when there is born a daughter.<sup>57</sup>

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُم بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ -<sup>58</sup>

“and Allāh has made for you from yourselves mates and has made for you from your mates sons and grandchildren and has provided for you from the good things. Then in falsehood do they believe and in the favor of Allāh they disbelieve?”

Allmighty Allāh reveals those blessings by granting them partners from within themselves of their own species, he has bestowed upon his creature. If he had provided them some other forms of companions, there would be no peace, compassion and affection between them. Yet He made the offspring of Adam men and women out of His mercy, and made female

<sup>55</sup> Shafi‘, *Ma‘āri‘ful Qur’ān*, vol., iv, 117.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Qur’ān, Ash- Shuraa 42:11.

<sup>57</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qurān*, vol, x, 51.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Qur’ān, An Nahl 16:72.

mates for the males.<sup>59</sup> This shows the wisdom behind whatever has ordained by Allāh for His servants is best and applicable in all its essence.

### 1.2.1. The Legal and Spiritual Aspect

It is a matter of common knowledge that in order to contribute moral and material health of the society, woman also needs legal protection like a man. Rights guaranteed by the law can give them the requisite confidence and fortify their courage to shape their destiny within the boundaries of law and ordinance. Beginning from the material to the spiritual ground, Islām never forgets to grant women's proper rights in every sphere. It is not the doer either male or female instead it is the deed and intention that makes any individual dutiful and virtuous in the sight of the creator.<sup>60</sup> It is clearly provided by the Qur'ān that women are exclusively as noble and equal as men in terms of their rights and duties in the sight of Almighty Allāh. Their whole earning depends upon their actions, not on their gender. It can never be established through Qur'ānic teachings that if a woman will do a righteous deed it will be less acknowledged by Almighty as compared to that of man. The Qur'ān states:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ<sup>61</sup> -

*“Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained.”*

Almighty Allāh has clearly informed that on the day of judgement, every person is bound to his deeds. Ibn Abbas and others have said this.<sup>62</sup> Women can have the benefit of full legal status, dignity and pride in their performance and have right to dispel traditional suspicion about their capabilities to live in a society a balanced life. The question in Muslim societies does not revolve around the perfection of the legal status of the women according to the religious doctrine of Islām. However, the reality is totally contrary to this. It is also mentioned:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً<sup>63</sup> وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ -

<sup>59</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 6, 370.

<sup>60</sup> Saleh, *Women in Islām: Their Status in Religious and Traditional Culture*, p.37.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al- Muddaththir 74:38.

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 10, 256.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Qur'ān, An-Nahl 16:97.

“whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer- We will surely cause him to lead a good life, and we will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”

To Adam’s progeny, it is promise of Allāh that He will be blessed them with good life in this world and hereafter if they are among righteous people and will act according to the will of Allāh and his Prophet’s *Sunnah* whether he is male or female.<sup>64</sup> Another perspective of women’s relaxation from religious duties can also be noticed in religion of Islām. During her menstruation period, she is not obliged to establish daily prayers and to have fast in the month of ramadan. Simultaneously, during her pregnancy and when the child is infancy stage, she can also leave their fasting to take care of themselves and for the sake of their child’s health. It is permitted to them to complete their fast when they feel healthy or she can also compensate by feeding the poor for it. Moreover, the prayer of Friday is not mandatory for them like men.<sup>65</sup> Although, one might find many examples from the time period of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), women were allowed to say congregational prayers and Friday prayer at a mosque, but it was remained optional for them just for the purpose to give them relief. On the other hand, saying a prayer at a mosque was mandatory for men.<sup>66</sup> It shows that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) treated equitably instead has given privileges to women to worship without bearing any hardship.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, Hinduism not only debar women from the participation in religious rituals, but also considers her polluted because of her menstrual cycle. Women are forbidden from the recitation and study of *Vedas*. In some of orthodox houses, women are not even allowed to cook, to serve or eat with their family members during these days.<sup>68</sup> In biblical teachings, it is considered dishonorable for a woman to speak or ask something in the church. They have to keep themselves silent in churches.<sup>69</sup> If she has to keep silence and not allowed to ask a question then how she will learn. While in Islāmic tradition, women saints, scholars and notable preachers have given significant admiration and recognition. It is illustrated by a scholar;

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<sup>64</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol.,5. p. 523.

<sup>65</sup> Zaw, *The status and rights of women mentioned in Islām.*, p.138.

<sup>66</sup> Ali, *The Status of Woman in Islām*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Von Grunebaum, Gustave E., “*Medieval Islām*”, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 174.

<sup>68</sup> Rambachan , A Hindu Perspective,” in *What Men Owe to Women; Men’s Voices from World Religions*, 24.

<sup>69</sup> I Corinthians, 14:34, [https://biblehub.com/1\\_corinthians/14-34.htm](https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/14-34.htm), Retrived on 11/10/2020.

“There can but few books on the biographies of saints which fail to mention a number of women saints under every letter of the alphabet whose wondrous deed are no less marvelous than those of the men dealt with in the same works”.<sup>70</sup>

In many countries, based on the knowledge and capacity, many women are recognized as Islāmic scholars and preachers without any distinction. It is illustrated that like men in any society, females are also equally obliged to play their role in performing religious duties. On the basis of their nature and psychology, on several occasions, women are exempted by some duties and hard responsibilities by Islāmic teachings.<sup>71</sup> It is for this justification that there is an increasing awareness in almost all developed societies that reformers and intellectuals must work hard to strengthen the legal position of women.<sup>72</sup> It is remarkable historical fact that Islām made a very thorough examination of the role of women in society among all the great religions of the world, and established a very specific law system of her rights.

### 1.2.2. The Social Aspect

The metaphorical expression that is utilized, ‘creating from the rib’, portrays the inflexibility, shyness and stubbornness that one can find in women’s nature. Basically, women are considered physically weaker than men and it is based on their delicate nature and physical strength.<sup>73</sup> It is for the purpose of protection and to the preservation of individualities that nature has bestowed different qualities to each of them. It does not make any of them inferior or superior. The logic and motive of Qur’ānic teachings are always filled with unique wisdom based on ‘Divine Power’. These divinely teachings are meant to lead entire humanity towards moral development and prosperity in this world and hereafter. This is the reason, in Islāmic society; social set-up is interlinked with all setups (cultural, economical, and religious) to build a unique mode of living for humanity. Almighty Allāh says:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup>Godziher, Ignaz, “*Muslim Studies*”, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1971), Vol:II, 274.

<sup>71</sup>Zaw, *The status and rights of women mentioned in Islām*, p. 138.

<sup>72</sup>Ali, Parween Shaukat, *Legal Status of Women in Third World*, (Lahore, aziz Publishers,1979), pp. i,2.

<sup>73</sup> Imran , Muḥammad, *Ideal Woman in Islām*, (Lahore, Islāmic Publications Limited,1981), p. 5.

<sup>74</sup>Al-Qur’ān, Ar-Rum 30:30.

“So direct your face [i.e., self] toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *fiṭrah* of Allāh upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allāh. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know”.

Some of them said that this mean, “do not change the creation of Allāh, for if you do, you will divert the people away from *fiṭrah* with which He created them. Allāh has made all his creation equal. So there is no disparity among people in this regard.<sup>75</sup> They are equal either men or women. The distinction between Islām and traditional cultures stands out in high relief when comparing the legal status of women before as opposed to after the appearance of Islāmic institutions. Here, one cannot fail to appreciate Islām’s contribution to the improvement of the social position of women throughout the Middle East.<sup>76</sup> On the basis of unique features in nature, attitude and aptitude of man and woman, certain specified roles and duties are assigned to them for perfection and the well social construction of individuality, whole community and for state.<sup>77</sup> It is one of the well accepted common facts that the survival becomes only possible when a thing or person works according to its mechanism. You cannot ask a software engineer to build a road or a house. Everyone has to work according to their capacities, knowledge and potential. Now, it is relatable to explore why Islāmic teachings has restricted women’s role in social affairs. Indeed, the wisdom behind these injunctions are not limited to some aspects, it prefers whole community’s natural order and benefit.

#### **1.2.2.1. Female Child**

In pre-Islāmic Arabs, hatred for a female child, burying them alive was common to notice. The sacrificing of children to their gods that is fearful custom along with the inhuman practice of burring alive is common with other nations of antiquity being observed.<sup>78</sup> It was the light of Islām, which granted survival to female child and right to live with respect in that inhumane kind of society.

#### **a. In the Light of Qur’ānic and Prophetic Traditions**

Despite the fact, it was not an easy task to change the cultural practices that were not less than crimes towards whole humanity. Some practices become so deep rooted that it seems like it is not practiced instead law itself. The social acceptance of female child infanticide

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<sup>75</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol.,7. p.544.

<sup>76</sup>Saleh , *Women in Islām: Their Status in Religious and Traditional Culture*, p. 37.

<sup>77</sup>Ahamed, Ibrahim, H., and Zaleha Kamaruddin (edt.), *Muslim Women in Contemporary Societies: Reality and Opportunities*, (Malaysia, IIUM Press, 2009), p. 217.

<sup>78</sup>Ali, *The Spirits of Islām*, p. 228.

was common in some Arabian tribes. It was then Islām which forbade this custom considered it as a crime like any other murder and has spoken explicitly to honor female child as the male child is being treated.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ –

بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ –<sup>79</sup>

*And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked. For what sin she was killed*

The female infant is called here as Al-Maw‘ūdah, who was buried alive in the dirt because of their hatred for girls in the time ignorance. This is the reason, on the day of judgement, she will be questioned by Almighty Allāh that what sin she has committed that caused her to be murdered? <sup>80</sup> In that brutal culture, it was the teaching of Islām, which not only demolished that custom of killing the female child, but also criticized the attitude of such parents who rejects their female children, and bestowed respect and honor to girls, as the Qur’ān states:

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ۔ يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ ۚ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ<sup>81</sup>

*“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide.”*

Such were the feelings and the sentiments of the people about those poor creatures in the days of ignorance. It is, therefore, easily comprehensible that people used to kill their daughters to save their selves from disgrace. Besides the feelings of shame and disgrace attached to the birth of daughters, people committed this heinous crime due to baseless fear of poverty.<sup>82</sup> The source of all these disgraceful acts and hatred towards daughter in pre-Arabian society is actually derived from the conclusion of the Qurān’ic verses, traditions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and from some other historical accounts. This aforementioned comparison clearly

<sup>79</sup>Al-Qur’ān, At-takwir 81:8-9.

<sup>80</sup>Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol.,10, 376.

<sup>81</sup>Al-Qur’ān, An-Nahl 16:58-59

<sup>82</sup> Siddiqi, Muḥammad Saeed *The Modest Status of Women in Islam*, (Lahore, Qazi Publications,1991), p.5.

explores that true divine teachings can never ordain any rule or obligation for the creatures that creates any discrimination or leads towards such heinous crimes on the basis of gender.

### 1.2.2.2. As a Wife

#### a. Wife's status in the Light of Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions:

The religion of Islām has brought necessary transformation in the institution of Family structure. It has represented a diverse system for the nourishment and growth of family by honoring the wife's status. It has ordained certain responsibilities on husband beginning from respect to financial matters. It is indicated in the Qur'ān clearly the contract of marriage is not mere a contract in Islāmic tradition, it is basically a strong bond between two halves of the community and its core objective are spiritual harmony, emotional development based on love, mercy, mutual understanding, compromise, respect and care. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded from An-Nu'man bin Bashir that the Messenger of Allāh said, وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ (And when the souls are paired)<sup>83</sup>, those who are alike.<sup>84</sup> This is the mean to preserve the human race,<sup>85</sup> protection against chastity<sup>86</sup>, to achieve peace and tranquility of spirit<sup>87</sup> and to promotion of love and union between the parties.<sup>88</sup> Among the most impressive verses in the Qur'ān about the rights of women as wives is the following.

أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ لَيْلَةٌ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ<sup>89</sup>

*“It has been permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allāh knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you.”*

And as nothing interferes with the body of a human and his clothing, nothing between a man and his wife can interfere. It is a bond of inherent affection.<sup>90</sup> Marriage is a solemn familial bond between a man and a woman in Islām. In all the other human relationships, it is a connection that is most extraordinary.<sup>91</sup> For Muslims, the purpose of marriage is distinct and

<sup>83</sup>Al-Qur'ān, At- Takwir 81:7.

<sup>84</sup> Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr, vol.,10,374.

<sup>85</sup>Al- Qur'ān, Al-Baqara 2:223.

<sup>86</sup>Al- Qur'ān, An-Nisa 4:25.

<sup>87</sup>Al- Qur'ān, Al-A'raf 7:189.

<sup>88</sup> Tanzeem, Fatima, *Marriage Contract in Islām*, (New Delhi, India: Deep and Deep Publications, 2007), p. 31.

<sup>89</sup>Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqara 2:187

<sup>90</sup>Maududi, *Tafhimal-Qur'ān: An Understanding of Qur'ān*, vol.I, 146.

<sup>91</sup>Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris, *The Muslim Marriage Guide*, (Iran: Amana Publications, 2000), p.5.



unique. They believe that marriage is a pure relationship prescribed by Almighty Allāh for his people to provide a foundation to the entire *Ummah*. It laid down many regulations concerning rights and obligations to protect the family institution for both wife and husband. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said;

Narrated ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه): Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “O ‘Abdullāh! Have I not been informed that you fast all the day and stand in *Salat* [prayer] all night?” I said, “Yes, O Allāh’s Messenger!” He said, “Do not do that! Observe the *Saum* [fast] sometimes and also leave them [the fast] at other times; stand up for the *Salat* [prayer] at night and also sleep at night. Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you and your wife has a right over you.”<sup>92</sup>

The religion of Islām then abolished many evil practices and granted back the rights to the original owner. The most Just Book of Almighty Allāh has abolished the prevalent evil customs regarding dower and brought back the original right position. In Arab tribes before the advent of Islām, the right of *Mahr* was solely considered as parent’s right because they are the one who nurture and brought up the girl. Later on, Islām restored the right to the actual owner i.e., wife. There is no question that *Mahr* was initially equivalent to the purchase price, but it has been emphasized from the advent of Islām that it is the absolute right of a woman.<sup>93</sup> Almighty Allāh says in Qur’ān;

وَأْتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً ۚ فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا ۗ<sup>94</sup>

“And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously. But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, and take it in satisfaction and ease.”

This verse takes up a particular right of woman and aims at removing the injustices in practiced in matters like *Mahr*. These injustices were prevailed at peak during the time of *Jāhiliyyah*.<sup>95</sup> It is mentioned in *al-Hedaya*, “the payment of dower is enjoined by the law, merely as a token of respect”.<sup>96</sup> It shows that the conceptual order of *Mahr* in Islām is not a price for the woman (it was the practice of some cultures) instead it is a symbolic gift to the new bride which shows love and affection between the couple. Islām has ordained many obligations to treat a woman kind-heartedly and caringly. At many times, it is illustrated to

<sup>92</sup>Al-Bukhari, Muḥammad Abdullah, *Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 1997)The Book of An- Nikāḥ(Wedlock), Chapter: Your wife has a right over you ,7, Ḥadīth no: 5199, 93.

<sup>93</sup> Nyazee, “*Outlines of Islāmic Jurisprudence*”,182.

<sup>94</sup>Al-Qur’ān, An-Nisa 4:4.

<sup>95</sup> Shafi’, *Ma ‘āri ‘ful Qur’ān*, vol., 2, 315,316.

<sup>96</sup> Murghanani , Burhanuddin, “*Al-Hidaya*” ,Trans. Ch. Hamilton,(London:S.G Grady,1870),p. 44.

take care of your women. The importance of taking advice and mutual cooperation in family matters is stressed by Islām. The Qur’ān gives us an example:

فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا<sup>97</sup>

“And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them.”

The status of wife in Islāmic tradition is considered as much respectable and honored. The Holy Qur’ān emphasizes on it in several places and it is strongly recommended in the traditions of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) to treat women humanely and make your companionship stronger. It is narrated by Abu Hurairah:

Allāh’s Messenger said, “The woman is like a rib; if you try to straighten her, you will break her. So, if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness.”<sup>98</sup>

He created her from a rib, a bone closer to the heart that protects the vital organs. She is a helper, a shield, when necessary, a protector, she is one who completes a man, a family and a society. A *sūrah* named *Nisa* (woman) related to woman has declared many rights to woman. It orders to live with them in harmony, kindness and prefer righteousness towards women. Many other rights, including dower, inheritance were introduced and practiced in Islāmic societies.<sup>99</sup> This *sūrah* is basically, ‘*the sūrah of women*’ which deals most of the issues concerning women, secures women’s rights and regulates imperative orders for the family unit. Consequently, this *sūrah* has carried a great reform for Muslim women in perspective of their social, legal and other matters.

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا<sup>100</sup> –

“And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allāh makes therein much good.”

In between many prevailing injustices, the central assumption was that the man is not only the owner of women’s property, but he solely owned the very life of the woman. The Qur’ān eradicated this evil that was the reason of many other existing injustices and recommended to

<sup>97</sup>Al-Qur’ān, Al-Baqara 2:233.

<sup>98</sup>Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami Al-Shahih*, The Book of An- Nikāh (Wedlock), Chapter: To be polite and kind to the women, 7 Ḥadīth no. No. 5184, 80.

<sup>99</sup>Ibn Qay’im, Shākih Al-Islām Imam, *Us’wah-e-Hasnah*. Trans: Mulana Abdual Razaq Malih Abadi, (Lahore: Asan Qur’ān, 2003), p. 50

<sup>100</sup>Al-Qur’ān, An-Nisa 4:19.

correct such social disorders.<sup>101</sup> The Qur'ān states about such cases like, 'do not keep them, intending harm,<sup>102</sup> do not transgress them.'<sup>103</sup> Under injunctions concerning women, "discrimination against them by withholding or wasting their rights was prohibited."<sup>104</sup> Islāmic teachings aimed at protecting the women's rights and secured her from all kind of discrimination and mistreatment in many injunctions. The Holy Book of Allāh Almighty has elevated their status by calling them, وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ (and Muslim women), الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ (believing women), قَانِتَاتٍ (devout women), الصَّادِقَاتِ (and truthful women), وَالصَّابِرَاتِ (and patient women), and وَالْخَائِضَاتِ (and humble women)<sup>105</sup> and many other respected identifications in terms of appreciation without any discrimination and side by side with men equally.

The privilege that belongs to her as a wife or as a woman is actually coming to secure her. Taken into the account the current rights and duties, her status is not more unfavorable than that of western woman or wife. In comparison, she lives a better position in many respects. The comparison of its social status has nothing to do with religious obligations because these evils that are prevailing in many societies are not generated by any religion but these are pure social and cultural productions.<sup>106</sup> Woman is not only independent in her marriage rights, she has been granted right to separate from her husband as well. Even though, it is detested by Almighty to end a marriage either from husband's side or initiated by wife's side. The family is the basic center of Islāmic society. To protect this core institution and for the stability of family, certain rulings are intended to be observed by both male and female while entering into the marriage contract or to seek an end of this relationship.

#### 1.2.2.3. *Mother's Status in Islāmic Perspective*

Kindness towards parents in Islāmic traditions is considered as next to the worshipping of Almighty Allāh. The greater emphasizes is to be dutiful, to pay respect and obey them in every situation.<sup>107</sup> Islām grants a very high status to motherhood. Motherhood is perceived as the ultimate goal of every woman. The status of the mother is more respected than the status of father because of the hardships childbirth brings. Islām asserts that parents, particularly

<sup>101</sup>Shafi', *Ma'āri'ful Qur'ān*, 2, 371.

<sup>102</sup>Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqara 2:231.

<sup>103</sup>Al-Qur'ān, Al-Baqara 2:229.

<sup>104</sup>Shafi', *Mari'ful Qur'ān*, 2, 396.

<sup>105</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al-Ahzab 33:35.

<sup>106</sup>Ali, *The Spirits of Islām*, p.257.

<sup>107</sup>Zaw, *The status and rights of women mentioned in Islām*, p.135.

mothers are to be cared for in their old age and must be treated kindly and politely.<sup>108</sup> In Qur'ān Almighty Allāh says:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَنَا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ -<sup>109</sup>

*“And we have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.”*

Here the Almighty Allāh mentions how mother brings her child up and bears many hardships. During this she gets tired and suffers a lot and to remind the son of her previous kind treatment.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, the recommendation of Qur'ān shows that it is much concerned about the kind treatment to parents. In Islāmic tradition, the honor, respect and high regard attached to the status of mother has distinctive position. The kindness to the parents placed by the Qur'ān soon after the command of worshipping Almighty Allāh. The Qur'ān emphasized:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا -<sup>111</sup>

*“And your Lord has decreed you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [as much as]. “uff”, and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.”*

These two provisions are often mentioned together in Qur'ānic text; one is to worship only Allāh and the second is being dutiful towards parents. Through these Almighty Allāh tells us that how Hazrat Luqman (عليه السلام) advised his son,<sup>112</sup>

وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا<sup>113</sup>

*“And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, “My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.”*

When Hazrat Luqman (عليه السلام) advised his son to worship Allāh alone, he also advised him to honor his parents.<sup>114</sup> The emphasis found not only in Qur'ānic text, but the prophetic

<sup>108</sup>Joseph, Suad, and AfsanaNajamabadi, eds. *Encyclopedia of women and Islāmic cultures: Family, law and politics*. Brill, 2005, Vol. II. 513.

<sup>109</sup>Al-Qur'ān, Luqman 31:14. See also, 46:15, 29:8.

<sup>110</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol.,7, 580.

<sup>111</sup>Al-Qur'ān, Al-Isra 17:23.

<sup>112</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol.,7,579.

<sup>113</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al-Isra 17:24.

<sup>114</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol.,7,579.

traditions also laid stress on the status of motherhood by giving respect, affection and love in a manner more than they deserves. A man came to Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) asking;

“O Messenger of God, who among the people is the most worthy of my good company? The Prophet (ﷺ), Your mother. The man said then who else: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your mother. The man asked, Then who else? Only then did the Prophet(ﷺ) say, Your father.”<sup>115</sup>

It is noted that Holy Qur’ān and Prophetic traditions accords the mother a greater right to obedience because she suffers more than the father for the sake of the children and she also bears greater responsibility for their upbringing and training. In general, the commands are to protect the rights of both, father and the mother, but later on the particular attention is drawn towards the mother’s rights.<sup>116</sup> It was narrated that Abu Salamah As-Sulāmi(رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I enjoin each one to honor his mother, I enjoin each one to honor his mother, I enjoin each one to honor his mother [three times], I enjoin one to honor his father, I enjoin each one to honor his guardian who is taking care of him, even if he is causing him some annoyance.”<sup>117</sup>

Islām does not oblige only mothers to be dutiful towards the upbringing of their children. Instead, the ruling shows that it makes responsible both mother and father for providing and taking care of their kids in a balanced way. Because of the woman’s soft and fostering nature Islām admires the biological role of mothering as a distinction between male and female.<sup>118</sup> Mothers have a superior status over all women in Islām. It is a fact that Islām authorizes motherhood as a key to prestige and Islām places the mothers on a pedestal by expressing deep gratitude and appreciation because of her hard work and affection for her family.<sup>119</sup> She is treated as a most respected figure of the family institution. The practice incest was allowed in some societies before the advent of Islām. Even a son had right to marry his stepmother

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<sup>115</sup> Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, Imām Abul Hussain, *Sāḥīḥ Muslim* (Riyadh : Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007), Translated by, Nasiruddin al-Khattab, The book of Al-Birr, Nurturing ties and manners, Chapter 1. Being dutiful to one’s parents, and which of them is more entitled to it, 6, Ḥadīth. No. 6501, 413.

<sup>116</sup> Khan, Shabbir, Mohammad, *Status of Women in Islām*, (New Dehli, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2001) pp. 21-22

<sup>117</sup> Al-Qazwinī, Imam Muḥammad Bin Yazeed Ibn Mājah, Sunun Ibn Mājah (Riyadh : Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007), Translated by, Nasiruddin al-Khattab, Chapters On Etiquette, , Chapter: Honouring one’s Parents, 5, Ḥadīth. No. 3657, 11.

<sup>118</sup> Aquil, *Change and Muslim Women*, 24.

<sup>119</sup> Abudi, Dalya, *Mothers and Daughters in Arab Women’s Literature: The Family Frontier*, (Boston: Brill, 2011), p.51.

after his father's death because she was considered as a part of the inheritance. Islām has forbidden that practice;

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا<sup>120</sup>

*“Do not marry former wives of your fathers— except what was done previously. It was indeed a shameful, despicable, and evil practice.”*

The Holy Qur'ān rounds of all statements prohibiting the objectionable social traditions of the time of *Jāhilīyya*.<sup>121</sup> Such a practice was allowed in pre-Arabian society which had one of the reasons barring women to get married again. When a woman lost her partner, the most emphatic tradition was that the family should prohibit the little boy's stepmother until he himself became legally an adult for marrying her.<sup>122</sup> The dignity and honor and respect given to mothers in Islām have no comparison. This show that Islām has forbidden all such traditions and only Allāh Almighty knows the wisdom behind these restrictions that best serve the whole humanity.

The role model that is presented by Islām for women through Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition is so unique in its essence. Islām is not giving them just a chance to live their life, but a life full of honor, respect and a status which is really wants to live. The woman, as a female child, wife and mother not only enjoying the rights, but Islām also made their lives protected, secured and tender by putting the hardest responsibilities on their males. By achieving their rights and acting upon their duties, they have a great opportunity to find eternal peace and closeness to Almighty Allāh.

### **1.2.3. The Economic Aspect**

In an era of globalization and technology, the consensus among different observers can be seen on the issue of women's participation in the economy. It is to be considered that they must not be underutilized anymore on the basis of their skills and potential. For economists, the equation is simple, *'no development without women's participation.'*<sup>123</sup> Yet another viewpoint, true equality does not mean equality of work opportunity, but in the consciousness of people. The notion of human rights does not imply that any person must be involved in

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<sup>120</sup> Qur'ān, 4:22.

<sup>121</sup> Maududi, *Tafhimal-Qur'ān: An Understanding of Qur'ān*, vol, II, 21

<sup>122</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qurān*, vol, II, 67.

<sup>123</sup> Hanieh, Hassan Abu. *Women & Politics: from the Perspective of Islāmic Movements in Jordan*, (Jordan, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2008), p.v.

almost the same work to achieve the true equality. The core concept is everyone should be treated with the same respect and dignity without any discrimination. Within the various branches of women's movements, many women are engaged in internal and external struggles for improving the status of women. They are also trying to let women allow to work side by side with men, independent ownership of property and inheritance right on the bases of equality. Either this is suitable or not for them. Here some main features that are currently supposed to be burning issues are discussed below.

**a. Woman and Employment:**

The Western countries have fallen into a mistake of trying to create an unnatural place in the name of equality for men and women in the workplace. The consequences are not hidden from anyone; it leads women towards more discrimination and inequality that emerged through the demand of unexpected roles. Women and men are made naturally to serve separate roles according to their capacities and potential. It has affected badly by doubling-up the woman's responsibilities. On the other hand, inducting both male and female in the same fields makes women stressful. They did not find opportunities to excel in their fields like men and sometimes they might not be able themselves to stand out like their male colleagues because of the nature of work. As a result, the women suffer a fall in status in comparison with the men.<sup>124</sup> In Islām, it is solely the obligation of male to provide sustenance for the entire family. It does not constitute that Islām forbids woman to indulge in any economic activity or earning for a family in case of need. However, in Islām, there is no verdict that it bans women from participating in business or finding, so the Qur'ān does not prevent them from working, particularly in positions that suit their most desirable nature.<sup>125</sup> The job of Muslim women outside the home is only religiously permissible as long as it is actually inevitable and does not require contact with non-related males.<sup>126</sup> Nursing, teaching and medicine are admired professions. We also found early jurists holding the view that there is not even any restriction on the role of a judge, where because of her emotional tendencies may arise question in this post. Moreover, there is no restriction on benefiting from woman's exceptional talent in any field.

**b. Woman and Independent ownership**

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<sup>124</sup>Khan, *Woman between Islām and Western Society*, p. 46.

<sup>125</sup>Chaudry, *Women's Rights in Islām*, p.131-132.

<sup>126</sup>Stowasser, Barbara Freyer, *Women in the Qur'an, traditions, and interpretations*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 61.

The right of independent ownership is a right from which women were deprived in pre-Islāmic era and even after Islām until this century in many countries. Islāmic law has fully acknowledged woman's right to own properties, real estate and her money with herself. In Islāmic tradition, being single or married, this right has fully retained by her in either situation. Further, she possesses her right to sell, buy, lease, rent or mortgage any of her belongings.

It is demonstrated that marriage does not grant the right of either person to the other's properties. She maintains the same rights, as if she was entitled before marriage to use and dispose of her assets, or to enter into all transactions relating to it to sue and to be sued without his approval. Without the involvement of a guardian or other relative, she can even sue her spouse and is in no way under his legal custody.<sup>127</sup> This shows that a woman's legal ability has not been reduced by that getting married or remaining unmarried in either situation. It is also interesting that this privilege extends both to her property before marriage and to everything she eventually inherits. It can also be seen in the words of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān regarding independent ownership as, "*Islām has given equal status to women like men. She is the independent owner of her property. She has a right to contract, sell and buy property and to gift it.*"<sup>128</sup>

The contract of marriage in Islām does not give power to men over woman to usurp her rights over her property. Same in case of motherhood, rights as a mother do not depend for their recognition upon the irregularities of any individual judges. Her money cannot be wasted by her prodigal husband that she earned through her own hard work, nor can she be ill-treated in any situation. These are all her individual rights which are related to her and her property. She needs no intervention of her husband or from her father's side. She is also allowed to sue her debtors in court without using her father or the husband's name. In Islām she possesses all the rights which the law has granted to men in property issues.<sup>129</sup> This clearly shows that Islāmic traditions and religious commands also give an independent right of ownership to a woman on the equal basis as men do.

### **c. Woman and Right of Inheritance**

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<sup>127</sup>Hussain ,Aftab, *Status of women in Islām*. (Law Publishing Company, 1987), p. 202.

<sup>128</sup>Ahmad, Rasheed *Musalmanun Kay Siyaasi Afkaar*, (Lahore, Idara e Sacafate Islāmia,1990) ,p. 283.

<sup>129</sup>Ali, *The Spirits of Islām*, p. 257.



Women are entitled to the preservation, succession and liberties in many cultures. These privileges are guaranteed by legislation, local customs and behavior in some cases, these rights hold back inadequately. The core reason is the traditional bias that becomes a hindrance in its implementation which favors men over women. While entering into the legal contracts concerning inheritance, women have to face any issues regarding this notion.<sup>130</sup> History shows that once women were subjects of inheritance themselves. Islām, then has restored her inheritance right by concluding that woman's share only belongs to her and nobody has right over it without her consent.

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ ۗ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا -<sup>131</sup>

*“For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much- an obligatory share.”*

In most situations, her share is half the share of the man and it does not constitute that she is worth half a man, but due to strong financial commitments and liabilities. One of the basic rules of Islāmic state is, “gain is commensurate with duty”. The reason women's half share is because women are exempted from all economic liabilities and men bear all responsibilities.<sup>132</sup> The created assumption “woman worth half a man”, seems very contradictory because of the dozens of examples which clearly treats woman equal to man and sometimes a degree higher to him. This distinction in inheritance rights is just because of financial liabilities that are totally dependent on him. Her father before marriage and her husband after marriage is liable to bear all her expenses without any justification in either case whether she is working or non-working.<sup>133</sup> Further, wife's personal wealth and any other income generating activities can neither waived nor redundant the responsibilities of husband in any situation.

#### **d. Woman and Maintenance**

Maintenance applies to the arrangements for the basic essentials of life that a man is obligated to equitably offer to his spouse according to the bearer's wealth and the

<sup>130</sup>Lockwood, Bert B., *Women's Rights: A "Human Rights Quarterly" Reader*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p.56.

<sup>131</sup>Al-Qur'ān, An-Nisa 4:7.

<sup>132</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'ān*, vol,II, 104.

<sup>133</sup>Chaudry, *Women's Rights in Islām*, p.75.

beneficiaries' requirements. Maintenance require all that is necessary for life, i.e. shelter, food and clothes, etc. In Qur'an Almighty Allāh says:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ<sup>134</sup>

*“Men are in charge of women, because Allāh has made one of them excel in other and because they spend of their property [for the support of women].”*

*Qawwām*, *qayyām* or *qayyim* in Arabic refers to a person who is responsible for or is responsible for handling a structure or a task and thinks about what needs to be done about anything. Through the term *Qawwām*, which has been interpreted in different meanings, the basic position of a man in relation to his woman has been stated.<sup>135</sup> Basically, a man is responsible for the woman and he is her caretaker, maintainer, and a leader who disciplines her if she deviates.<sup>136</sup> It means that Almighty Allāh has endowed certain qualities to one gender, which he has not endowed to other gender at least not to an equal level. As a head of the family, male is being qualified and female should live under his care and protection.<sup>137</sup> This verse emphasizes that the financial and moral responsibilities of a household are the husband's responsibility. In another verse mentioned as:

وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ<sup>138</sup>

*“He (husband) shall bear the cost of food and clothing in equitable terms”.*

Maintenance should be in accordance with the status of its provider.<sup>139</sup> Maintenance comprehends food, raiment, and lodging.<sup>140</sup> Maintenance is one of basic rights among the wife's rights over her husband and it is restricted to food in general usage. The wife is entitled to support from her spouse, while she may have the means to maintain herself and although her husband is without money.<sup>141</sup> This is the reason that Almighty Allāh commanded men to be responsible for the maintenance of women in every situation. This verse clearly emphasizes that the moral and financial responsibilities of a woman lay upon husband. If she has neither father nor husband, her brother will take care of her responsibilities. If she has no brother, then the closest of kin will be responsible of her

<sup>134</sup> Al-Qur'an, An-Nisa 4:34.

<sup>135</sup> Shafi', *Ma'āri'ful Qur'an*, vol.,II,417.

<sup>136</sup> Ibn e Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol., II,442.

<sup>137</sup> Maududi, *Tafhīmal-Qur'an: An Understanding of Qur'an*, vol, II, 35.

<sup>138</sup> Al-Qur'an, Al-Baqara 2:233.

<sup>139</sup> Al-Sarakhsi, Muḥammad Ibn Ahmad, *Al-Mabsut* (Cario, Matba'at al Sa'adah, 1322 AD), vol.5, 181.

<sup>140</sup> Sircar, S.C., *AL-SHARĪ'AH (Sunni And Imamiyah code)*, (Lahore: Law Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 445.

<sup>141</sup> Fyzee, *Outlines of Islāmic Jurisprudence*, pp. 272, 209-12.

financial matters. Beyond all this, if she has no relative, Almighty Allāh has recommended the Muslim community to never let her alone and take care of her. It ultimately becomes communal responsibility and if none take care of her matters, all becomes sinner in this case.<sup>142</sup>

This can easily be assumed or construct that under Islāmic law periphery, women are more secure, stable and less burdened in the context of financial responsibilities. Islāmic law stressed a lot to take care of her every single need by putting these responsibilities on men. It is the sole duty of man to spend with his family out of his income and woman is entirely excluded from all financial and economical burdens in all cases either is working, wealthier than the responsible man, by any other legal means or income generating activity. The economical system of Islām shows that it is not only equitable and unbiased towards women instead it is much compassionate and concerned.

#### **1.2.4. The Political Aspect**

There are some common denominators behind religious appeals, one should not disregard the fact that, like other facets of society, religion reacts in each specific context to various political, economic, and social realities, and has constantly formed and reshaped according to the reality it addresses.<sup>143</sup> The socio-political matters are also discussed by the religion, although they are not much highlighted.<sup>144</sup> At the advent of the industrial revolution in the West, women have been given rights following years of struggle that Islām had indisputably confirmed fourteen centuries before. Islām has clarified the civil and political rights and obligations of both men and women in such an impartial way that neither male nor female can question their superiority. Despite the fact, throughout the historical diverse interpretations and misinterpretations, the issues regarding women's rights are constantly a subject of repeated controversy.<sup>145</sup> Besides this, women in different societies have made a great stride and in many spheres have surpassed the men. But this success has paved the way for further indicators in context of women's rights and obligations.

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<sup>142</sup>Abdur-Rahman, Sheikh, *The Wisdom behind The Islāmic Laws Regarding Women*, Trans. Ali Al-Timimi (China, The Islāmic Assembly of North America, 1995), pp.1-15

<sup>143</sup>Salbi, Zainab, "Why might women support religious fundamentalism?." *Critical Half* 1, no. 1 (2003): 16.

<sup>144</sup>*Islāmi Riyasat*, (Lahore, Islāmic Publications, 2000), p. 539.

<sup>145</sup>Elius, Mohammad "Islāmic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis," Arts Faculty Journal, 2010, 195–205, <https://doi.org/10.3329/afj.v4i0.12941>, 203, 196.

In perspective of Western philosophical thought, the rights of women in the international human rights program are almost unheard. It is indicated that in some Islāmic countries, women are facing restrictions at public domain, decision making, and political avenue and consequently underrepresented in legislation.<sup>146</sup> But any fair and unbiased investigation will open new horizons in the context of political equality. Islām has represented a well-built way of life consisting of balanced legislation. It has granted women right to vote and essential participation in political matters related to them was never questioned by Islāmic teachings. It also requires the right of women to take part in public matters and relations where a woman's participation is more suitable and pertinent.

#### a. Right to Vote

In any country, people have a responsibility to select their representatives for political affairs. This political process affects in different way to entire affairs of the country directly or indirectly. The voting opinion is something that can change or help bringing revolution in countries, if it goes the right way. In this political process, societies around the globe appreciated men's participation, but some of communities disliked women's participation. After the nineteenth century, many Western countries allowed women to participate in some areas of political process e.g., right to vote. On the other hand, in Islāmic history, we have found many examples in Qur'ān, Sunnah and in other Islāmic traditions in which women were actively participating in serious discussions with Holy Prophet(ﷺ) and at many occasions they have argued even with Companions (*Sahaba Karaam*) in different matters, when they have found something not in accordance or contradictory with Islāmic rulings. It is pertinent to clarify that contribution of both man and woman in the establishment of Islāmic Caliphate is important,<sup>147</sup> as far it concerns about the prosperity of the nation, responding to the words of God Almighty:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ – <sup>148</sup>

*“And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be successful”.*

Basically, the purpose of this ayāh is, there ought to be a community or group of Muslim *Ummah* representatives who conducts the necessary duty of “enjoining good and forbidding

<sup>146</sup> Hosken, Fran P., *Toward a Definition of Women's Human Rights*, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 3(2) (May, 1981), p.3.

<sup>147</sup>Hanieh , *Women & Politics: from the Perspective of Islāmic Movements in Jordan*, p. 24.

<sup>148</sup>Al- Qur'ān, Ale-Imran 3:104

bad”. It is significant in diverse senses and it is also a responsibility of every member in according to his or her ability.<sup>149</sup> The messenger of Allāh(ﷺ) said;

“Whoever among you see an evil action, let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart [by hating it and feeling it is wrong], and that is weakest of faith.”<sup>150</sup>

During the time period of of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), a woman argued publicly while sitting in a mosque, proved her argument valid and upon this the Caliph of the time has to declared in front of the public, “*A woman is right and ‘Umar is wrong.*” Hazrat ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was *Khalifa* (ruler) at that time and a common woman passed judgment on his view by rejecting it publicly that he taken his words back. This shows the freedom of speech and a woman’s right to participate in public affair and policies.<sup>151</sup> This clearly shows that women were allowed publicly to participate in decision-making, political opinions and legislation. The logical opinion of them was not regarded as invalid or unacceptable just because they are women. The power that has been given to women in Islām is beyond comparison. They were equally considered as important as men in building nation in Islāmic traditions.

#### **b. Woman as Head of State**

Literature on women presidents, prime ministers and women parliamentarians is growing.<sup>152</sup> This political pursuit has gained the global focus. The matter of women as a head of state did not remain in the circle of western and non-Muslim countries. This debate on women’s leadership and authoritative representation at country level also became the matter of discussion in many of the Muslim countries. Although not mentioned in the Qur’ān, that a woman can act as head of state or not. But on the basis of other injunction concerning political matters and state related issues, different rulings are derived.

In consideration to the Islāmic society and culture, the ruler of the nation is not just a head of state. He leads people in the congregational prayers and remains consistently involved in decision-making processes and security of his nation. He remains busy almost all the time in a nation-building and puts his whole attention to different processes. In Islāmic

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<sup>149</sup> Ibn e Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, Vol. II, 233.

<sup>150</sup> Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, *Saḥīḥ Al-Muslim*, The Book of Faith, Chap: Clarifying That Forbidding Evil Is Part Of Faith; Faith Increases And Decreases; Enjoining What Is Good And Forbidding What Is Evil Are Obligatory), Ḥadīth no. 177, 143.

<sup>151</sup> Khan , Wahid uddin, *Khatoon e Islām*, (Lahore, Malik &Company, 2011), p.170.

<sup>152</sup>Jalalzai, Farida, “Women Heads of State and Government.” In *Measuring Women’s Political Empowerment across the Globe*, pp.257-282. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-64006-8\_12 .

sphere, it is not a right, other than a severely questionable responsibility. However, this massive responsibility has nothing to do with woman's rights or her dignity.

In terms of gender roles and responsibilities, Almighty Allāh has given absolute equality and human dignity to females. Except in situations relating to those skills, expertise, or responsibilities, He did not discriminate between individuals. For either of the sexes, this should not impact the truth of the human experience. If males and females have same specific capabilities, expertise and obligations, then the two are considered equal; but if these attributes vary, distinction clearly rises accordingly.<sup>153</sup> Subsequently, combining together to the entire responsibilities and rights will create more indistinctness. All of these aspects related to women's political participation are measurable, though in nature wise these all are very challenging.

Allama Muḥammad Iqbal, has given much importance to women's rights but he did not admit the European ideology of equality. Almighty has bestowed different responsibilities according to their nature and by accepting this, human development is possible. If woman indulges in such business that is not suitable for her, she is definitely going to lose her real purpose of creation.<sup>154</sup> This is what, nature demands from us. Each of us has our own kind of responsibilities and rights. By following these, a successful society can be emerged.

### **c. Woman as Army Commander**

Many questions concerning women's participation in security forces can also be noticed in the current debates. Specifically, the idea of woman as commander in forces is not only argued by Islāmic scholars, but it remained also a debatable matter among many western scholars. The matter was actually highlighted during the women's movement was once unacceptable and excessive by the people of the twentieth century. It can also be noticed into the thoughts of Plato. Plato considered that military training must also be given to the women the way it is given to men.<sup>155</sup> The same ideas are again prevailing into the contemporary voices for women's rights. Generally, the demand of woman army commander is considered as inconsistent with biological, physical and psychological make of the woman. It is worthy to clarify beyond going into any religious or cultural restriction; it is medically proven fact that during pregnancies and menstruation, a woman undergoes many psychological and

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<sup>153</sup>Qutb , Sayyid, *Social Justice in Islām*, (Cairo, Dar Al-Shuruuq, 1995), 47

<sup>154</sup>Ahmad, *Musalmanun Kay Siyaasi Afkaar*, pp. 348-349.

<sup>155</sup>Mutahhari ,Murtada ,*The rights of women in Islām*, (Iran,World for Islāmic Services, 1981),p. 170.

physiological changes. Consequently, such changes can play a major hazardous role affecting her decision can lead to unexpected damage.<sup>156</sup>

One of the western intellectuals clarifies this biological difference in a fine logical way; he thinks that the variations within men and women do not derive from the unique shape of the reproductive organs, from the presence of the uterus or from conception. They are of a type that is more foundational. They are caused by the very composition of the tissues and the impregnation of particular chemical compounds naturally produced by the ovary to the whole organism. Lack of understanding of these basic truths has prompted feminists to assume that the same qualifications, the same abilities, and the same obligations should be exercised by both genders. Women, in fact, differ fundamentally from men. Any one of her body's cells carries the imprint of her gender. The same happens to her lungs and in particular, to her nervous and immune system.<sup>157</sup>

This natural structure has made her additionally delicate and soft natured creature of the universe. Beyond all, Almighty Allāh has neither imposed any duty on women to participate in war, nor has he forbidden women to fight when their participation becomes necessary in *Jihād* alongside men.<sup>158</sup> Islām allows women to take part in the fields that suits more according to her physical strength. Even members of the Prophet's (ﷺ) family and his closest relations were not hesitant to come out of their home to fight in the defence of Islām.

During the battlefield of *Uhad*, Hazrat 'Aishah and Umme Salamah have actively participated by supplying water to the thirsty soldiers.<sup>159</sup> Another noteworthy contribution was done by Rufayda al-Aslamiyyah in the battleground. In Historical perspective of Islām, she became the first nurse who treated the wounded soldiers during warfare in the period of Hazrat Muḥammad(ﷺ).<sup>160</sup> During this battle, several injuries were suffered by Hazrat Umme Aammir(R.A)while protecting the Prophet (ﷺ). On the other hand, Rabi Binte Mu'az and many other Muslim women assisted tremendously by carrying back injured and martyred Muslim soldiers from the battle of *Uhad*. History shows that many Muslim women played similar roles during the battle of Kadesiya. Hazrat Ṣafiyah (R.A), who was the paternal aunt

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<sup>156</sup>Badwi, *The Status of Woman in Islām*, p.17.

<sup>157</sup>Carrel, Alexis and John Rodker. *Man, the unknown*, ( New York: Harper, 1935), p.89

<sup>158</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qurān*, vol, II, 103.

<sup>159</sup>Syed, Mohammad Ali ,*The Position of Women in Islām A Progressive View* (NewYork: State University of New York Press, 2004), p.118.

<sup>160</sup>Al-Hassani ,Salim, "Women's contribution to classical Islāmic civilization: science medicine and politics." *Foundation of Science, Technology and Civilization (FSTC)* 14 (2010), p. 6.

of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has defended Muslim camp in a battle.<sup>161</sup> There is a Saḥīḥ Ḥadīth which shows women were encouraged to take part in certain military activities;

“Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Messenger of Allāh(ﷺ) used to go to battle with Umm Sulaim, and other women with her, from the Anṣār, who would give water and tend to the wounded.”<sup>162</sup>

In the armed forces that part which is suitable for her, a woman can participate. This cannot possibly be ascribed to Islāmic backwardness, rigidity or any limitation on the right of a woman to be in a position such as commander or chief of military staff. Despite the modernization’s influence in modern times, one would rarely witness woman as army chief or commander of the forces even in the most industrialized modern nations.<sup>163</sup> In terms of the inherent and unquestionable sexes natural distinctions, it becomes noticeable that a distinction does not mean the superiority of one sex over the other, but rather focuses on the complementary positions of both sexes in life.

### **1.3. Woman’s ideal Freedom in Islām**

Religion, culture and traditions are an appreciated integral part of a society. Every individual is practicing either religious doctrines, cultural traditions or social perception that affects his or her life in a distinct way. As mechanical as that might sound, most of what one believes and how he lives is due to socialization. Sociologists investigate that people assimilate their culture without much hesitation when they are young. Each person is apt to feel that his own culture is much better and practicable because that notion makes him feel secure. However, once one begins to question why he does things, he will come to understand the many aspects of life and especially his distinct personality.<sup>164</sup> These distinctions are an important part of how culture functions. Gender divergent roles contribute the acknowledged perception and behaviors in any society.<sup>165</sup> In addition, human beings are natural to this planet, regardless of what unnatural trends are proclaimed. The nature has shown to us all the differences and

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<sup>161</sup>Syed, *The Position of Women in Islām A Progressive View*, p. 118.

<sup>162</sup>Tirmidhī, Imām Hāfiz Abū ‘Eīsā Moḥammad Ibn ‘Eīsā, Jāmi‘ alTirmidhī,(Riyadh : Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007) translated by, Abu Khaliyl, *The Chapters on military expeditions from the Messenger Of Allāh (ﷺ)*, Chapter 22. What has been related about women going out for war, 3 , Ḥadīth no, 1575, 346.

<sup>163</sup>Badwi, *The Status of Woman in Islām*, p. 18.

<sup>164</sup>Abdulsalam, Rukaiyah Hill ,“*Womens Ideal Liberation*”,(Saudi Arabia: Abul-Qasim Publishing House, 1998), p. i.

<sup>165</sup>Wadud, Amina, *Qur’ān and Woman, Regarding the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective*,(NewYork: Oxford University press,1999),pp. 8-9.



these differences are identified even by a common person. In the law of nature, the diversity of behaviors, aptitudes and mind-sets is undeniable.

Over the world, various voices were coined for women's equality, emancipation and equal rights, and slogans have been raised for the protests. Around the world, woman has certainly lived under tyranny, brutality and inequality in many cultures, and her basic rights were denied often. Instantaneously, it is also based on reality that in many Muslim communities the true teachings of Islām are forgotten. The slogans distributed by the international liberation movements demonstrated on woman's emancipation, the rights of women and rights equivalent to the rights of men.<sup>166</sup> Around the globe, all the scriptures have led the same view regarding women's status and thousands of years passed like this without any doubt. Only in modern times, through the women's liberation movement a woman became able to enjoy some rights. It is observed that, if someone has earned credits from the modern feminist activism, so that would undoubtedly be men.<sup>167</sup> The reason is, on the whole, women in race of equality, has lessened the male's burden in many arenas. She has doubled her responsibilities, and now she considers herself equal.

These liberation movements basically in the world are, a result of dissatisfaction, moral, economic and physical insecurity and the nonexistence of the divine teachings in the life of human beings. Beauty pageants, modelling agencies, female pornography thrives because of the willing participation of women blinded by the myths fed them by this culture. It is distressing to see the semi-clothed female body increasingly splashed on billboards and in magazines selling everything from lipstick to batteries. And it is not as if all this freedom does not come with a high price tag. Female suicide, depression, and substance abuse are worldwide problems.<sup>168</sup> It must be noted that most of the institutions that objectify women as playthings would be out of business if women woke up and saw the light. Currently, most of them are unaware of the worth they have lost while gaining the self-created apparent admiration.

The Eastern nations were so pleased by the inventions of Westerns, as if everything were exceptional in their sights. They considered their foods, dressing, their thinking, rules, values, and systems related public affairs flawless and ideal. They thought that whatever they are practicing must be acknowledged with closed eyes and folded hands. While following

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<sup>166</sup>Abdur Rahman, *Women in Islām & Refutation of some Common Misconceptions*, p.10.

<sup>167</sup> Abdulsalam, *Women's Ideal Liberation*, p.139.

<sup>168</sup>Abdulsalam, *Women's Ideal Liberation*, p.1.

their footprints, these secret admirers of the west have forgotten in allurements that these glamorous developments are not complementary and can never prevail in Islāmic countries.<sup>169</sup> This is happening because the woman is treated as a product in the name fashion advancement in current broad-minded societies. The movement of women's liberation is almost two hundred years old in many modern developing nations around the world. In some countries, it is as successful that neither any constitution nor any custom dare to put any hindrance in their way who want to step into men's shoes by choice. Woman still lags well behind the man, with rare occasions of having position themselves with them as per their wishes.

The analysis shows that, there can never be a universal concept of ideal liberation neither in Islāmic societies nor at any other part of the world. The reason is not only cultural structure, religious identities or regional differences but many of other factors that are contributing to it can be noticed in the world. All women around the world are not same or have similar aspirations. Even in family house two sisters might have different aspirations. For one freedom or liberation may not signify the same term as for the other one. Western societies might claim their values and culture liberal but not necessarily it becomes universal or ought to be adopted by all the nations. In a world, where billions of people are surviving, its nothing but a diversity and unique identities. By colouring all the people in one colour won't make difference or universality. Muslim women like other women around the world may be victims of many social evils but one need to be more accurate while blaming the Muslim women's religion. The need is to shed light on those social evils that are attributed towards religion and to clarify those misconceptions that are basically not a part of Islāmic teachings neither belongs to any of its traditions.

#### **1.4. Misconception about Women's Rights in Islām**

The woman is given so much importance in Islām, before Islām women were treated worse, they were buried alive, they were not given their right of inheritance, they were not given the basic education. Islām came up with a totally different view and gives a new life to woman role in society.<sup>170</sup> The status of woman in Islām is unique, noble and incomparable. They have

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<sup>169</sup> Taqi , Mesbah ,Muhammad, Muhammad Jawad Bahonar, and Lois Lamya al-Faruqi. *Status of women in Islām*. (n.d: Radiant Publishers, 1990), p.39.

<sup>170</sup>Ahmed ,Leila, "Feminism and Feminist Movements in the Middle East, a Preliminary Exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 2 (1982): 153–68, doi:10.1016/0277-5395(82)90024-3, 44.

more than current “women’s right’s imbalanced notions”. No religion around the world or any secular human rights declarations can provide better women rights plan the way Islām has ordained for them. These laws are ordained by the supreme lawgiver; it cannot be replaced, withdraw, or compared by any man-made secular law or any constitution.<sup>171</sup> These ordained laws by the Almighty Allāh are integral part of the Islāmic faith and Islāmic societies. The religion of Islām and its teachings are not comparable. Subsequently, in this gender diversity, the exception does exist, but it is imbalanced, unnatural and less acceptable. The presence of fundamental temperament that exist in males and females according to their nature and roles is unquestionable.

Regardless of the fact, the status of Muslim women is perceived in western countries as one of the most neglected and dishonored human being in Islāmic perspective. The role and the responsibilities are associated with many different negative connotations and beliefs. These foreign factors are also contributing towards eradication of culturally practiced social stigmas and taboos within the Islāmic culture. Here are some major misconceptions are briefly highlighted.

#### **1.4.1. Male Dictatorship**

Women are ruled by their fathers, husbands and, brothers in some kind of federal dictatorship is one of the most common misconceptions attributed to Islāmic societies. In some leadership matters, if males are considered more responsible pertaining to their physical and psychological abilities cannot be misinterpreted in terms of women's rights. It cannot be perceived that Islām allows or permits males being a dictator over women. It is stated in these words in the Holy Book of Allāh;

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ -<sup>172</sup>

*“And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.”*

It is interpreted that the men are the protector and maintainer of the women, but nature deserves to be “*Qāwwam*”. Apparently, a man gets this position in the return of the *māl* that

<sup>171</sup>Abdur Rahman, *Women in Islām & Refutation of some common misconception*, pp. 1-4

<sup>172</sup>Al-Qur’ān, Al-Baqara 2:228.

he spends on his wife in the form of *Mahr*.<sup>173</sup> It applies to the inherent gender disparity which enables the weaker sex to security and shelter. This means “no dominance or advantage before the law”. It does not imply the husband’s attorney or being a tyrant towards their women. If women are admired of being housewives, it is because of their inclination, gentleness and love towards the family that is not possible to be adapted by their male counterparts.<sup>174</sup>

A Muslim woman always prefers taking care of children, household and family because of her devoted disposition and fostering composition. Even around the world, it is a fact that mothers are always of a same nurturing nature. Mothers always raise their children with dedication, motivation and excitement without any external compulsion. The misunderstanding that Muslim women are coerced into matrimonial relations, oppressed by raising children, forced to stay in the home, to wear the veil is all derived from myths. The generalization of such myths is injustice towards whole society.

Men are dominant as a social group, most of them today don’t really believe themselves as influential or enough powerful. The power granted to men is hierarchical power that protects and upholds the structure of male and besides this his class and race, privilege.<sup>175</sup> Although, in some places women are being tortured, forced and coerced, but all these cultural evils cannot be attributed towards Islāmic traditions. Women within the sphere of Islāmic community are neither oppressive nor dishonored or disrespected. The requirement is to separate these traditional evils which are ingrained within culture to raise the position of women.

#### **1.4.2. Women as a House-wife**

In words of Holy Book of Allāh, the contract of marriage is referred as, “*Mithaq Ghaliz*” which applies to the sacred essence of a marital relationship. In Islām, It is not only a worldly relationship, but an expression of worship and devotion as well.<sup>176</sup> Marriage in Islām is one of most important institution that not only connects two people, but it is significant as a whole for the entire community. It sets down new roles and responsibilities to the fresh

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<sup>173</sup> Maududi , Abul A’la, *The Law of Marriage and Divorce in Islām* (Kuwait: Islāmic book publishers, 1983), p. 123.

<sup>174</sup> Khan, *Woman between Islām and western Society*, p. 30.

<sup>175</sup> Ellison ,Marvin M., “A Protestant Christian Perspective,” in *What Men Owe to Women; Men’s Voices from World Religions*, ed. John C. Raines and Daniel C. Maguire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 41–68, 59.

<sup>176</sup> Ahmad , Khurshid, *Family Life in Islām*, (United Kingdom: The Islāmic Foundaton, 1974), p. 30.

connected individuals.<sup>177</sup> Such a fundamental and a dignified responsibility, that plays a vital role in shaping the future of nations, cannot be a waste of time or work without pay. Islām, which regards the mother's and wife's role as the most sacred and vital one, subsequently termed as a housewife in western philosophy. For both the preservation and prosperity of a family, strong ties between the married couple that satisfy all the rules and regulations of the *nikāḥ* and are committed to and passion and love between the two is essential.<sup>178</sup> The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said;

“All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is the guardian and the man is the guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.”<sup>179</sup>

Literature shows that the status of woman as wife is not something to lose her individuality and independence.<sup>180</sup> The status of wife and husband in Islāmic perspective is one of the ideal relationships based on affection, care and love that saves both from sins and safeguard them in staying away from the devil's way. It cannot be regarded as subordination or servitude, because wife is the one who saves her husband from indulging in immoral activities. Definitely, she is a strong fortress against the devil's roads and not the devil's doors, a virtuous light that saves man whose drowning into the waves of ambitions. She helps transferring him from violent to an angelic man.<sup>181</sup> She is the real queen of every house in Islāmic traditions even it is declared by the Holy Prophet(ﷺ) that a female is the ruler in husband's house. Indeed, she is her partner of life, consolation, peace and happiness.

The place of mother neither can be replaced by a baby-sitter and maids nor can be compared to the natural love and affection of her towards children. The way mother up brings and take care about her children is not possible by any other relation. This would be an unfair and additional obligation, if they are expected to work outside to ensure their livelihood in addition to their natural duties including , childbearing, and feeding the babies other related responsibilities. The results can be noticed of those nations that are currently deviated from what Almighty Allāh has made natural and significant for the progress and development of

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<sup>177</sup>Afzal, Mohammad , Bean Lee L. and Imtiazuddin Husain, “Muslim Marriages: Age, *Mahr*, and Social Status”, *The Pakistan Development Review* 12, no.1 (1973):49.

<sup>178</sup>Munir , Muḥammad,"Stipulations in a Muslim Marriage Contract with Special Reference to Talaq al-Tafwid Provisions in Pakistan" *Yearbook of Islāmic and Middle Eastern Law* 12, no.12 (2005): 237.

<sup>179</sup>Al Bukhari, *Al-Jami Al-Sahih*, The Book of An- Nikāḥ (Wedlock), CHAPTER: The woman is a guardian in her husband's house, 7,Ḥadīth no: 5200, 93-94.

<sup>180</sup>Ali, *The Spirits of Islām*, p. 257.

<sup>181</sup>Fazlul Karim, Alhaj Maulana, *al-Hadis*. (Islāmic Book Service, 1988), p. 581.

the whole community. The natural duties that are ordained for creatures by the supreme Lawgiver are filled with valid cause and motive.

### 1.4.3. Women and Education

Islām attaches immense importance to the acquisition and extension of knowledge/ education. It is very apparent from the Holy Qur’ān as to how much emphasis promoting the pursuit of knowledge for all Muslims irrespective of any discrimination.<sup>182</sup> The Qur’ān uses repetitions in order to imbed certain key concepts in the consciousness of its readers.<sup>183</sup> Knowledge, in Arabic language *‘ilm* is an important aspect of Islāmic teachings, that is why repeated numeral times. *‘Ilm* comes third after Allāh and *Rab* with 750 repetitions.<sup>184</sup> According to the Islāmic teachings, acquiring knowledge is recommended for every Muslim without any distinction. In fact, the opening verses of the Holy Qur’ān to the Hazrat Muḥammad (ﷺ) indicate the significance of education in Islām. This shows how religion of Islām is concerned about education, which it even started with the word of a read;

أَفْرَأُ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ -<sup>185</sup>

*Recite in the name of your Lord who created.*

The verse begins with “*Iqra*”, an Arabic word meaning “read”, which denotes the ideas of reading, investigating, and achieving wisdom. Islām not only accords due respect to women, but also gives great attention towards their education and propagates equal educational rights. The Qur’ānic teachings exhort Muslim women to adorn themselves with a wealth of knowledge and try their best to prepare an educated and well-cultured generation.<sup>186</sup> The growth of balanced personalities is not possible without acquiring adequate knowledge. The complementarity is the key essence to human’s spiritual and social development and this process could only attain through education. In Islāmic world, acquiring knowledge is not limited to attain worldly desires, it extends to individual’s spiritual training which leads to the success of hereafter that is the ultimate goal. Furthermore, both men and women are subjected to this educational training without any restriction.

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<sup>182</sup>Ambreen, “Education Right of Women-Assesing Islāmic Ideaology”, *Social Sciences International Research Journal* 4, no.1(2016), 47.

<sup>183</sup>Daud , Wan Mohd Nor Wan, *The Key Concept of Knowledge in Islām*, (London,Mansell Publishers Limited 1989), p. 32.

<sup>184</sup>Wild, E. H., *The Foundation Of Modern Education*, (Reinhart and Co.,1959), p. 216.

<sup>185</sup>Al-Qur’ān, Al-‘Alaq 96:1.

<sup>186</sup>Zaidi , Teresa, “Importance of Education and Women in Islām”, *Social Sciences International Research Journal* 3, no.2 (2017): 173.

In Western societies, the image of Muslim women is portrayed very bewildering. She has been represented as restrained, controlled and damaged on the name culture and religion.<sup>187</sup> Another misconception is regarding the Muslim woman education. Most of them assume that girls really aren't permitted to pursue an education in Muslim societies that is not backed up by facts. The education for women in Islāmic society is one of the required obligation. It is obligatory for woman to educate themselves and to other at academic level within their cultural and religious boundaries.

Islām freed women from a culture that limit their rights extensively. Women were granted many rights, including the right to education with the advent of Islām.<sup>188</sup> Since early Muslims societies has enormously granted their females a right to get education and self-development, many among them did remarkable work and left a great mark on the pages of Muslim's history. Of the hundreds of women who are so illustrious, some are listed here. For example, 'Aishah (R.A), the wife of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), was a lady of profound erudition. Many *Sahaba* (Companions of the Prophet) and *Tabeeyeen* (direct followers of the *Sahaba*) used to come to her for learning Islāmic law, theology and Ḥadīth. Zainab (R.A), the daughter of Hazrat 'Alī (رضي الله عنه), was a great Islāmic scholar of theology. Fāṭimah Binte Abbas and Sikha Sayeeda, the two Islāmic scholars, used to come to the mosque regularly to deliver lectures on Islāmic theology.'<sup>189</sup>

In addition, Islām recognizes that educating and nurturing all genders are necessary because the Muslim community's genuine strength is always its coming generation. The State of *Khilafah* is obliged to offer the highest standard of education to women and to regard women as important people of the state. By studying the life of Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his wives' knowledge, one is able to find many examples of such women who had remarkably spread knowledge among their people, and it shows that women's position in Islām is seen as fundamental and honorable in every perspective of life from the time of advent of Islām.

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<sup>187</sup>Razack , Sherene ,  *Casting out: The eviction of Muslims from Western law and politics.*(Canada, University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 88.

<sup>188</sup>Aquil, *Change and Muslim Women*, p.24.

<sup>189</sup>Elius, *Islāmic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis*, p.197.

## Conclusion

Human beings are considered in Islām as the “*Ashraf Al Makhluqaat*”, the best and most respectful among all of His creation. This status that is given to human beings, makes this creation unique and distinct on the basis of its responsibilities and rights. Distinctively, human beings are obliged to show concern in both materialistic and spiritual aspects of their lives to fulfil the desired obligations. In the perspective of ‘equality of males and females’, the concept of the Muslim *Ummah* is diverse. In reality, each male possesses a unique and different characteristic to the other male. This shows that if a male cannot equal to another male, how a woman from another genus can be equal to man. Furthermore, these distinct features in each person are universal and natural which begins from the day of its birth. It cannot be altered or transformed. Men and women both are equally respectable, honored, loved and treated in all matters by the Lawgiver when they fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with their required functions. He puts responsibilities on both men and women as per their capacities and aptitudes. In certain things men are more responsible and being responsible is not a right but an obligation. In this sense, at my occasions, women in Islām are enjoying certain privileges and males have to complete all those obligation in any condition.

The religion of ‘Islām’ is perfect, although it’s followers might not. Compared to the modern world beliefs, the Muslim world has evolved and pushed on by taking part in many modern activities. Even though, the position of a woman was not restricted to the role of mother and a wife from the very early stages of Islām because many examples can be noticed throughout the history. The religion of Islām has allowed women to go on the *hajj* (pilgrimage), to engage her in nation building, to participate in the political process, or even to run a business within the premises of its culture. Islām has acknowledged these rights and kept themselves engage in all available and best suitable forums. When it becomes essentials, Muslim women can come out of their homes as a bread earner for the family. They always met with more respect and welcomed by the community in comparison to their male counterparts. Those who are blaming Islām for treating women as an inferior worthless creature need to judge the circumstances of their countrywomen. It is not valid to blame a religion just because of prevailing social prejudices and cultural stigmas.



Those who assume that women's emancipation begun in the 20th century through the struggle of western women are mistaken. Truly by simplifying the matter, the women were emancipated in the seventh century and the announcement of women's liberation was ordained by Almighty Allāh and the further transformation in women's status was brought by the Holy prophet (ﷺ) in the world. Freedom begins with complete submission to Allāh and by acting upon his Prophet's Sunnah, given that the time when the human beings are going to acknowledge that, then true liberation can be seen and experienced. All systems for enlarging, perfecting and allowing the self to flower will eventually fail except for Islām.

Those misconceptions that are prevailing around the world concerning women's rights and status require to be re-evaluated. The need of time is to separate cultural and social evils from religious teachings. Around the world, no religion teaches their followers to be inhumane and cruel towards any human either women or men. So is the case of Islāmic teachings that only requires best human practices from *Ummah* towards every creature in the universe. Islām is a religion of peace, and it always wanted peace among its creation. The women in Islām are not treated inferior, house maid or as a slave girl. The dominance of males and the inferiority of females in gender circles is always misleading. In Islām, many of the laid principles may seem to be inadequate to the standard of modern women's liberation, since these won't meet with current moral norms, one must not overlook the fact that they were conveyed at a period when the woman was exposed to ill care, injustice and intolerable regimes of racial supremacy in every area of the earth. This is due to the lack of Islāmic education, Islāmic dictates and moral and spiritual dishonesty in our societies and attributing them to any religious teachings is injustice.

## CHAPTER II

### Feminism: It's Evolution in Global Perspective

#### 2. Introduction

The replaced structures, new spaces and expression have been encouraged by the globalization. The ideas concerning universal human rights became one of the most influential beliefs surrounded by individual traditions. Globalization has generated new paradigms for feminist politics and developed many new possibilities for argumentation. It meant, “a process of increased solidity and frequency of international or global social interactions relative to local or national ones. This includes economic, political and cultural dimensions.”<sup>190</sup> It transformed the nature of feminism, through the process of creating new opportunities and by presenting innovative ideas worldwide. In multicultural societies, woman's individuality is very much affected by the shifting status and role of women globally.

The issue of gender inequality is an acute issue. Women's lives in different countries and issues being faced by them are according to their cultural values. Such particular matters are regulated by rules, and influenced by rituals and beliefs. It equips women with male traits to participate in any sector of life; college, sporting, technical, public, financial or commercial, for such growth and learning. In its inherent capacity, it neither accepts nor recognizes that women vary at certain things from those of men and fits them for diverse roles. Boldly, a fair field is demanded by them, just equal rights and equal opportunities in all fields without any bias.<sup>191</sup> Because, it rejects all concessions to her womanhood; even to her motherhood by nullifying it, as these things are not actually to assist or lessen their problems rather it affects their basic rights and it has increased difficulties according to feminist approaches. It repudiates all privileges for her.

The current debate on women's rights is troubled with some complicated and diverse beliefs. In comparison to old times, women were mistreated and discriminated because of some stereotypes and superstitions. But in comparison to the existing period, the influence of social

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<sup>190</sup>Walby, Sylvia., “Theorising Patriarchy,” *Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1989): 213–34.

<sup>191</sup>Kenealy , Arabella, *Feminism and Sex-Extinction*, (London, T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd, 1920), p.v.

and cultural customs on women discrimination is not as the way it was common in old times. In terms of self-recognition and importance, woman now a day is more influential and powerful in social and cultural spheres.

Feminism is an idea that can't be defined in a single explanation because of its diverse range of actions, beliefs, ideologies and movements. Its meaning and sense changes with the passage of time. It is stated that feminism is hard to define.<sup>192</sup> Feminism, in the name of common humanity on behalf of their sexual category, re-balances the economic, social and political influence of men and women within certain societies.<sup>193</sup> It presents a challenge to social, patriarchal thinking and to control mechanism. The core and basic goal of feminist theorists is to examine gender: that's how gender is represented and perceived, and how we think critically about it and at the same time what we don't think about it. The gender study includes but is not limited to what is often perceived to be the predominant feminist issues: the position of women and the examination of male domination and this is patriarchy.<sup>194</sup> It is further argued that patriarchy as a system of social structure that gives men the power to exploit women, through dominance and oppression.<sup>195</sup>

Women's political worlds are expanding like none before. In states around the world, women are holding a record-breaking number. In almost all parts of governance, more women playing critical roles in the judiciary, as a professional employee, civil servants and running executive bodies. In today's world, more women can be seen in public, addressing issues of human rights, justice and social equalities to build new alliances with governments to provide much-needed social services and campaign for social change.<sup>196</sup> Besides, women's success in the public sphere, still women's right notions are circulating across the globe. Although women's rights recognition is worldwide and they are actively participating in decision making matters at the local and international level, but still calls are coming up for fairer representation.

It is necessary and worth understanding to study common themes of issues between different geographical, social and cultural regions. It is inferred that the fortunes of feminism, as a modern-day movement in the Western world, varied widely from one culture to

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<sup>192</sup>Cott , Nancy F., *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (Yale University Press, 1987) , p.4.

<sup>193</sup>Offen , Karen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity* 14, no. 1 (2005): 62–81, doi:10.4324/9780203982266.

<sup>194</sup>Flax , Jane, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (Univ of California Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>195</sup>Walby, "Theorising Patriarchy", 534.

<sup>196</sup>Hawkesworth , Mary, *Political Worlds of Women, Student Economy Edition: Activism, Advocacy, and Governance in the Twenty-First Century* (Routledge, 2018), 1.

another.<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, in the west, the fact that women have gained a lot like, right to vote, equal pay is not the only of the results that are concrete in its nature of women's movements and repeatedly portrayed as a proof because of its breakdown in society.<sup>198</sup> For the better understanding and the acute judgment of the woman status one may look into the background out of which the role and position of women have emerged from the past to the present.

## 2.1. Woman in Western Society

Feminist's movements have so clearly roots in western societies this is why, it is also imperative to contextualize it.<sup>199</sup> Feminism in a west is grounded in a common understanding of the rights and freedom of individuals. Most western societies appreciate the idea that the seat of moral authority resides in the individual and that individuals can and need to be entrusted to make decisions and choices about their lives.<sup>200</sup> In today's west, there is widespread agreement that biology does not determine an individual's legal standing or his or her capacity to pursue a chosen private or professional path. Like anywhere in the world either its East or West, a woman tried hard and yet continues in a competition with a man in every field like business, politics, in technology and many other spheres, but she is still deprived of her basic rights that are more important than to excel remarkably in these fields.

In historical perspective, many of the discriminatory laws specifically against married western women were derived in part from Biblical sources and in part from feudal customs. These laws presented women as one of evil nature and inferior creature. The industrial revolution and the need of women's participation in the workplace brought power to the feminist activism. Gradually, it helped them to replace those discriminatory laws against women and to break those feudal customs in the society.<sup>201</sup> The issue of inequality has rooted into lengthy history. Europe's societies may recognize woman as a human being but deprive her of many human rights like many other societies. They didn't even consider her to be a citizen of a state nor granted her any basic personal rights. She was used to work on farms,

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<sup>197</sup> Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, p.320.

<sup>198</sup>Helen Warner Savigny, Heather, *The Politics of Being a Woman: Feminism, Media and 21st Century Popular Culture* (Springer, 2015), 8.

<sup>199</sup>Strathern, Marilyn. *The gender of the gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. no. 6. (Univ of California Press, 1990), vii.

<sup>200</sup>Gray, Doris H., *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa* (I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2015), p. 73.

<sup>201</sup>Al Faruqi ,*Islāmic traditions and the feminist movement: Confrontation or cooperation?*, p. 136.

completing the home tasks at one hand and to satisfy the man's sexual need on the other hand by having no significant legal protection.<sup>202</sup> It is illustrated that the motherhood and homemaking were the roles for which women were destined and were not viewed to be valuable or admiring. They were connected with cold in the imaginations of the ancient civilizations and soulless residents of a dynamic world, whereas males, burning with heat, were imagined as active citizens. They might be sometimes allowed to play some minor roles and rarely allowed other leading opportunities and when luckily, they did, apparent part was their weakness. Nothing went accomplish without a '*chorus of a woman in tears*'.<sup>203</sup>

When the cultural practices that construct gender become more powerful in terms of a set of laws, then it seems that, '*gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation.*' In such cases, it's not biology instead culture that becomes destiny.<sup>204</sup> The aforementioned injustices were actually based on cultural traditions. These malpractices exemplify the community's discrimination while treating women in particular; their self-generated gender structures to create obstacles in the way of women and not let her get liberated from her subordinate status. Later on, this condition led many women from different backgrounds and ideologies to come out of their homes and claim their basic rights.

The main feature of changed women's lives in the West is the increase in women's participation in the economic sphere in the last decades. The demands of a post industrial economy are the general influenced tendency that increased the need and economic aspirations of individual households, education and career commitments of women. Despite, many prominent objectives that the western women have been able to secure for themselves, feminism in the west has also become a jargon, rhetoric and an extremist stance in the hands of many feminist writers and activists who are criticized by their partners for using feminism for the professional and personal benefits and publicity.<sup>205</sup>

In the west, feminism is a genuine concern, a voice against oppression, a struggle for humanity and fight for liberation in many senses whether it is beyond or in the perimeters of social or moral values. Though their objectives are not fully accomplished by these feminist movements to any high level, but at least their voices have been heard and recognized in the

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<sup>202</sup>Abdur Rahman, *Islām and women's rights*, p.34.

<sup>203</sup>Duby, Georges, and Michelle Perrot. *A History of Women in the West: From ancient goddesses to Christian saints*, 1, 1(1994), ix.

<sup>204</sup>Butler, Judith , *Gender trouble*. routledge, (NewYork, 2002.), p. 13.

<sup>205</sup>Farid, Arifa, *Muslim Woman in World Religions' Perspective*, (Bureau of Composition, Compilation & Translation, University of Karachi, 1994), p.130.

charter of human rights. Change in the West is strongly influenced by long-term and largely unchecked changes in women's lives. These changes stem from the demographic transition directly accompanying by the industrial revolution and the gendered division in many spheres of life that supported it.

### 2.1.1. Rise of Feminism

Feminism as a movement for the emancipation of women's rights is not of recent origin. Feminist movements in the Middle Eastern countries started practicing at the same time started in western countries.<sup>206</sup> In different terms, significant for the women and secularization is the feminist movement.<sup>207</sup> Feminists are made, not born. One does not become an advocate of feminist simply by having the privilege of being female.<sup>208</sup> The most popular drive for women's liberation was one of the most radical movements in current times. This feminist movement is changing the whole structure of human relationship, and revolutionizing the entire social construction.<sup>209</sup> The feminists and feminist movements worked and continue to campaign for women's status and their rights till to date. It can be noticed that particularly in the West, the major force for the women's rights and their liberation brought many societal changes in context of historical details. Although, in the beginning their cause was limited but later on they developed different theories based on gender roles and discrimination.

Any contextual analysis of a movement as complex and complicated as "feminism" is, must start with a conceptual description. It was French suffragist, Hubertine Auclert, who has firstly used the term feminism and feminist. At the outset, by 1900, these terms became widespread throughout the Europe in America. From the beginning to this day, the term feminism in the context of its meaning and implication is contested.<sup>210</sup> Generally, the term feminism originated in West, the subjected reason was the oppression which pushed women to voice against all oppressive means and to demand a liberated society for each individual.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>206</sup>Ali, *Status of Women in the Muslim World: A Study in the Feminist Movements Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Algeria and Pakistan*, p.70.

<sup>207</sup>Sharma , Sonya, *Women and religion in the West: Challenging secularization* (Routledge, 2016), 7.

<sup>208</sup>Hooks , Bell, *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics* (Pluto Press, 2000), p.7.

<sup>209</sup>Jameelah, Maryam, *Islām and Western Society: a refutation of the modern way of life* (Adam Publishers, Delhi,1998), 98.

<sup>210</sup>Allen, Ann, *Feminism and motherhood in Western Europe, 1890–1970: The maternal dilemma* (Springer, 2005), 3.

<sup>211</sup>Karam, Azza, *Women, Islāmisms and the State: contemporary feminisms in Egypt* (Macmillan Press, London, 1998),p. 5.

Women and men should be equally treated on all spheres of political life, economic or social. According to the vision of another critic, Feminism basically is a, ‘movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and Oppression.’<sup>212</sup> Thus, to be a feminist is necessarily to be at odds with male-dominated culture and society.<sup>213</sup> It seems appropriate, by these concepts, to save women from patriarchal obscurity, to reveal the inequities and harms caused to woman, to focus on the human dignity, rights and liberties of women, to declare that women are human beings deserving of admiration in a number of ways.<sup>214</sup> In terms of the aforesaid conceptual justification, while taking women’s rights into account, feminist’s impression seems more concerned about injustice, unfairness, discrimination, patriarchy and oppression. Furthermore, each theory differs at certain criteria, but focuses on same stipulation that ends of on the notion of ‘equality and freedom’.

In culture, also within the domain of feminist studies, the position of feminism remains unstable as it has an uncertain and deteriorating foundation. In the current era, the women's movement is not a special product. Its historical examples date back millions of years. Plato promoted the elimination in his Republic of the social and family positions defined by gender. The belief that Plato is a precursor to Women’s Emancipation has been backed up by the fact that Plato suggests not only that women share the roles of men in Republic V, but also that the system of nuclear family ought to be eliminated.<sup>215</sup> In cultural and social arenas, the 'feminism' of the period 1550 to 1700 battled its wars. The shift in attitudes they helped to form, however, was critical in laying the groundwork for more drastic changes in the coming decades. However, the era between 1550 and 1700 saw no noticeable legislative change in the status of women. Women did not have any formal rights in local or national government at the end of the time, including the right to vote.<sup>216</sup>

In the drama of Henrick Ibsen (1828-1906), ‘*A Doll’s House*’, and the ancient Greek classical comedy, *Lysistrata* have preached feminist values in literature. In an essay, ‘*The Subjection of Women*’, the Victorian economist and philosopher, John Stuart Mill, and the German socialist, Friedrich Engels, laid the theoretical foundations of feminism through its publication in 1869. Yet again, Engels in 1884, publically called the institution of marriage as ‘*dreary mutation of slavery*’ and urged its elimination by suggesting it as a public

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<sup>212</sup> Hooks, *Feminism is for everybody*, p.viii.

<sup>213</sup>Offen, *Defining feminism: A comparative historical approach*, p.152.

<sup>214</sup>Thompson, Denise, *Radical Feminism Today* (Sage publications, London,2001), p.13.

<sup>215</sup>Annas, Julia, “Plato's Republic and Feminism.” *Philosophy* 51, no. 197 (1976): 307.

<sup>216</sup>Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, “Early feminism.” In *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism*, (Routledge, 2004), 1.

responsibility of nurturing children. Those women who joined this cause sooner realized that to make this mission effective, they primarily required political influence.<sup>217</sup>

Feminism had been developing slowly over the preceding decades, as it had in Britain.<sup>218</sup> The Seneca Falls Convention<sup>219</sup> in 1848 was the historical milestone of the Feminist movement, which in the manifesto called for women's freedom to have direct custody over their property and earnings, the right to divorce, the right to guardianship over children, and the abolition of sexual harassment in the job market, as well as the right to fair salaries and most importantly, female franchise. The war for the suffragette's cause continued to grow.<sup>220</sup> The 1776 Declaration of Independence was utilized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton with Lucretia Mott, the principal instigator of the Seneca Falls Convention, as a model for the Convention's Declaration of Sentiments.<sup>221</sup> Cady Stanton, working closely with Susan B. Anthony,<sup>222</sup> a former temperance crusader, became the most significant of the American feminists advocating for the transformation in property rights, divorce rights and right to vote.<sup>223</sup> These ladies with the same purpose came forward for the emancipation of women and laid down an example for other women to claim their rights who were silent until that period.

After this, however, women started to understand the need to be ready and with this realization to act as their own guardian and protector; the ability to enter higher learning institutions and to pursue jobs in the fields once considered as the men's area began to look less like a fantasy and more like an achievable target. The notion of women's rights claimed worldwide and it became the basis of women's liberation movement or the feminist movement during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Their representative and too many of the followers of the revolution encouraged people to stand up to convention and inspire community to follow modern practices and traditions that would break the patriarchal laws and regulations against females. Feminism was broken into separate waves by western

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<sup>217</sup> Jameelah, *Islām and Western Society: a refutation of the modern way of life*, p. 99.

<sup>218</sup> Stephanie., *Early feminism*, p.21.

<sup>219</sup>The Seneca Falls Convention was the first women's rights convention. It advertised itself as "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman". Held in the Wesleyan Chapel of the town of Seneca Falls, New York Seneca Falls was the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who, along with Lucretia Mott, conceived and directed the convention.

<sup>220</sup>Jameelah, *Islām and Western Society: a refutation of the modern way of life*, p. 99.

<sup>221</sup>The Declaration of Sentiments was the manifesto of the Seneca Falls Convention that defined the concerns and claims of women. Primarily written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, it called on ladies to fight hard to equality as U.S. citizens, which is constitutionally guaranteed.

<sup>222</sup>In the women's suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony was an American social reformer and women's rights activist who played a key role. As an advocate of temperance, prohibition, labour rights and equal wages for equal jobs, she is one of the female suffrage movement's most visible figures.

<sup>223</sup>Stephanie, *Early feminism.* ", p.21.



feminists in the United States and a number of countries in Western Europe. At various ages, it has often impacted many societies differently.

*a. Feminism: A Historical Glimpse of Europe*

In this world, east or west, the nature of women and its choices are almost similar. A woman is a woman where ever she lives, whatever culture, she brought her up. What made her different, beautiful and natural is of course her identity. Her identity of being girl, female, and the woman makes her more diverse and unique in her nature. By investigating the past of women living in Europe contributes major important insights and describes feminism for present readers into another distinct context.<sup>224</sup> Most of the social, cultural, political and moral changes originally can be found in the eighteenth and even in late seventeenth centuries in Europe like scientific revolution, industrialization, epistemology and the enlightenment. The important trends for women in the eighteenth century were commerce, philosophy, and politics and so to them were the women's contribution.<sup>225</sup>

Women were denied civil, political and legal rights included matters deemed private, such as the rights to the property. Political privileges covered public participation problems like suffrage. As for public rights, English women had few. Voting was a privilege reserved for men (and until the nineteenth century, few men even enjoyed that right). Women's access to higher education was denied, but until the 19th and 20th century society denied mainly women's public rights.<sup>226</sup> Feminists in late nineteenth century and in second wave feminist of seventies considered public education, citizenship and paid work key to women's emancipation. In the nineteenth century, Feminists mainly focused on the subordinate legal status of women. There was evolution of new ideas on social and economic sphere about woman's nature and her role as a wife, mother, lover, worker and a feminist.<sup>227</sup>

The female roles can be observed in the normative story in Europe from 1789 to 1918 is a highly male one. Women are more or less absent from that story because they are associated with continuity, the 'female' aspect of history the unchanging home with the wife, mother, daughter and cook at its helm, experiencing those unceasing reproductive functions

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<sup>224</sup>Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, p.328.

<sup>225</sup>Simonton ,Deborah, ed.,*The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700* (Routledge, 2006), p.5.

<sup>226</sup>Shane ,Mountjoy, *The Women Rights Movement Moving Towards Equality*, ed. Tim McNeese, 2008,20-22.

<sup>227</sup>Abrams ,Lynn, "At Home in the Family: Women and Familial Relationships," *The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700*, 2006, 14-54.

of birth and rearing.<sup>228</sup>In Europe, women were effectively excluded in the course of the nineteenth century not merely from associations, legislative assemblies and political clubs rather also from professions, coffee houses, educational institutions, and practicing science and from the world of art and culture productions. In 1850, they are also eliminated from union leadership.<sup>229</sup>

Many of the goals and demands of Western feminism seem as irrelevant and impossible to export across the cultural boundaries. Feminism emerged in England as a Western movement during the eighteenth century. One of its primary objectives at that time was the elimination of legal inequalities that were imposed on women by English Common Law. The need for the contribution of women to the Industrial Revolution and at workplace added impetus to the feminist movement. Gradually, it helped breaking down most of the discriminatory laws of its followers.<sup>230</sup> Consequently, beginning in the eighteenth century, it makes for a more comprehensive analysis of the key changes of modern times, while taking into consideration the story of the recent times allows contemporary women to create ties between past and themselves and a question established assumptions about female identity.<sup>231</sup>

At the beginning is the French Revolution of 1789 when Europe's serious involvement with the Enlightenment ideas of human equality and human rights begun. At the outset, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution both emerged as to propose the possibility of women being included as equals with men in the political body.<sup>232</sup> Feminism in the French Revolution did not last long. The French Revolution, in which for the first time women actually tried to band together to fight for their rights, yet was inadequate to carry about feminism on a permanently useful foundation.<sup>233</sup> The begun cause was in accordance with the will of women's rights activists and their supporters, and opposing deeply rooted cultural structures by imposing one's own will on entire culture often met with resistance. But they were determined, and it worked well in achieving many goals at different levels.

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<sup>228</sup>Abrams, Lynn, *The Making of Modern Woman* (Routledge., 2016),13.

<sup>229</sup>Savigny, Heather, *Political Worlds of Women, Student Economy Edition: Activism, Advocacy, and Governance in the Twenty-First Century*,41.

<sup>230</sup>Al-Faruqi, Islāmic Traditions and the Feminist Movement: Confrontation Or Cooperation?, p.134.

<sup>231</sup>Simonton, *The Routledge History of Women in Europe since 1700*; Jane. Jenson, "Struggling for Identity: The Women's Movement and the State in Western Europe. West European Politics" 8, no. 4 (1985): 5–18, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/01402388508424551>.

<sup>232</sup>Abrams,*The Making of Modern Woman*, pp. 18,2.

<sup>233</sup>Evans, Richard J., *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920*. (Routledge, 2012),16-17.

The first wave of feminism has focused mainly on political equality by law. This had its origins in 18th and 19th century through middle class movement and by the works of Marry Wollstonecraft (1792). It came together almost, particularly in Britain, in early twentieth century in a form of the suffragette movement.<sup>234</sup> Even though questions of exposure to male privilege and power in the European past were profoundly important to women and men, they also pursued other goals. The focus of was mostly on women's development; they celebrated sexual difference instead of similarity in a complementary women/men sense.<sup>235</sup>

The real impetus for the emergence of organized feminism came from political and economic reform, when from 1848 onwards the 'crust of patriarchy' began to crack as vocal women and men seized the opportunity by staking a claim for the rights of female citizenship. Women started to standardize themselves on some significant scale to confront their status in European society in 1850s and 1860s.<sup>236</sup> The standard statement of their purpose to women's rights was presented by, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) who was one of great liberal theorists. Stuart Mill's essay which published in 1869 named as *The Subjection of Women*, was the feminist bible. The enormous impression it has made on the minds of educated women throughout the world is difficult to exaggerate.<sup>237</sup> This book intellectually and morally influenced the people, both men and women and it suggested them to learn standing on their own feet. At that time, the writer was aware of the resistance and opposition he has to go through with because of his dynamic views that were totally opposite to the views of society and common cultural outlook. But he remained consistent in his argumentation that these old social norms have now no place in the modern world. Because he thought that the emancipation of women is not only beneficial for women, but also for men ultimately.

By 1900, women's movements were organized in most of countries, including Russia, Western Europe, the Nordic countries and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Females obtained the right to vote in most European countries between 1906 and 1919.<sup>238</sup> Some issues of the 1920 agenda were the equal pay and birth control which became the subject of quite a widespread debate in mid 1920s.<sup>239</sup> The movement for women's equality is renowned as first

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<sup>234</sup>Savigny, Heather, *The Politics of Being a Woman: Feminism, Media and 21st Century Popular Culture*, 13.

<sup>235</sup>Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach.*, p. 320.

<sup>236</sup>Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*, 270.

<sup>237</sup>Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920*, 18.

<sup>238</sup>Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*, p. 270

<sup>239</sup>Caine, Barbara, *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, 1997, 185, 221.

wave feminism. It engrossed more than mere suffrage. It has prompted major changes in the way that how women see themselves and the way they treated by men, and to the real destinies of life that women are aspired to and achieving them by the beginning of the twentieth century. Women's liberation movement all the way begins from here.<sup>240</sup>

The explicit demands made by feminists in Europe in the four centuries before 1950 have addressed the subjects of educational opportunity, laws governing marriage, property, unpaid labor. The other demands also call for prestigious professions, economic injustice, sexual exploitation, sexual autonomy, birth control and child rearing practices and decision-making power in political and religious NGOs and the vote as the key to enabling other changes.<sup>241</sup> The demands specifically revolve around the decision making powers subjected to legal, political, financial and religious matters. The feminists decided then to highlight these issues and to enable changes in the community.

In London, protesting against the Miss World competition 1970 Britain feminist followed their American counterpart and in February, 1970 at Ruskin, they held a first Women's Liberation conference where four demands were presented by the conference as, equal education, equality in pays, 24 hours nurseries and on demand free abortion and contraception. The actual focus which marked the second wave of feminism was women as a subjugated social group and on the body of female in regard of their need for sexual anatomy.<sup>242</sup> The only new demand was the 24-hour nurseries that were included in this conference agenda.

In the United Kingdom, the third wave of feminism is somehow distinctive in its nature. It came around a decade later and received media and academic attention in only the last few years. In contrast to their feminist foremother, they framed their feminism as a challenge to the present post-feminist.<sup>243</sup> It has some similar kind of analytical framework and concern as of second wave, but a very high level of support for socialist and radical feminist critiques of capitalism and patriarchy was demonstrated by third wave feminists. It can be more difficult to recognize progress or change, especially as many of the initial problems addressed by feminists before the 1970s were easier to resolve than those we have faced

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<sup>240</sup>Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*, p.270.

<sup>241</sup>Offen, Karen, "Writing the History of Feminisms (Old and New)," in *The Women's Liberation Movement: Impacts and Outcomes*, ed. Kristina Schulz, vol. 22 (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 320–36.

<sup>242</sup>Gamble, Sarah, ed., *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* (London and New York: Routledge Companions, 2005), doi:10.4324/9780203991923.

<sup>243</sup>Aune, Kristine., "Much Less Religious, a Little More Spiritual: The Religious and Spiritual Views of Third-Wave Feminists in the UK," *Feminist Review* 97, no. 1 (2011): 32–55.

since, or than those we still face today. Despite all, to establish a women's history archives in Eastern and Southern Europe has not yet materialized.<sup>244</sup>

Women's rights to be recognized and regarded as unbiased and just through a valid system needs an uncomplicated approach to be implemented. A modern structure must be introduced instead bringing all under one umbrella with a range of objectives without a specific goal. The requirement is to bring a system that tackles the central issue of interest and eliminates the main elements under which females currently face subordination or oppression.<sup>245</sup> Like anywhere in the world either its East or West, Although, woman is trying to compete man in every field like business, political realm, in technology and many other spheres but, if she still deprive of her basic rights then what to do with these social, political and legal woman rights movements. Because rising up into these fields is important but acquiring basic rights at home, institutions and public places is essential to live in this planet.

*b. Understanding Feminism: In American Women Perspective*

English settlers brought with them the legal and social traditions and institution of their home country when they first came to North America.<sup>246</sup> In United States, for the clarification of dimensions and directions of the change of woman life, in family patterns, work opportunities and for social status, historian often compares the 19<sup>th</sup> century woman with colonial woman.<sup>247</sup> In nineteenth century, American women by different angles had only some rights the same as those of living in early Roman times. The power was passed to husbands from fathers over women. Without the blessing and signature of their spouses, wife cannot have possession of the property, or she was not able to enter into business contracts. Women were not able to cast a vote nor can they expect to be educated as well as men. In short, American Women, with limited legal rights and without political rights were treated as a second class citizen.<sup>248</sup> In the ranking pattern, it is illustrated that women did not play a decisive role; through the members of their own family or the men they married, they took their place in

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<sup>244</sup> Offen, *Writing the History of Feminisms (Old and New)*, 329.

<sup>245</sup> Naudé, Alaric, "Theoretical Framework of Gender Equivalentism," *Brolly* 1, no. 1 (2018): 69–85.

<sup>246</sup> Mountjoy, *The Women Rights Movement Moving Towards Equality*, 22.

<sup>247</sup> Cott, Nancy F., *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (Yale University Press, 1997), p. 4.

<sup>248</sup> Mountjoy, *The Women Rights Movement Moving Towards Equality*, 24-25.

society. In other words, they didn't engage as individuals, but only as daughters and wives in the hierarchy.<sup>249</sup>

In a period from 1800 to 1840 was the one in which the status of the American woman was decisively changed. In 1840, the entire American culture had been transformed. The Revolution had replaced the oppressive structures of colonial life with an egalitarian philosophy. Privilege based on ability rather than hereditary status, mobility upwards for all social groups and unrestricted possibilities for individual identity had become thoughtful ambitions.<sup>250</sup> During this period, crucial indications can be developed to understand the subsequent developments and transformations that radically changed the whole American society's social norms and structures. Furthermore, the occurrence of ideological modifications concerning women's roles and rights can also be noticed during this era. In American society by 1840, the noticeable changes occurred and it has opened new sets of opportunities for women and replaced many old norms.

It would not be wrong saying that these preceding decades from beginning of the eighteenth century to 1848 were decisive years of American women in the context of their emancipation and their proper desired role was formed in these years. In the United States, 1848 convention in Seneca Falls marked the beginning of organized feminism and provided the impetus for the women's rights movement; there were also feminist voices in the late 1830s in the form anti-slavery movement.<sup>251</sup> The first American feminist Lucretia Mott<sup>252</sup> and fellow women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton<sup>253</sup> attended the International Antislavery Convention held in London, in June 1840. Because she was a woman, the convention did not recognize Mott as a delegate and refused to seat her. Both of these ladies joined each other behind a curtain at the gathering. Mott was allowed to address the convention, however. They discovered that both of them have similar dreams for

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<sup>249</sup>Lerner, Gerda, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson," *The Intersection of Work and Family Life*, 2013, 1–15, doi:10.1515/9783110968835.32.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>251</sup>Lerner, Gerda, "The Meaning of Seneca Falls: 1848-1998" (New York, 1998); Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*; Robert E. Riegel, "The Split of Feminist Movement in 1869," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 3 (1962): 485–96.

<sup>252</sup>Lucretia Mott, an early American feminist, was abolitionist and a reformer of society. When she was among the women exempted from the World Anti-Slavery Conference in 1840, she developed the principle of changing the position of women in society. She was also known as supporters of putting an end to slavery.

<sup>253</sup>One of the best-known authors, lecturers, and main philosophers of the women's rights and suffrage movements, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who articulated the women's equality platform that led the campaign well into the twentieth century.

women's emancipation. These two ladies became friends and made a decision to organize a meeting ahead for the promotion of women's rights once they returned to the United States.<sup>254</sup>

Lucretia Coffen Mott with her fellow Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Fredrick Douglass, including about three hundred men and women gathered for two day dialogue. The objective of this session was to raise voice for women's social, religious and civil rights and thus the organized women's rights movement begun in this country.<sup>255</sup>The focus was on the idea of voting rights to women, opportunities for education, economic sphere and political right on an equal footing with men at all levels of society. They incorporated property rights, one's right to earnings, one's right to sue and be sued, and the right to dispose of property. Such rights are sought on the basis of a claim to equality: women as individuals, as members of society, are equal in rights and therefore must be treated equally.<sup>256</sup>This convention boldly stated, all the injustices experienced by women and resolved to guarantee the equal participation of women in different trades, professions and trade with men.<sup>257</sup> Thus, in American women's activism history, 1850 marked a very productive era in the context of women's rights. The struggle of Stanton, Anthony and Stone presented an enormous and passionate women's leadership which imprinted a remarkable memorial in women's rights history.

The common teaching that throughout American life woman has always played a limited and subordinate role. In reality, though, mid of nineteenth century in America, the philosophy of "the place of a woman is in the home" shifted from being an accurate description of actual reality into a myth.<sup>258</sup> Throughout Women Suffrage's History, Cady Stanton and her fellows narrated the stories of many famous women by questioning those patriarchal gender responsibilities and traditions.<sup>259</sup> The early activists appeared to believe that men and women lived in separate spheres; their goal was to introduce the power of women into the worlds of men instead of just concentrating on right a wrong. In many ways,

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<sup>254</sup>Mountjoy, *The Women's Rights Movement: Moving Toward Equality*, 38.

<sup>255</sup>Wellman, Judith, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* (University of Illinois Press, 2010): 195; Carolyn S. Bratt, "Introduction to the Sesquicentennial of the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention: American Women's Unfinished Quest for Legal, Economic, Political, and Social Equality," *Ky. LJ* 84 (1995): 715–20.

<sup>256</sup>Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention: 195*; Bratt, "Introduction to the Sesquicentennial of the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention: American Women's Unfinished Quest for Legal, Economic, Political, and Social Equality"; Lerner, "The Meaning of Seneca Falls: 1848-1998."

<sup>257</sup>Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*, p.269.

<sup>258</sup>Lerner, *The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson.* 33.

<sup>259</sup>Hogan, Lisa Shawn., "Wisdom, Goodness and Power: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the History of Woman Suffrage," *Gender Issues* 23, no. 2 (2006): 3–19, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-000-0020-3>.

they supposed that women are respectable human being, more innocent and more righteous than their counterpart men.<sup>260</sup> Stanton has glossed over the differences that arose within the women's movement, hoping to inspire and empower the later generation and called on women generation to pick up where she and her fellow activists left.<sup>261</sup>

By the end of nineteenth century, a woman became able to possess property in her own name even after marriage; she was capable of keeping money if she has paid work and she was now allowed to enter into various contracts as well as can sue people by herself. Afterwards by 1920s, a woman can enter into the professions; she was eligible to join college to get higher education and without the protection of her male guardian she was allowed to live by herself.<sup>262</sup> This is because they believed that women deserve to be treated equally before the law in the society publicly or at private sphere and this is what was regarded as for granted once.

In the 1950s, for the revival of feminism, an American woman was ready.<sup>263</sup> Feminism, reappear in the United States in the 1960s, partly inspired by Governmental policies and civil rights movements whose goal was to provide a power to a woman across the society for anticipated economic expansion and including the professions and academy.<sup>264</sup> The second wave feminism refers to the 1960s feminists picked the suffragettes mission up where they stopped. A commission was set up by President John F. Kennedy on women's status and several localities and states were obliged to follow the suits, the application of civil rights law to women's rights, the Negro rights movement are some of the manifestations of that time. In 1963 the publication of, "*The Feminine Mystique*" by Betty Friedan was a scholarly polemic to sell over a million of copies.<sup>265</sup>

It is often thought, that the beginning of the second wave is grounded in Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*.<sup>266</sup> It defined the American's housewives experiences a problem that has no name. According to her, the issue lies buried untold in the

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<sup>260</sup>Phillips, Ruth and Vivienne E. Cree, "What Does the 'Fourth Wave' Mean for Teaching Feminism in Twenty-First Century Social Work?," *Social Work Education* 33, no. 7 (2014): 930–843.

<sup>261</sup>Hogan, Wisdom, Goodness and Power: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the History of Woman Suffrage."3.

<sup>262</sup>Rory C. Dicker, *A History of US Feminisms* (Seal Press, 2016),33.

<sup>263</sup>Freedman, Estelle B., "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s," *The Journal of American History* 61, no. 2 (1974): 372–93.

<sup>264</sup>Burke, Peter, "New Perspectives on Historical Writing," in *Women's History* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press., 2001),pp. 43–70.

<sup>265</sup>Freedman, The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s." 373.

<sup>266</sup>Savigny and Warner, *The Politics of Being a Woman: Feminism, Media and 21st Century Popular Culture*.



mindset of women in America for many years.<sup>267</sup> Friedan's words helped restructure American women's generation in implicit philosophy, as many people started accepting the idea that women are the victims in American society. Men are in need to improve themselves and a change in their vision and conduct.

The expected way to eliminate the discrimination against women, she said, is to reform people and culture to recreate a unique country, one that is fairer and more just and kind towards women.<sup>268</sup> Similarly, in the 1960s and 1970s, women agitated for and achieved many new women's rights, ranging from greater access to employment and education to reproductive rights, including abortion.<sup>269</sup> In the United States, there emerged a new category of global feminism and became an ordinary feature of feminist discourse in 1980s. Several young feminists have been listed in different ways, from using individual birth dates by using more common terminology, for example, "Generation X" or a mother-daughter trope to clarify the relationship between the feminists of the second wave and the third wave feminists.<sup>270</sup> This was beginning of the era when the vision of the newly emerged third wave of feminism confronted the ideas of the second wave.

Yes, the fight was over.<sup>271</sup> Rebecca Walker announced that, "*I am the third wave, I am not a feminist of a post-feminism,*" which applies to nineties women's generation who were undoubtedly influenced of the feminism developed by their mothers, who would describe feminism differently and, in some respects, oppose what they viewed as the doctrinal elements of theory, kind a mainstream feminism, which they both support and consider restricting.<sup>272</sup> It is argued that another impediment for women's NGOs, young women described as the "third wave" of feminism, has arisen from within the movement. The representatives have used the expression to differentiate themselves from activists of the first

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<sup>267</sup>Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique* (Dell Publishing Co., INC., 1979), p.18.

<sup>268</sup>Phyllis. Venker, Suzanne., & Schlafly, *The Flipside of Feminism: What Conservative Women Know--and Men Can't Say.* (Washington, DC: WND Books, 2010),p.15.

<sup>269</sup>Dicker, *A History of US Feminisms*,34.

<sup>270</sup>Mann, Susan Archer and Douglas J. Huffman, "The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave," *Science & Society* 69, no. 1 (2005): 56–91.

<sup>271</sup>Walker, Rebecca. "Becoming the Third Wave," *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement* 3, no. 13 (2001): 78–80.

<sup>272</sup>Sheftall, B. Guy-, "Response from a 'Second Waver' to Kimberly Springer's 'Third Wave Black Feminism?,'" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1091–1094, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/339632>.

wave in nineteenth and early twentieth century and from those activists of second wave who shaped the women's movement in 1960s and 1970s.<sup>273</sup>

It is illustrated that given this backlash, in 1980s and 1990s certain components of the women's movement managed to gain support along with the well established formal liberal feminist's organization NOW, the Women Equality Action League, and the National Abortion Rights Action League.<sup>274</sup> The third-wave feminism in North America, it is articulated through some kind of advocacy and events, including, online forums, festivals, conventions, general local groups and issue specified campaigns.<sup>275</sup>

The third-wave feminists are distinguished by their ability to adapt the diversity and reform. They seem to be feminist sponges, physically capable of absorbing certain elements of all the feminist thought modes that followed the emergence on the scene of the third wave.<sup>276</sup> Feminists at the third wave are particularly keen to understand how sexual exploitation and some other forms of human oppression are produced and maintained together each other. For the feminists of the third wave, distinction is the way things are.

Within new or fourth generation feminist voices, many of the concerns of the second wave women's movement are repeated once again, but there are also different issues and less simple or fixed feminist's definitions. This is partly related to the emergence of new cultures around sexuality, education, reproductive technology, communication technologies.<sup>277</sup> No doubt against extreme conservatism, some demands of women were essential and still there is needed to grant much more rights that women really deserves, but these voices need to restructure their ideas that may cop cultural, social and ethical values side by side.

## **2.2. A Review of the Feminist Approaches**

Over recent decades, modern women's politics, feminist movements and different organizations, such as other social movements have undergone a number of shifts, often in reaction to changes in context and particular historical moments, sometimes because of advances in feminist theory and a broader understanding of how to make these changes

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<sup>273</sup>Rhode ,Deborah L., *What Women Want: An Agenda for the Women's Movement* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 15.

<sup>274</sup>Mann and Huffman , "The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave."58.

<sup>275</sup>Aune, "Much Less Religious, a Little More Spiritual: The Religious and Spiritual Views of Third-Wave Feminists in the UK." 48.

<sup>276</sup>Tong ,Rosemarie, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Colorado, 2009), pp.284-85.

<sup>277</sup>Phillips and Cree, "What Does the 'Fourth Wave' Mean for Teaching Feminism in Twenty-First Century Social Work?" 934.

happen.<sup>278</sup> Indeed, the new sense of the word reflects the fact that many now consider so much of what has historically been thought of as sexual distinction to be primarily created socially.<sup>279</sup> From the work of people, awareness-raising collectives, NGOs and networks at a number of levels, a rich diversity of processes and movements have been emerged worldwide. Feminists have taken up deeply nuanced struggles beyond ‘the personal is political’ that have culminated in some of the most dramatic social shifts of the last century.<sup>280</sup> Furthermore, the woman specifically, has been shown as a ‘victim among all creatures’. It is true that you cannot empower women by just telling the world they are the real “victims”. There exists systematic discrimination against everyone in a different way. But playing a woman card turned this struggle into striking transformations of many cultures.

Feminists, on the other hand, spent decades proving themselves and others that women can enjoy their freedom without any barriers and feel potentially content and cheerful. Women certainly like the thought of being freed from time to time of their responsibilities. As it was certainly an alluring idea. Occasionally, they might like this idea of freeing themselves from their spouse and motherly matters just like anyone else would have. At the same time as matrimony and maternity demands interminable work and above all a true sacrifice.<sup>281</sup> Although, it turns out surprisingly, as human nature and temperament cannot be changed, abolished, or transformed forcefully. These ideas have changed the places for the women, but their natural make-up is not repealed and can never be.

It is observed that today women in Western-European countries do have access to economic and educational opportunities that they didn’t have a century ago and finally it is proclaimed by United Nations that “Women Rights are Human Rights.”<sup>282</sup> Over the past 50 years, there has been an incredible change towards those women who provide for themselves and their dependents rather instead of only relying on their male counterparts. Alternative lifestyles, including reduction in marriage rates, rising rates of divorce, late marriages, single parenting have changed the social and cultural life.<sup>283</sup> It is asserted that all the struggle for liberation of women from all responsibilities, beyond this entire still if independence meant to be staying alone, relying on the state, or becoming a strong boss with little space and time for

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<sup>278</sup> Alpizar ,Lydia, Noël D. Payne, Anahi Durán and Anahi Russo Garrido, eds. *Building feminist movements and s: global perspectives*. (Zed Books, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>279</sup> Okin, Susan Moller. *Justice, gender, and the family*, (Basic books, New York,1989), p. 6.

<sup>280</sup> Alpizar, *Building feminist movements and s: global perspectives*, p.1.

<sup>281</sup> Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, 15.

<sup>282</sup> Offen, *Writing the History of Feminisms (Old and New)*, p. 321.

<sup>283</sup> Adbnor , Leanne, *Social Security Choices for the 21st-Century Woman* (Cato Institute, 2004),p. 4.

home, a woman does not want to be “free” at all like this way. In the United states, a woman’s desire whatever a sensible individual desires: a family to enjoy and even depending on them in different ways.<sup>284</sup>

Women in the United States do enjoy equality with men. Women rights for divorce, custody, and property today exist to the extent that may cause Elizabeth Cady Stanton<sup>285</sup> pride.<sup>286</sup> On the other side, many people don’t actually know about what they really think because feminism has so radically changed culture and language that women in America are supposedly liberated.<sup>287</sup> There has been noticed a marked demographic change in U.S. family life. In recent decades, marriage withdrawal, high divorce rates and rapid acceleration in unmarried coexistence has been witnessed.<sup>288</sup> Additionally, the increase in cosmetic surgery, eating disorders and body image dissatisfaction has got worse.<sup>289</sup>

The hard effort and that endeavor women are now investing in their outer look or appearance can better spend on families, friend circles, co-workers and in other healthy activities that might contribute well to their social responsibility and personal growth. This is something that is letting women towards deep depression, low self esteem, anxiety, divorces and distorted family system in the 21st century instead of happiness and peace of mind. It is observed that being a woman at the end of the 20th century in the United states is a wonderful fortune to be aware of. The American woman has finally achieved her citizenship rights. Women have “so much now”.<sup>290</sup>

Literature shows, at the same time in the twenty first century, in the name of “freedom of speech,” this sort of pornography is on the rise, and it threatens the future of our youth, especially our girls and our boys, by promoting and implicitly endorsing retrograde and fundamentally unhealthy images of relations between the sexes that objectify women and promotes unethical material.<sup>291</sup> Women’s fight for their rights is over and succeeded, but there flashes a deep message. You might be equal and free to somehow, but you have never

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<sup>284</sup> Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, p.15.

<sup>285</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) was an American suffragist, social activist, abolitionist, and leading figure of the early women's rights movement.

<sup>286</sup> Mountjoy *The Women Rights Movement Moving Towards Equality*, 133.

<sup>287</sup> Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, 167.

<sup>288</sup> Brown, S. L. and M. R. Wright, “Marriage, Cohabitation, and Divorce in Later Life. Innovation in Aging” 1, no. 2 (2017), doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igx015>.

<sup>289</sup> Rhode, *What Women Want: An Agenda for the Women’s Movement*, 133.

<sup>290</sup> Faludi, Susan, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (Three River Press, 2006), doi:10.1177/036168439201600304. 1.

<sup>291</sup> Offen, *Writing the History of Feminisms (Old and New)*, p.323.

been more miserable than this.<sup>292</sup> Consequently, the feminists' promises came true and women are almost equal to men now and are enjoying all privileges and responsibilities what men typically do.

Happiness, then, has not marched forward with feminism. The most important and best sources of joy, meaning and identity for males and females are always found in the world of homes and families not at the workplace.<sup>293</sup> Realistically, we need to stop debating about women's issues, her progress, her rights, and her needs. We must stop talking about female empowerment, girl's power and overturning a patriarchy that doesn't even exist. When we frame the debate in feminist lingo, we foster a war between the sexes. It's time to end the confrontation between the sexes that is truly leading towards matriarchy.<sup>294</sup> Feminism generally has got an alarming position in social, religious and political outlook. The feminist has endured some of the abnormal kinds of distortion and defamation among all the emblems of social growth and liberation on the basis of some diverse approaches existing in feminism.<sup>295</sup> It would not be a right approach, if it is creating a social war, chaos and to argue with those issues that are not measurable. Consequently, results are in, and this is what some of approaches become the extension to such ideologies. It would be significant to mention the cultural transformation brought by the women's liberation movement through the observation of a western scholar;

“Women's liberation has given my generation high incomes, our own cigarette, the option of single parenthood, rape crisis centers, personal lines of credit, free love, and female gynecologists.”<sup>296</sup>

No matter how much feminist attempt to deny sexual differences, woman is and always will be more vulnerable sexually than men. So it's not the patriarchal ideology rather, it's the biological fact that overstress the differences between men and women.<sup>297</sup> They have changed the label that there exists any difference between these two distinct genders. Now, in Western countries, women are all free, all set, but still not happy because they have achieved almost all what they fought for once. It is illustrated that one, and only one, solution to this riddle has

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<sup>292</sup> Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, p.1.

<sup>293</sup> Charen, Mona, *Sex Matters: How Modern Feminism Lost Touch with Science, Love, and Common Sense* (New York: Crown Forum, 2018), 13, 604.

<sup>294</sup> Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, 172.

<sup>295</sup> Kanner, Melinda and Kristin J. Anderson, “The Myth of Man-Hating Feminist,” in *Feminism and Women's Rights Worldwide*, ed. Michele A. Paludi (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 1–25.

<sup>296</sup> Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, 2.

<sup>297</sup> Charen, *Sex Matters: How Modern Feminism Lost Touch with Science, Love, and Common Sense*, 27.

been supported by the popular wisdom of the past decade: it must be, “equality” that is causing all the suffering. It is primarily since they are liberated, women became more miserable than ever before. The demanded emancipation enslaved women more. They picked the golden freedom pin, only to skip the one ring that truly matters.<sup>298</sup>

The Feminist movement took a disastrous wrong turn was the time when the home became as a trap for women, and it rejected the family as a prison for women. <sup>299</sup> It has transformed the workplace, but it has not changed the men, and most significantly, it has not profoundly changed the relationships between genders. If the progress of women counts, women activists must understand that the home is to 2005 what the office was in 1964 and the vote meant for in 1920.<sup>300</sup> Now in many Muslims countries, like Pakistan, the liberation marches are more concerned about work, pay and economic stability of women. They are just insisting women to get rid of family responsibilities and go for something independent and well paid. The situation of women in twenty first century is defined by a scholar as, it’s not that I’m objecting to women who run states, or corporations, or men who run households. That’s because I don’t agree that “equality” implies “sameness”;

“It needs not to frighten or bewilder us that, on average, women tend to be more inclined to choose children overwork than men, and I have never understood why feminists consistently disparage women’s preferences.”<sup>301</sup>

Logically, there lies no issue, if women are working outside the home, housewives or both. We need to come up for a better solution. The key to understand the choices in the ways in which women and men combine their waged and domestic work plays a big role. In fact, women who are having multiple tasks being mother, wife and an employee need some positive association between all these roles. Here comes two things, a woman wants family life and at the same time she wants to earn. This is what’s making her life more difficult and confused. In general terms, equality is if she and her husband working outside and when back at home, they must share the household too. But in reality, it is really something desirable only, but actually exists rarely instead it must be.

Men would feel less pressure to do a work as her wife will share certain tasks, but women would have to do men’s work and her own household too. So this makes women life

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<sup>298</sup>Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, 2.

<sup>299</sup>Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, 27.

<sup>300</sup>Hirshman ,Linda, “Homeward Bound,” *The American Prospect* 16, no. 12 (2005): 20–26,

<https://heyannette.typepad.com/heyannette/files/HirschmanArticle.pdf>.

<sup>301</sup>Charen, *Sex Matters: How Modern Feminism Lost Touch with Science, Love, and Common Sense*, 18.

tougher, uneven and complicated if it's not managed by her or her family. Like if she likes to be a wife or a mother and an outdoor worker at the same time, then obviously she needs to manage it instead of blaming society, culture or reserving this credit to patriarchy. Because, after all, this responsibility is not given to them forcefully rather it's their own choice. However, the ideological and factual "trap" of feminism of choice (between home and work) has forced women rather than the patriarchy to confront one another and society.<sup>302</sup>

Family is a key support to the happiness of men, women and children. Thousand of studies show that married people are happier, healthier, wealthier and longer lived than those who are single, widowed or divorced.<sup>303</sup> Perhaps, many people deliberately not joined the feminist approaches, nor do apparently, they support or have a strong opinion on these matters. But the lifestyle of many women is a direct result of feminism's influence and its involuntary adoption. This is making the lives of many women's more tough and rough.

On this planet, compromise is something essential to live in harmony, peace and love. For happiness and for self-peace, we need collective effort. We need to understand the value of relation, nature, worth and differences. Women movement suggests all women are on the same page) is bogus.<sup>304</sup> Because there are many differences that an eye can witness, and a heart admits without any coercion and oppression. There are definitely very real distinctions in race, age and gender between all of us. It is not such distinctions in us that divide us. Rather, it is our unwillingness to admit, recognize and analyze the misconceptions that arise from our mislabelling of them and their influence on human activities and perceptions.<sup>305</sup>

There are distinct characteristics and unmatched qualities in both sexes. No doubt, in some ways, women are not quite as good as men, but on the other way, men are not nearly as good as women. It does not constitute any negative implication, gender complex or inferiority.<sup>306</sup> Beginning from the right to vote and to date it is continued. It twisted into another world; social roles became conventional and old; slim and caring mother shifted into ideal ad models; best cook to senior bureaucrats and managers; married to single and happy and from patriarchy to a kind of matriarchy. This is making the lives of many women's more

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<sup>302</sup>Iannello, Kathleen P., "Third-Wave Feminism and Individualism: Promoting Equality or Reinforcing the Status Quo?," in *Women in Politics: Outsiders or Insiders? A Collection of Readings*, ed. Lois Duke Whitaker (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), p. 313–21.

<sup>303</sup>Charen, *Sex Matters: How Modern Feminism Lost Touch with Science, Love, and Common Sense*, 26.

<sup>304</sup>Venker and Schlafly, *Flipside of Feminism*, p. 6.

<sup>305</sup>Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984), p. 115.

<sup>306</sup>Lucas, J. R. "Because you are a woman." *Philosophy* 48, no. 184 (1973): 170.

tough and rough. Instead of becoming anti-men and to give rise matriarchy, we should respect and accept the biological differences

### **2.3. Secular Feminism**

The advent of secular feminism combined with the pattern of modern technology's expansion in the form of printing press and growth of literacy late among women. Consequently, these trends allowed new audiences for women reading and writing across the world.<sup>307</sup> If "secularism" is the philosophy that promotes the elimination of religious belief from societal prominence, thus the name given to the phase of religious degradation in western society is secularization. Secular feminism is a long-winded and exclusive model which cannot be applied to the world entirely. Generally, in feminist outlook, it introduces the belief that perfection is the standard for woman and that all women should gain the same opportunity and status as men do without physical and biological differences.

The pre-industrial civilization that people missed was a world of purity, modest spirituality, economic simplicity and social harmony. The gradual decline of churches, religious traditions and religious morality began with industrialization and the expansion of large cities. There was a disconnection and an opposition between piety and computers. The world we have discovered, by comparison, was and continues to be a world of technology, competition, and social dislocation. This paradigm of secularization has not emerged in the academy of the twentieth century, but in the world of shifting power relationships in the late eighteenth century.<sup>308</sup>

In nineteenth century, the preliminary moment of "secular feminism" for women can be traced.<sup>309</sup> Later on, in the twentieth century, Western societies became more secular, with lower rates of churchgoing, baptisms, religious ceremonies, etc.<sup>310</sup> Survey data from the UK and USA reveals that faith-based women appear more in conventional motherly roles today instead their inclination towards outside work, whereas women who work out door are expectedly more to be secular inclination and less religious.<sup>311</sup> It clearly shows that paid

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<sup>307</sup>Badran, Between secular and Islāmic feminism/s: reflections on the Middle East and beyond, 7.

<sup>308</sup>Brown, Callum G. *The death of Christian Britain: understanding secularisation, 1800–2000*. (Routledge, 2009), 16.

<sup>309</sup>Badran, Between secular and Islāmic feminism/s: reflections on the Middle East and beyond. ,6.

<sup>310</sup>Brown, *The death of Christian Britain: understanding secularisation, 1800–2000*, p.16.

<sup>311</sup>Aune, Much Less Religious, a Little More Spiritual: The Religious and Spiritual Views of Third-Wave Feminists in the UK." 48.



employment is another factor as women are less involve in religious activities that are busier in jobs etc.

Feminists have advocated for the right of women to regulate their fertility, to work outside the home and to enter into a lesbian or non-married sexual relationships. Most of these reasons are related one or another way to feminism.<sup>312</sup> On one side of the picture are those whose theories of women's subordination and discrimination rely exclusively on biological differences as a source of gender construction, and at the other end are those who claim that biological differences may not even be at the centre of gender social construction. Between these extremes, the opinions of the overwhelming majority of feminists fall. But many modern feminist researches are distinguished by the rejection of biological determinism and the subsequent focus on gender as a social construction.<sup>313</sup>

Since, as many feminist in Western countries, rejected outright religious doctrines and become rigid to those millions of religious educated women and are less secular in their nature while working for women's rights. Feminism evolved in Muslim countries amid these conflicts, but it did so in different modes of thought. Secular feminism, which is led by Muslim upper class women who often have other ties to Europe, is one of its prominent forms. However, in the West, modern feminist and women's movements generally takes religion as anti-women and a mean to generate obstacles in the way of women's emancipation and liberation. It also affected many Muslim activists as they adopted modern western theories of feminism and women's rights. Although, the secular feminist approaches in Muslim countries did not flourish as in western countries, but its impact is noticeable around the Muslim world.

## **2.4. Islāmic Feminism**

The other mode that can be noticed is Islāmic feminism, which is "a feminist discourse and practice articulated within an Islāmic paradigm." The road of modernization is not a one-way road to be pursued by the rest of the nations and planned by the West. By reaching the necessary destination, each nation must design its own route. Activists and policy makers in Muslims majority countries may take western models into consideration, by creating a successful policy that may not cause any severe internal tension can only be possible by

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<sup>312</sup>Ibid,

<sup>313</sup>Okin, *Justice, gender, and the family*, p. 6.

finding a balanced way between modernity and their cultural and religious tradition. Societies referred to as traditional is that social norm, practices and customs are passed on from one generation to another and truly valued.<sup>314</sup>

Over the past two decades , a new wave of feminists has emerged as women's issues have become an essential part of modern Islāmic thought.<sup>315</sup> At a period when feminism was influenced and affected in Europe and North America, both as a consciousness and as a movement, it also “functioned to morally justify the attacks on native (Muslim) societies and to support the notion of the comprehensive superiority of Europe.”<sup>316</sup> Feminists then began to translate and bridge the relevance of universal feminist agendas with local, indigenous struggles.<sup>317</sup> They were well known with the perception that feminism as constructed in the West has no place and importance in the Islāmic societies.<sup>318</sup> The collective work of this generation of feminists is often characterized as modernist feminism. One branch of such interest morphed into what was later categorized as Islāmic feminism.<sup>319</sup>

The rise of “Islāmic feminism” appeared in the late twentieth century. Feminism originated predominantly in Islāmic countries with various ideologies and multiple ethnic backgrounds.<sup>320</sup> The term “Islāmic feminism” was not originated until the 1990s, but later on, women worked passionately to amalgamate modern liberal traditions with Islāmic teachings.<sup>321</sup> Islāmic and liberal women activists, as well as those with government influence, are searching all throughout Islāmic states for Islāmic alternatives to a very modern issue that is the product of the changing status of women. Women are gradually demanding for equality, and getting engaged in the political world of Muslims in Muslim nations. Women often engaged at religious and cultural levels to transform the condition of women in Islāmic cultures and civilizations.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Gray, *Beyond feminism and Islāmism: gender and equality in North Africa.*, 5.

<sup>315</sup> Ahmadi ,Fereshteh, "Islāmic feminism in Iran: Feminism in a new Islāmic context." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*(2006):35.

<sup>316</sup> Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. "Muslim women's quest for equality: Between Islāmic law and feminism." *Critical inquiry* 32, no. 4 (2006): 638.

<sup>317</sup> Zia,Afiya Shehrbano , *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2018), <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017043011.5>.

<sup>318</sup> Gamble, *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, 15.

<sup>319</sup> Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*,5.

<sup>320</sup> Badran, *Between secular and Islāmic feminism/s: reflections on the Middle East and beyond*, 6.

<sup>321</sup> Hoza , Jacquelyn Lauren, "Is There Feminism in Saudi Arabia?." *UF Journal of Undergraduate Research* 20, no. 2 (2019): 3.

<sup>322</sup> Ahmadi, Islāmic feminism in Iran: Feminism in a new Islāmic context, 35.

Feminist interaction with religion is experiencing a significant transformation in the 21st century. Feminism is a growing theme in Islāmic countries, but feminists are cautious about how their causes can be defined to remove the stigma connected with opposing cultural customs. Therefore, many Muslim feminist scholars initially endeavored to prove that their religious and cultural values are genuinely and truly rooted in their faith, spending remarkable energy to separate themselves from modern Western woman's rights activists.<sup>323</sup> The effect of Muslim feminism is more systematic than secular feminism, which has been resisted as a 'Western interference and therefore a danger to 'authenticity' in Muslim societies because of its identification.'<sup>324</sup>

The controversy between Islāmic and secular feminists' is not a recent one. Over the past four decades, the Muslim Middle East has seen the ebb and flow of these rival movements.<sup>325</sup> Many third world women challenged the word feminism. On the basis of cultural hegemony, feminist movements have been challenged by short-sightedness in defining the definition of gender in terms of "middle class, white experience, and internal racism, classism and homophobia."<sup>326</sup> Apparently, the feminism was not placed on third world countries by western philosophy, instead, was considered as home-grown idea in context of spreading women's rights campaign in Asia and Middle East. Islāmic feminism may be the predictable outcome of this junction into the current situation of the women's movements. However, from its inception, the term 'Islāmic Feminism' and its agenda remain conflict-ridden and challenging.<sup>327</sup> Many feminists started working for women who are attached to the religion and who practice and observed the religion and its impacts on women's life. It is examined that women activists' interaction with faith is experiencing a significant shift in the 21st century. Most scholarly activists have paid little attention to religion in the past few decades, after the revival of the women's movement in the 1960s and

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid,44-45.

<sup>324</sup> SaadAllāh ,Sherin, "Muslim feminism in the third wave: A reflective inquiry." In *Third wave feminism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2004, 224.

<sup>325</sup> Barlow, Rebecca, and Shahram Akbarzadeh. "Women's Rights in the Muslim World: Reform or Reconstruction?." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 8 (2006): 1482.

<sup>326</sup> Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds. *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991), p.7.

<sup>327</sup> Kausar, Zeenath. "Islāmic Feminism Fully Exposed: Amina Wadud And Margot Badran Vis-à-Vis 'Allama Yūsuf Al-Qaraḏāwī And Jamāl Badawī On Women's Issues," *TAFHIM: IKIM Journal of Islām and the Contemporary World* 9 (2016): 1–26.

1970s. In the 1990s and beyond, researchers started discussing the contentious topic of how religions frequently characterize and limit the roles of women?<sup>328</sup>

The issue addressed by many academics is whether such responses should be considered “feminist discourse” in the sense of reflecting the experiences of women. The question that arises here is that what possibility is there to talk about feminism in Islām?<sup>329</sup> There were many scholars including, Leila Ahmed, Amina Wadud and Fatima Mernissi who tried to adopt feminist analysis and allied it with women’s status in Islāmic perspective through critical readings, but actually they did not specify their work as Islāmic or Muslim Feminism.<sup>330</sup> It is even argued, contrary to other Muslim feminists, Ahmed, Asma Barlas and Wadud do not see Islāmic teachings as incompatible with feminism.<sup>331</sup> So is the case in Western countries; women have been struggled hard to seek liberation, but they did not use the word feminist for themselves and feminism for their cause and goals. They have been still preferred using women’s rights, women’s liberation movement or women’s rights movements instead referring it as “feminism”.

Throughout this century, a debate has raged between traditionalists who believe that Islām forbids any reform in notions of gender roles and modernists who argue that Islām encourages women to be liberated, but one thing that creates alliances between these two groups is; Islām must remain the foundation of society. It is also argued by reformists that the division of the sexes contradicts the ideology of Islām in relationship to that the women should be under the jurisdiction of their male family members in the context of social order.<sup>332</sup> Through this generated notion of ‘Male Dominance’, it is asserted that in the third world, woman has been considered as a victim of male control not the agent of their own destiny.<sup>333</sup>

In the 7th century Muslim women attained many rights, including those legal rights demanded by Western women to change the English Common Law. Therefore, such a struggle is of little interest to a Muslim woman. Furthermore, attempting to interest us in ideas or changes that are diametrically opposite to those important customs (based on

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<sup>328</sup>Aune, Much Less Religious, a Little More Spiritual: The Religious and Spiritual Views of Third-Wave Feminists in the UK.” 52.

<sup>329</sup>Ahmadi , “Islāmic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islāmic Context,” 36.

<sup>330</sup>Seedat ,Fatima, “When Islām and Feminism Converge,” *Muslim World* 103, no. 3 (2013): 404–20, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12022>.

<sup>331</sup>Zine ,Jasmine, “Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism : Reflections of a Muslim,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20, no. 2 (2004): 167–87.

<sup>332</sup>Mernissi ,Fatima, "Beyond the veil: Male-female dynamics in Muslim society,(*Al Saqi, London*, 1985), 19.

<sup>333</sup>Mohanty, *Third world women and the politics of feminism*, 58.

religious and cultural heritage) will be ineffective. There has been a great deal of resistance to any improvements in Muslim personal status, as these laws reflect the same values we have been debating and strengthening them.<sup>334</sup>

In addition, in a case of Asian Muslim women, their struggle with the stigma against feminist goals is notable. The reason is western culture is different than that of Asian Muslim culture. The matter is basically incompatibility of western intrusions with those of Asians. The requirement is they must create a negotiable environment across different cultures. They must consider those differences that are the basics of many communities like, gender, race, religion, ethnicity and class before adopting or transferring any goals into their home countries.<sup>335</sup> The purpose is not to turn out to be inflexible or rigid in adaptation as many of the goals of Western feminism are in alignment with many of countries' social and moral traditions. For example, the right to vote, right to get an education, to own property, to end sexual harassment, child abuse, and many more. But the basic clash fires up when things that are not in alignment and incompatible begins to amalgamate with another culture's norms and traditions.

It would definitely be best to practice Islām and defend women's rights at the same time. It's the Islāmic rule which appreciates not only woman rights, but human rights to fulfil at priority. In other words, if feminism is to flourish in an Islāmic setting, it must be a homegrown form of feminism. It would be insignificant if it is developed and fostered in relevance with foreign culture which further generates various issues, different outcomes and objectives. The secularist narrative of Islām being oppressive is perhaps the most prominent dilemma of misunderstanding the panic situation of Muslim women in general. This self-assertion meanly hides the true picture of Islāmic conduct which elevates the status of women in all spheres of life. It is matching a different culture of west to another culture whose values are totally diverse in its nature.

## **2.5. Muslim Women's Activism**

Muslim women can be found on every continent but by far, more Muslim women lives in South and Southeast Asia than in the Middle East. These regions have produced several significant legal and cultural changes. In all of the countries where Muslim women dwell, researchers have done many studies on gender related issues. Women's stories in various

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<sup>334</sup>Al-Faruqi, *Islāmic Traditions and the Feminist Movement: Confrontation or Cooperation*, p.135.

<sup>335</sup>Yu, Su-lin. "Third-wave feminism: A transnational perspective." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 1 (2009): 11.

other settings can teach us a variety of lessons.<sup>336</sup> The debate on Islāmic feminism dates back to the 1980s, but within three and a half decades, it has spread around the world and drawn many Muslim scholars globally. However, since its emergence, Islāmic feminism has become questionable due to its concept, objective and role on a number of women's issues, which have never been acknowledged by a number of prominent Islāmic scholars of modern times. The feminism that would cater to Muslim women and to society in general must be correspondingly distinct from that which would appeal to Western women. The reason is, basically the history and tradition of Muslim people is profoundly distinct from that of Western Europe and United States of America. Muslim and secular feminists, in the Muslim world and those who are politically influential are trying to search Islāmic and modern solutions as well for prevailing new problems to facilitate women and to change the status of women in accordance with contemporary modern time need.

Women from different background are trying to work on religious, cultural and social level to upgrade the women's status in the Muslim world. Although, the debate concerning women's rights in Muslim societies can be noticed all over the Muslim world, but discussing all, is not possible here due to study limit constraint. Some of selected Muslim countries are observed here in the context of Muslim women's activism because many of their activists played a prominent part concerning women rights debates and bringing feminist approaches in diverse ways into their home countries.

Analyzing women's rights activism related to the Muslim nations that have diverse cultures and traditions in perspective of their political and social structures, financial stability levels and country's legislation will be useful in revealing the current status of women's rights achievements. Furthermore, to depict the range of issues and the picture of countries' support, approval and resistance to feminist notions and their activism also shows the level of public support and recognition in terms of its advancement. In these countries, eminent scholars took part by emphasizing and highlighting women's issues and most of them are born in western countries or went there for higher education in Western institutions. Later on, they actively voiced against women discrimination and became highly concerned in highlighting certain inequalities according to their observations. Some of their voices transferred into reform movements, some countries heard their voices and upgraded the

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<sup>336</sup>Abu-Lughod, Lila ., *Do Muslim women need saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), p.12-13.

women's status and in some countries, they faced major resistance and confrontation not only by governments but from their country fellows.

### 2.5.1. Turkish Women

Amongst all Muslim countries, Turkey is the pioneer Muslim nation to introduce the women problems to the regional political level. It was well ahead of other Middle Eastern nations in initiating feminist's ideals.<sup>337</sup> The roots of modernization in Turkey, located in the final period of the Ottoman Empire (1839–1918).<sup>338</sup> In the context of modern turkey, initially feminism emerged as an ideology based upon certain political matter to change the position of women in the society. In political and ideological agendas, woman's emancipation debate has occupied a central place in Turkish states.<sup>339</sup> Movements of women in other countries, particularly Egypt and Turkey, have been debated, as it has been discussed the topic of suffrage in European countries.<sup>340</sup> Turkey was the country in Middle Eastern societies, which took the first step to reform related to women's status. Later on, there formation it has made can also be seen in Muslim states- Iran and then Tunisia.<sup>341</sup> It shows that the visible feminist work appeared in turkey during the nineteenth century as soon as the decline of Ottoman Empire begun.

Under the Ottoman rule, this has been characterized as a traditional Islāmic culture, experiencing very little change for centuries. Usually, what shift took place was attributed to Western influence. After the creation of the Republic of Turkey, their civilization was assumed to have been turned into a new body. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and it is replaced in 1923 by a modernized Turkish Republic. <sup>342</sup> In the beginning, it was in the middle of the nineteenth century by young Turks' activists in the period of ottoman voiced for the reforms particularly for the women's status in society.<sup>343</sup> This was the time when they separated nationalism from Islām and taken steps towards the process of modernization.

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<sup>337</sup>Feminism and feminist movements in the Middle East, a preliminary exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, p. 154.

<sup>338</sup>Çakır ,Serpil, "Feminism and feminist history-writing in Turkey: The discovery of Ottoman feminism." *Aspasia* 1, no. 1 (2007): 62.

<sup>339</sup>Nükhet ,Sirman,. "Feminism in Turkey: A short history." *New perspectives on Turkey* 3 (1989):2.

<sup>340</sup>Minault , Gail, "Women's Magazines in Urdu as Sources for Muslim Social History," *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 5, no. 2 (1998): 201–14, doi:10.1177/097152159800500203.

<sup>341</sup>Ahmed , "Feminism and Feminist Movements in the Middle East, a Preliminary Exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen," 57.

<sup>342</sup>Atıl Eylem ,Atakav,. "Mona Lisa in veils: Cultural identity, politics, religion and feminism in Turkey." *Feminist Theology* 16, no. 1 (2007): 15.

<sup>343</sup>Sirman , Feminism in Turkey: A short history in *New perspectives on Turkey*, 2.

Woman's rights organizations of the country, although limited in size, advocated justice and equality in civil and political rights and legal equality between all people regardless of gender in the first wave of feminism that occurred in the early 20th century in Turkey.<sup>344</sup> Thus by 1930 Turkish women had achieved legal and civil status equal to that of Western countries.<sup>345</sup> The adoption of Civil Law concerning women's rights was considered as the most important reforms of the time. It was basically a translation of the Swiss Civil Code that was a secular text in 1926, and the recognition of the rights of voting and eligibility for women in 1934. As a result, the most passionate supporters of the secularism were women in Turkey.<sup>346</sup> Subsequently, women felt much empowered because of the official implementation of modernization ideology that has granted them certain rights.

In Turkey the second wave of feminism as compared to the Western countries was a latecomer. Instead of the 1960s, the 1980s were the years in Turkey during which the women's movement raised concerns similar to second-wave of feminism in the Western countries, such as the removal of sexual violence, the use of gender as a means for patriarchal oppression, the misrepresentation of women in the media industry, and they challenged the virginity tests. The focus of the second wave of women's movement in Turkey was mainly social and political structure.<sup>347</sup> The real debate was about the role of women and the meaning of womanhood by elite women stating their own position. In 1980, after the military coup in Turkey was a time when again women and feminism occupied an important space in public gaze.<sup>348</sup>

By rejecting Islām, the traditional religion of the majority, and attempting to legitimize their project with reference to the pre-Islāmic Turkish history and to legitimize the Western ideals of secularism, equality and nationalism that the Turkish modernity project sought to adopt, the founding fathers exhibited ingenuity in "imagining" the national state.<sup>349</sup> Later, in the 1990s, political Islāmic parties questioned the understanding of secularism by

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<sup>344</sup>Diner, Cagla, and ŞuleToktaş. "Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islāmist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010): 41,45.

<sup>345</sup>Ahmed, Feminism and feminist movements in the Middle East, a preliminary exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.,157

<sup>346</sup>Tekeli, Sirin. "The Turkish women's movement: A brief history of success." *Quaderns de la Mediterania* 14 (2010): 122.

<sup>347</sup>Diner and Toktaş. "Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islāmist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization",41.

<sup>348</sup>Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A short history.", 3-4.

<sup>349</sup>Arat, Yeşim. "From emancipation to liberation: The changing role of women in Turkey's public realm." *Journal of International Affairs* (2000): 108.



Kemalism. A polarization and fragmentation within Turkish feminism arose with the emergence of identity politics on the one side and the growing criticism of Kemalism on the other.<sup>350</sup> The big platform that appeared to be for Islāmic activists was the ban on wearing a headscarf at institutions. Muslim women's rights groups played a pivotal role through campaigns, marches and by protesting in front of campus entrances. They actively presented their stance that misuse of Qurā'nic teachings is not acceptable.

The Civil Law was reformed in 2001. The husband then lost his privileged status as "head of the household" by the help of this reform. Finally, the penal code was also reformed in 2004 by abolishing the discriminating articles against women by providing heavy penalties for "honour crimes" cases.<sup>351</sup> Turkey's movement which brought with it the emancipation of women a step towards modernity was different from modernization in other developing.<sup>352</sup> It is argued that Turkish women were '*emancipated yet unliberated*' because it still left untouched the area of gender relations.<sup>353</sup> It is stated that Turkish women are very far from emancipation, despite several developments that provided Turkish women judicial, social, and political rights in the 1920s. Further, argued that at least on paper, the Turkish modernization process established. Turkish women's rights, while also forming a delusion that Turkish women are liberated in their true spirit.<sup>354</sup> This brief outlook shows, like any other Muslim nations, Turkish women's liberation activism also got divided into two strands with diverse viewpoints. The activist and their activities also met with support and opposition at the same time. It encountered with the challenge of secularism, and it then give birth to another structure branded as Islāmic feminism.

### **2.5.2. Egyptian Women**

In Egypt, the pioneers of feminist ideals, those who most profoundly encouraged their community on the value of empowering women and improving their position, were

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<sup>350</sup>Dinar andToktaş. "Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islāmist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization", 47.

<sup>351</sup>Tekeli, Sirin. "The Turkish women's movement: A brief history of success." *Quaderns de la Mediterania* 14 (2010):121,122.

<sup>352</sup>Arat, From emancipation to liberation: The changing role of women in Turkey's public realm,109

<sup>353</sup>Kandiyoti, Deniz A., "Emancipated but unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish case." *Feminist studies* 13, no. 2 (1987): 324.

<sup>354</sup>Müftüler-Bac, Meltem. "Turkish women's predicament." In *Women's studies international forum*, 22, no. 3(1999), 313.

predominantly men.<sup>355</sup> Egyptian culture has selectively appropriated some values and practices as it was in contact with western culture.<sup>356</sup> In Egypt, in late nineteenth century, the Islāmic reform movement under the leadership of Muḥammad Abduh (1849-1905) has started.<sup>357</sup> Initially, Muḥammad Abduh and another scholar of his time Qasim Amin (1863-1908) argued against some issues like polygamy and for the education of women. Qasim Amin also argued the face covering of women. In Egypt, among the early feminist scholars, Huda Sha'rawī (1879-1947) was also one of them who argued veil.<sup>358</sup> Nuclear families, education, financial liberty are also seen as vital aspects of modern day Egyptian woman's life for the improvement of women's status.<sup>359</sup> Huda Sha'rawī originated the Egyptian Feminist Union with her friends in 1922, and from then on she became a key figure in the women's movement in the 20's and 30's. In 1923, she led the Egyptian Women's Delegation to the International Women's Conference (Rome) and that was the moment when she took off her veil.<sup>360</sup> In Egypt, Huda Sha'rawī was one of the pioneer feminist leaders, supporter of independence, and suffragette. Oddly, taking off veil in front of so many people was not the sign of modernity neither it applies to any kind of emancipation. She actually called the religious values off and made fun of it at international level. The point is, if you want to be secular or you don't want to be a practical Muslim, then your such odd practices must stay close to yourself. There is no need to make Islamic values disregarded or disrespected at this level. By challenging the Muslims' values by a Muslim woman at international level was disheartening to the whole Muslim Ummah around the world. This is insidious nature of feminism that leads many people to disregard many of the values without thinking of those who acknowledge them and practice them by heart and by their own free will and choice.

### 2.5.3. Saudi Women

Saudi Arabia is known as one of the traditional Muslim countries depending on its social and religious structure. Because of the core affiliation with Islāmic norms and traditions, it has a

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<sup>355</sup> Ahmed, *Feminism and Feminist Movements in the Middle East, a Preliminary Exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen*, 3.

<sup>356</sup> Najde. Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement* (Cambridge University Press., 2000), p.231.

<sup>357</sup> Badran, Margot, "Between Secular and Islāmic Feminism/s, Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 6–28, <https://doi.org/10.2979/mew.2005.1.1.6>.

<sup>358</sup> Nurmila, Nina, "The Influence of Global Muslim Feminism on Indonesian Muslim Feminist Discourse," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islāmic Studies* 49, no. 1 (2011): 33–64, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2011.491.33-64>.

<sup>359</sup> Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement*, 227.

<sup>360</sup> Ahmed, *Feminism and feminist movements in the Middle East, a preliminary exploration: Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen*, 160.

unique and multifaceted culture.<sup>361</sup> The term feminism (*nasawiyya*) is not widely used in Saudi Arabia nor can one notice women working for women's rights or issues in comparison to some other Muslim countries. Other descriptions like womanist or female (*nisa'iyya*) are more common. Nonetheless, many women independently work on a number of feminist issues, but they resist the word activists or classify the work as activism.<sup>362</sup> In recent decades, no area of Saudi society has been the subject of more debate and discussion than the women's sector and their role in the development process. Besides this, problems concerning women's privileges and responsibilities in this developmental process have been increasingly contested amongst certain liberals and conservatives in Saudi society.<sup>363</sup>

In the last 50 years, the Middle East region has faced some of the major challenges that have affected all the Middle East nations, especially the gulf nations. Saudi Arabia, like other Gulf nations, has undergone several significant social upheavals, both directly and indirectly for example, in the reform petitions submitted to King Fahd during the time of the 1990-91 Gulf War, both "Secular" and "religious" petitioners recognized the Sharī'ah as the foundation for civilization and both shared respect for their devotion to it by the state. The reformists required democracy and freedom of expression to the media for all people, but did not argue for these changes as the rights of an individual, but rather as rights that could be rationalized within Sharī'ah. They also explicitly requested that a policy be developed that woman should serve outside their homes.<sup>364</sup> Gulf war I and II have affected woman and challenged the entire structure of Saudi society. Until then, this society had experienced a very little modification in policies that directly affects women's issues.<sup>365</sup>

The groups concerning Saudi independent women can be divided into different agenda-based orientations. With the help of expanded engagement, liberal organizations promote a larger presence for women in public roles and are also concerned primarily with gendered roles and traditional concerns. On the other hand, Islāmist feminist groups in Saudi Arabia offered indepth Islāmīc textual revision and demanded the transformation of Islāmīc

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<sup>361</sup>Al Alhareth, Yahya, Yasra Al Alhareth, and Ibtisam Al Dighrir. "Review of women and society in Saudi Arabia." *American Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 2 (2015): 121.

<sup>362</sup>Al-Dabbagh, May. "Saudi Arabian women and group activism." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 11, no. 2 (2015): 236.

<sup>363</sup>Hamdan, Amani. "Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievements." *International Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (2005): 42-43

<sup>364</sup>Doumato, Eleanor Abdella. "Women and work in Saudi Arabia: how flexible are Islāmīc margins?." *The Middle East Journal* (1999):575-576

<sup>365</sup>Hamdan, Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievements,43

teachings on women's rights from within and traditional/religious group that holds religiously strict views on women's roles and presentations.<sup>366</sup>

Among the most complex of the many transformations, is the advent of Saudi women as a social force. Today, Saudi woman is visibly on the move, calling for the transformation of their society and playing an enhanced part in economic aspects of their nation. Currently, there are Saudi women serving in medical, media, educational and social organizations, financial departments, to name only a few of the new professions in which they have relocated. In this way, within the framework of the Sharī'ah, to respect them and acknowledge their role in building society has been clearly represented.<sup>367</sup> This shows that the Saudi society has open new zones for woman participation in many sectors while in past, once women were deprived of because of their gender and status.

#### 2.5.4. Iranian Women

Iranian women have worked to rebuild gender identity in Islāmic debate. The globalization of women's activism for rights has also been crucial for Iranian Islāmic feminism to open up a new debate. The transformation of the world through foreign trade, relocation, faster and easier mobility services, modern digital media and information systems have contributed in deepening the globalization process, notably since the 1970s.<sup>368</sup> Feminism in Iran and the Diaspora is complicated.<sup>369</sup> The historical ladder of feminism in Iran began in the 20th century. Modernity was defined broadly as a socio-political process which promised the establishment of social and technological progress, social justice, national independence and political freedom in the context of early twentieth Iran<sup>370</sup>. The major issues of feminism in Iran that are point of debate, likely, questioning *hijab* (head scarf), sexual identity, divorce, polygamy and religious teachings related age of marriage etc.

Reza Shah officially banned the use of the *hijāb*(veil) in 1936. As a part of a wider drive towards western culture, this amendment was passed. The strategy of unveiling was implemented solely in order to force Iran's phenomenal modernization, not for the purpose to

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<sup>366</sup>Al-Dabbagh, "Saudi Arabian women and group activism,236.

<sup>367</sup>Bahry, Louay, "The new Saudi woman: Modernizing in an Islāmic framework." *Middle East Journal* 36, no. 4 (1982): 502.

<sup>368</sup>Ahmadi, Islāmic feminism in Iran: Feminism in a new Islāmic context", 34,52.

<sup>369</sup>Fazaeli, Roja. "Contemporary Iranian feminism: Identity, rights and interpretations." *Muslim world journal of human rights* 4, no. 1 (2007).,p.8. doi:10.2202/1554-4419.1118

<sup>370</sup>Paidar, Parvin. *Women and the political process in twentieth-century Iran*. Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, 1997, 24.

liberate women. Furthermore, some upper and middle-class women have favored the new strategy of the Shah. At the same time, many of religious and practicing Muslim women actually refused to leave their homes following Reza Shah's verdict.<sup>371</sup> The reason they were not supporting this verdict and has chosen to stay home instead of getting out with the label was a concept of modernity.

The White Revolution of 1963 was, without any question, a profoundly important moment in the history of women in Iran. In regard to women's legal and political recognition in Iran, the legal gains achieved during the Revolution reflected a leap forward. Given the promising results of the Revolution, the enactment of female suffrage failed to modify social views of the liberation of women as an unethical intrusion by the West into Iranian society.<sup>372</sup>

Iran triggered a dynamic discussion about faith, religion and modernity in the nineteenth century and the constitutionalist uprising in the early twentieth century.<sup>373</sup> An enormous, anti-Shah demonstration erupted across Iran in 1978. Women were the active participants of the protest, which soon grew into a full-scale revolt.<sup>374</sup> Later on, an Islāmic republic replaced Iran's monarchy in 1979, whose founding leaders immediately introduced major political and social reforms. This reform in the regime was brought about by a large revolutionary alliance that included a number of political parties (liberals, nationalist and Islāmists) and social forces (women and men of the middle classes, intellectuals, the working class and the urban poor).<sup>375</sup> Again women participants were important actors in the Islāmic Revolutionary Period, when the anti-Shah movement was formed.<sup>376</sup> The Islāmic Republic of Iran (IRI) raised a new model of Islāmic administration and political power in 1979 under the leadership of Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini (known as Imam Khomeini), founded on Shi'a Islām's beliefs that have made basic changes in its consideration of women's rights. Indeed,

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<sup>371</sup>Vogel, Andre. "The Source of Change Within Society": A Brief Survey of Modern Iranian Women's Movements" *Undergraduate Journal of Global Citizenship* 2, no. 4 (2018): 6-7.

<sup>372</sup>Vogel, "The Source of Change Within Society": A Brief Survey of Modern Iranian Women's Movements, 8.

<sup>373</sup>Badran, "Between secular and Islāmic feminism/s: reflections on the Middle East and beyond", 7.

<sup>374</sup>The Source of Change Within Society": A Brief Survey of Modern Iranian Women's Movements, 9-10.

<sup>375</sup>Moghadam, Valentine M. "Islāmic feminism and its discontents: Toward a resolution of the debate." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1137.

<sup>376</sup>Shojaee, Mansoureh. "Hopes and Struggles for Transformation: Reflections from an Iranian Feminist." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development*, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016), p.595.

the Iranian revolution was a core point of political participations of women, compared to the last.<sup>377</sup>

In Iran, feminists collaborate with establishments' authorities, along with the religious members, to formulate changes aimed at eliminating racism and discrimination against women.<sup>378</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth-century, Iran's Constitutionalist movement has given rise to lively debate about religion and modernity.<sup>379</sup> A new trend emerged in Iran in the latter part of the 1990s, a social movement for Islāmic Republic's reform. This movement was largely comprised of students, intellectuals and women that have called for civil emancipation, political freedom, to avail relaxation of social and cultural controls and for women's rights.<sup>380</sup> It is argued that Tohidi and Najamabadi were active in anti-Shah movement, anti-fundamentalist and feminist movement during the 1970s and 1980s. It is illustrated that these state feminists depict a greatly idealized image of the lives of Muslim women. Their ideal is the veiled feminist woman released from the shackles of modern western capitalism and consumerism. She is the mother, wife, sister or child of a martyr who, following Hazrat Fāṭimah (R.A) as her role model, lives her life as per the Islāmic doctrine. The rights of women were specifically perceived as identical rather than comparable or equal to men's rights.<sup>381</sup>

In the second decade, a revival of secular feminist activity in Islāmic Republic took place, in response to Muḥammad Khatami's call, who was the 5<sup>th</sup> president of Iran, for a more open political atmosphere. Secular feminists started mobilizing mostly global ideologies, such as legal frameworks and conferences for human rights, by discussing women's problems outside the belief and religious teaching context.<sup>382</sup> As it is claimed that, the early dominant voices of feminism in Arab countries was emerged with westernization in early 1900s based on secularism.<sup>383</sup> So was the narrative of Iranian feminist. In Iran, progressive feminists argue that civil society and the state should uphold men's and women's

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<sup>377</sup>Hasannia ,Ali , and Zahra Fazeli. "Socio-Political Rights of Iranian Women before and after the Islāmic Revolution; a Comparative Study." *Journal of Contemporary Research on Islāmic Revolution* 1, no. 1 (2019): 57.

<sup>378</sup>Mahmoudi , Hoda, "Freedom and the Iranian Women's Movement." *Contexts* 18, no. 3 (2019):17.

<sup>379</sup>Badran, Between Secular and Islāmic Feminism/s Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond, 7.

<sup>380</sup>Ahmadi, Islāmic Feminism in Iran: Feminism in a New Islāmic Context." 35.

<sup>381</sup>Fazaeli, Contemporary Iranian feminism: Identity, rights and interpretations, p.11.

<sup>382</sup>Soraya, Batmanghelichi, K., and Leila Mouri. "Cyberfeminism, Iranian Style: Online Feminism in Post-2009 Iran." *Feminist Media Histories* 3, no. 1 (2017):56

<sup>383</sup>Ahmed, *Women and gender in Islām: Historical roots of a modern debate*, p.175.

civil, political, and social rights equally.<sup>384</sup> In their activism and advocacy, the generation of younger feminists, supposed to be the fifth generation of Iranian feminism, are gradually focusing on liberal secular ideals. Many of them went into exile after the revolution, with a few secular feminist academics staying in the country. Mostly during the reform period, these women became more vocal, using woman's magazines like *Zanan* as a forum to raise their issues.<sup>385</sup>

It has proven by the feminist movement in Iran to be a constant force and a voice for a fair justice for around four decades since 1980.<sup>386</sup> It is argued that, currently, the Iranian state ritually uses declarations of Western imperialism in Iran to suppress feminists.<sup>387</sup> Muslim and secular feminists of Iran think that an unequal society along racial lines has been developed by the Islāmic state.

### 2.5.5. Moroccan Women

In fact, the discourse on gender is probably one of the most divisive and controversial in Morocco. Not a week goes by that issues related to women are not discussed in the media, at one academic conference or another, in a mosque, in parliament, or on the street.<sup>388</sup> Since the 1970s in Morocco, Fatima Mernissi has written extensive work related feminism.<sup>389</sup> Following in the footsteps of earlier male advocates for women's rights in Morocco is Fatima Mernissi, one of the contemporary initiators of what is now called 'Islāmic feminism'. Mernissi is widely considered a pioneer of Muslim feminist scholarship.<sup>390</sup> On the other hand some Moroccan activists categorically reject feminism because they argued that it is a Western concept. They further insisted that feminism in this North African kingdom is going too far while others say it has not yet fully arrived. They urged that feminism is not suitable for the country.<sup>391</sup>

In the era of 1990s, a gradual shift can be seen from the traditional focus on the status of women or her role in Islām rerouted to gender and sex equality in Islām

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<sup>384</sup>Mahmoudi, *Freedom and the Iranian Women's Movement.*, p.17

<sup>385</sup>Fazaeli, *Contemporary Iranian feminism: Identity, rights and interpretations*, 11.

<sup>386</sup>Mahmoudi, *Freedom and the Iranian Women's Movement.*, p.15

<sup>387</sup>Fazaeli, *Contemporary Iranian feminism: Identity, rights and interpretations*, 19.

<sup>388</sup>Gray, *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa*, p. 21.

<sup>389</sup>Nurmila, *The Influence of Global Muslim Feminism on Indonesian Muslim Feminist Discourse.* 38.

<sup>390</sup>Gray, *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa*, p. 31.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

by Muslim women analyst.<sup>392</sup> In addition, the individual women from different backgrounds and professions who decided to join the movement; the geographic region of Islāmic Feminism has extended including Europe, Africa, the Arab world, North America and a number of Asian countries.<sup>393</sup> The women who lived under the colonial rule were those who actually experienced the hard time nationwide and on the other hand, some did not, some are Muslims from the heartland while others are from the Diaspora, some prefer veil and some not, some are Arab while others are no-Arabs.

So is the case of many other Muslim countries. The women are unshackled, somewhere not freed in the context of country women's demands. In some countries women have achieved men like status, in some parts they are equally treated as per women's choices and in many places, they still are deprived of many basic rights. The reason of deprivation of women's rights in twenty first century is not the religion, faith or any divine teachings. It is culture, social practices and self-created myths and norms that are making women life most unpleasant.

## **2.6. Current Status of Women Activist in Muslim World**

Since the time feminism has started, no more noticeable protest in the street does not signify that activists and their activism is ended all the way. They actually decided to throw the noisy protests and transformed into the structure of society through many other means. The role and status of women become one of the most debated topics of Muslim countries in the form of movement to some extent. Such is the case that can be seen in South Asian, African and eastern side where women's status became one of the most controversial and frequently discussed issue. Today, the most intense discourse about 'the woman question' actually occurs within Muslim-majority countries. Such discussion often revolves around the role of individual agency versus the importance of maintaining collective cohesion. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Syria, and Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan, where this issue is significantly smacked out and manifest in vibrant debates within each country. The Muslim world is not a gigantic union, nor is there a general consensus within any of the given countries. In fact, the discourse on gender is probably one of the most divisive and controversial in Muslim majority countries. Not a week goes by that issues related to women

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<sup>392</sup>Seedat , When Islām and Feminism Converge, 404.

<sup>393</sup>Amal Grami, "Islāmic Feminism: A New Feminist Movement or a Strategy by Women for Acquiring Rights?," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 6, no. 1 (2013): 102–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2012.757851>.



are not discussed in the media, at one academic conference or another, in a mosque, in parliament, or on the street. The current internal discourse within Muslim states has much to offer the Western world, where the debate about Muslim women is often conducted with a kind of tunnel vision.<sup>394</sup>

Around the Muslim world, numeral women activists are indulged in Muslim and secular feminism. Most of them might not feel comfortable to use the term 'Feminist' for them, but in the perspective of their work 'feminist consciousness' depicted. Most of them in their researches and literature have clearly taken stances on male dominance, patriarchy, female subordination, discrimination and resistance to many other anti-women activities and societal norms. It is worth mentioning that many of Muslim women's activists around the globe are not following the term feminism for their cause because of its western origin. Although they actively work for women's rights. The situation is getting changed in the Muslim world based on modern concepts and developmental notions. Most of the activists are also living in European or American states, but also hold nationality of Muslim countries where they are born. Some of the activists are born in western countries and working for the women rights like, Margot Badran(USA), Amina Wadud(USA) etc.

Some of the prominent activists around the Muslim world are mentioned here. Beginning from Afghanistan, Jamila Afghani and Shukria Barakzai are active participants in the context of women's empowerment. The former is a women's rights activist and the later one is a political person and as well as a journalist. She also works for the rights of women. Asma Barlas, Farazana Bari, Farida Shaheed, Riffat Hassan, Mukhtaran Mai, Afia Shehrbanu Zia and Malala Yousufzai are some of prominent activists who belong to Pakistani society and their work has caught the eyes of International audiences even. Their work centers on women's education, women's rights and empowerment. Some of them are political bodies, research writers, journalist and side by they are also working for women development.

Currently, the Egyptian women activists whose work and activism primarily focuses on women's issues includes Leila Ahmed, Mona Eltahawy, a leading journalist and social activist who has written extensively on women's issues, Samira Ibrahim, Azza Karam and one the most famous Nawal El Saadawi, who is considered as Simone De Beauvoir of Arab Muslim world. These are some of Egyptian women's rights activists who has put their effort and still continue working through their influential writings and activism.

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<sup>394</sup>Gray, *Beyond feminism and Islāmism: gender and equality in North Africa*, p.21.

In the context of Iranian women's activism, Ziba Mir Hosseini, Shahla Haeri, Mahnaz Afkhami, Zahra Eshraghi Khomeini and Shirin Ebadi are some of prominent activists. Their work mainly focuses on women's rights, human rights, feminism, gender and development. Although by profession some are legal anthropologist, researchers, political members and lawyers, but they actively participate in women's rights debates. Musdah Mulia (Indonesia), Fatima Mernissi (Morocco), Hideyat Sefkatli Tuksal (Turkey), Zainab Salbi (Iraq) Lubna al Hussein (Sudan) and Mohja Kahf (Syria) are some other prominent names from the Muslim world. These all women activists are trying to work for women's rights and promoting awareness among women's through their writings and other resources. These activists are utilizing either secular or religious approach while working for women's issues.

The women's rights activism is not now limited to protests, rallies and literary writings, so is the case with women's rights activists. Due to dominance of social media, the activists around the world now got the chance to share their feelings and demands so fast and actively. Social activists are tremendously spreading their vision through social media while sitting at home. It did not only help them in growing number of activists, but their activism is becoming stronger and influential around the world. People shows interest in any cause that is inhumane and spread racism or discrimination. No doubt, in the name liberty and freedom many other social evils are also growing enormously through these unrestricted resources. It also helps spreading rumors, bullying, unnecessary involvement in other people's life and matters, distracting and disrupting the sleep of the younger generation. Consequently, its positive outcome is also worth appreciable. Through the trend spreading and awareness creating activities, activists were even able to suppress the state and their policies to take action towards injustices.

Due to anti-feminist speeches in Turkey, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queered (LGBTQs) campaigns have achieved exceptional popularity in the 2010s.<sup>395</sup> Later on, "Me Too" (another movement) swept around the world in 2017 to highlight the invisible sexual harassment cases against women. The debate also re-emerged tensions among feminists on the second and third waves, although this trend greatly focused on women standing against men's sexual abuse.<sup>396</sup> There is a profound cultural shift in 2017 a

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<sup>395</sup>Sümer, Sevil, and Hande Eslen-Ziya. "New waves for old rights? Women's mobilization and bodily rights in Turkey and Norway." *European journal of women's studies* 24, no. 1 (2017):7.

<sup>396</sup>Finneman, Teri and Yong Volz., "Leading the Second Wave into the Third Wave: U.S. Women Journalists and Discursive Continuity of Feminism," *Feminist Media Studies*, 2019, 1–16, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1644658>.

nationwide reckoning with the issue of sexual assault and harassment in the workplace via the #MeToo movement.<sup>397</sup> Social institutions are sustained by human engagement, agreement, and can be undermined by individuals' unwillingness to participate, have a life of their own.

Subsequently, the intense growth of what has been labeled as 'project feminism' is worth noticing around Muslim countries due to the rise of foreign funding and International level projects.<sup>398</sup> The mixture of NGOs and Government programs typically leads to another brand of activities, albeit with support from foreign institutions such as United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) and European Union's (EU) Projects.<sup>399</sup> This issue has become the discussion matter in between modernists and traditionalists. This is because when these NGOs work with foreign unions, the initiatives are then undertaken for alternative gains. Women's rights are meant for women only not for political or certain other irrelevant gains. In this way, these projects tend to deal with only those issues and targeted groups which fulfil the requirement of the funding agencies. These are some of factors that are playing major role in restricting or advancing, making affective/ less affective to different causes and activists in the context of their work.

## **Conclusion**

Despite noticing the work done by the feminists and their activities around the western, non-western and Muslim- Majority Countries, they have initially achieved much appreciation and

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<sup>397</sup>Seidman , Alan, *Minority Student Retention: The Best of the"Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice"* (Routledge, 2019), 220.

<sup>398</sup> Diner and Toktaş. "Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islāmist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization" ,42.

<sup>399</sup> Leake, Adam. "A Brief History of the Feminist Movements in Turkey." *International Relations* 29 (2012): 3.

support worldwide. But in twenty first century they derailed from the actual track and became more ambitious for unnatural things instead rights. Specifically, in western countries because of their inferior status, women achieved a successful status through these movements and activism in the beginning. The reason was their cause, for which they were consistent and passionate because their sufferings compelled them to come forward and insist their rights. They finally achieved many rights with certain responsibilities, although it took centuries to accomplish whatever they claimed. They advocated through protest, movements and used their writings to convince them at any cast and they did it. However, with the passage of time, the modifications in their approaches, demands and their activism emerged, and it incorporated many additional things into their goals that have nothing to do with women's freedom or emancipation. It was the beginning, when the drive of women's freedom took a drastic turn and it had struck badly to their social norms and values.

Generally weighing up, Western feminism is even not whole-heartedly accepted by the Western people, so how would it be appealing and acceptable to non westerns and practicing Muslims, who have totally unique and distinct cultural and religious values. In contrast to the Muslim countries, we might be able to adopt a modernization as it is a wider connotation and be a practicing Muslim at the same time, but we cannot adopt Westernization and Islāmic stance at the same time. Westernization is not a modernization; it is a cultural trend of Western people and a product of globalization. Muslim feminist forgets this, just blindly followed their western counterpart in these activities without realizing their cultural and traditional structures. These activists and their struggle remained ineffective because their approach was copied one and their drive for freedom did not gain much attention due to the lack of reliable direction. This is the reason they often failed in making it as productive as it was one in western countries. Even though in many Muslim countries these feminist movements spread much faster, but its impact was not the way it could be seen in Westerns countries. Subsequently activists and those people working for such causes spot the resentment and antipathy from other groups. Furthermore, it makes their cause less affective. It further creates more panic situations and develops misunderstandings. This is another reality that many of groups working for the right cause and for the betterment of women also have to tolerate worse situations, no co-operation and an aversion because of some groups' performance and their incompatible activism.

Feminists' commandments cannot be applied to all societies, regardless of how they tried to make them acceptable for all. The thing that comes to mind at first while taking into

consideration feminism is, 'equality to all women'. But when it comes to analyzing the entire notions revolving around this women's liberation drive, results fluctuate significantly. The truth is, feminism is that single movement which radically changed the whole social structure of an entire world in a magical way. They played women card perfectly; have gained support and unenthusiastic assessment globally. Although, making women oppressive and a victim without developing any parameters is not a right approach. On the other hand, depicting men as the key to women's sufferings is also not an appropriate approach because it's men's consistency which provides freedom to women at many directions.

Coming to the fact, woman around the world is facing many issues, and this is beyond deniable. But this does not mean that all men are always cruel of all women all the time, or that women are always the passive, peaceful victims of the will or force of men. History shows that women did not enjoy their true status and it is beyond deniable fact. Subsequently, in many parts of the world, men and women alike are deprived of basic necessities, education, healthcare and unhygienic food or in some part even no availability of food. The call of the hour is to focus more on human beings' issues and their lives. The need of the time is to highlight women, men and children's issues that inclusively restrict their freedom and causing harm in living actual free life. At present, women rights activists or feminists must not only ponder over their achievements, they must consider the outcome of their activism in diverse angles. Because it is not about women's rights only, it directly or indirectly hits the whole structure of society. It's a social structure, a question of values and definitions, activities and structures. Reform efforts and legislative changes are important, but with a valid approach, through an acute analysis and by educational reforms, it finally becomes effective collectively. In the perspective of transformation of our social norms, laws and traditions related to men and women's lives, only a convincing and most applicable approach can teach us how to transform culture and social evils so that "equality and actual freedom" can be accomplished without declining genuine civilized values.

## Chapter 3

### Role of All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) in Pakistan

#### 3. Introduction

At different times in history, women's movements arose across most places of the globe, feminists started to speak to each other through international and domestic borders. Often, in order to battle for different objectives, they used specific ideas, had distinct notions and chose various tactics.<sup>400</sup> What women's equality and rights mean, whether in industrialized capitalist nations, economically underdeveloped postcolonial states or in the economically dynamic predominantly Muslim states, is a controversial topic worldwide today.<sup>401</sup> In colonial India, for historians of women's life, from 1896 to 1947 were described as an enlightenment era. Throughout that half century, the limits were re-drawn for the appropriate women's behavior, at least for those women from the privileged family environment.<sup>402</sup>

Pakistan is the second largest Muslim majority country. In terms of the socio-religious country, it was based on Islāmic vision in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It carried out a movement of independence in the Indian subcontinent with a strong Hindu influence. For it is not surprising that Pakistan in the early days of the establishment formulated an ideal Islāmic concept for the life of the state and society. Pakistan was finally able to formulate its own ideology without being overshadowed by the British grip on August 14, 1947.<sup>403</sup> Although, from the very beginning of its establishment, Pakistan needed to build a new legal framework and state structure of a unique kind and it went almost well. Although, the effects of the colonial period and Indian culture were strongly embedded in law and culture that overturning them was not an easy job at that time.

Women consist of 48.76 % of Pakistan's overall population, which means that almost half of Pakistan's citizens are females. There are ample regulations on the ground, but its

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<sup>400</sup>Rupp, Leila J. and Verta Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement : A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 2 (1999): 363–86.

<sup>401</sup>Anita M Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).4.

<sup>402</sup>Ansari, Sarah, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan," *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 6 (2009): 1421–61, doi:10.1017/S0026749X08003776.1435.

<sup>403</sup>Abu bakar ,Fatum, "Islāmic Family Law Reform : Early Marriage and Criminalization ( A Comparative Study of Legal Law in Indonesia and Pakistan )," *Al-Ahkam* 4 (2019).112

implementation must be assured to improve the participation of women in all areas of society. Women have their guaranteed rights, and they are socially and legally accepted except in some places. It is suggested that, female empowerment and economic participation must be strengthened at the national level through preparation.<sup>404</sup> Afterwards, in recent times, Pakistani woman is not bound by any restriction or legislation to participate in any field or area of interest. The existing cases that are mostly highlighted by different groups are usually belonging to less privileged areas. The basic factor of women's less participation in public affairs, women's subjugation and discrimination at homes is not merely instigated by male dominance or patriarchal culture; mother's way of upbringing her children, staying silent on brutality, women's reserved choices and less and inadequate knowledge about their rights are also contributing a lot towards women's position.

### **3.1. Formation of Women Rights NGOs in Historical Perspectives**

In Pakistan, the connection between women and the establishment has been both convincing and inconsistent at the same time. Pakistan became the first nation in the Islāmic world to have a female head of state after almost a decade of state-sponsored efforts.<sup>405</sup> Women of Pakistan are being portrayed as a 'picture of contrast' because of their diverse status in socio-economical arena.<sup>406</sup> In Pakistan, women's rights organizations are not as flourished as compared to other countries. There were a number of NGOs and organizations, working from the beginning of time when this country came into being in 1947 and to a certain extent even country's birth.<sup>407</sup> The central idea in recognizing the dynamics deployed on either side of the current combat for women's rights, one must examine the stages of Muslim women's struggle in the subcontinent as well as Islam's role in modern history. The two are intertwined and must be viewed in light of the formation of Muslim politics and political thinking in India, followed by the events in Pakistan in the post-independence period.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>404</sup>Aslam , Muḥammad Waqar, "A New Feminism in Pakistan," *Daily Times*, April 19, 2019, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/524022/a-new-feminism-in-pakistan/>.

<sup>405</sup>Jalal , Ayesha, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan," in *Women, Islām and the State*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 77–114, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-21178-4>.

<sup>406</sup>Syed , Jawad, "Reconstruction of Gender in Islāmic Thought: Iqbal's Vision of Equal Opportunity," *Women's Studies International Forum* 32, no. 6 (2009): 435–44, doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2009.09.005,435.

<sup>407</sup>Jalal, *The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan.*, 77.

<sup>408</sup>Khawar, Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back* (London: Zed Books, 1987), p. 1.

There are many aspects that have helped in the development of Muslim women in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>409</sup> In the sub-continent, the picture of women's participation and their active role for women rights is distinct in its nature. Women question has been divided into three generations by the Minault. Firstly, those who are born before 1857, are well trained in literature and knowledge of Islām. They reflected upon the Muslims family life, customs and anticipated educational programs for women within four walls of a house and private domains of religion; next to them was the generation who born after 1857, blended version of Islām and western education, later became professional social and religious debater. They have started publishing books, journals, established women's schools, associations and were pioneer to debate *purdah* (veil); preceding to them was the third generation of those who got training in schools, have contributed through school teaching and exploration of women's issues through the writings.<sup>410</sup>

Women's rights are always discussed under the framework of their historical status, their financial or class influence, national politics and in the context of prevailing religious beliefs. History reveals that women have always faced many challenges in perspective of their gender. These challenges have been always self constructed under the framework of social, cultural, religious or political aspects to make them more significant and authoritative. In contrast, from the sufferer group, the uprising is also noticeable in history. These challenges and their outcomes are not limited to western countries only. Women's rights activism is global in its scope because the gender inconsistencies exist all over the place. The country of Pakistan is also one of them. To retrace the milestones of the initial progress achieved by women of Pakistan, one must go back to the late nineteenth century, when there was no Pakistani nation, and to 'evolutionary processes' that did not recognise the subsequent division of the Indian subcontinent.<sup>411</sup>

It has been illustrated that some of the new challenges arose in the twentieth century, such as the equal opportunities of education, different debates on suffrage, legal and political rights. One of the prominent advocates of this ideology was Sayyid Mumtaaz 'Alī (1860-1935) who played a pioneering role by publishing Urdu Journal 'Tehzib un Niswan' under the editorship of Muḥammadi Begum (his wife) for females as a founder of this magazine in 1898. The objective of publishing this weekly magazine was to educate and free

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<sup>409</sup> Pal, Izzud-Din. "Women and Islam in Pakistan." *Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 4 (1990): 449-464.

<sup>410</sup> Minault, Gail, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>411</sup> Khawar and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, pp.56-57.



women from old customs and evil traditions.<sup>412</sup> On the other hand, many groups, such as the All India Women Conference (AIWC), Women's Indian Association (WIA), and National Council of Women (NCW) in India, were formed to join men in their fight for independence from British India. These groups operated on two fronts: first, they advocated for democratic power, and second, they fought against colonization.<sup>413</sup> Women were permitted to engage in the liberation movement by the Muslim League and this was the time in sub-continent when women have actively started participating in movements.

By exploring the early history, in twentieth century during the first decades, though in Muslims organizations such as, Anjumani Khawateen-i-Islām (1908), All India Muslim Ladies' (1915) and All- India Ladies' Association (1918) in the cross-community, Muslim women started participating in different forums and with diverse aims taking side by side to all those belonging to private spectrum. In these forums, the discussion was mainly focused on women's issues and their rights, including all restriction enthusiastically.<sup>414</sup> In 1932, women in sub-continent issued a memorandum to the round table conference advocating for women's universal right to adult suffrage. Many women's groups supported the Congress's 1931 fundamental rights proclamation of the rights to citizenship (equality of sex, caste, and creed) in British India.<sup>415</sup> Currently, women's perspectives in Pakistan, their privileges, and participation in all domains are all part of an ongoing process that began around the turn of the century. Women in the vanguard of the contemporary fight for women's rights owe a debt of gratitude to those women who took the first steps in the early twentieth century, despite the obstacles they have faced in achieving all these privileges.<sup>416</sup>

Later on, in mid 1930s, within the politics of Indian Muslims there is spread a true anticipation under the guidance of great leader Muḥammad Ali Jinnah.<sup>417</sup> The support of Muslim women was courted by 'Muslim separatist of 1930s and 1940s.' The league leaders and their affiliates were aware of the worth of participation of women into liberation struggle and Jinnah was one of them.<sup>418</sup> During his speech in 1944, the founding father of nation of Pakistan said, "*No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side*

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<sup>412</sup>Minault, Women's Magazines in Urdu as Sources for Muslim Social History, 203.

<sup>413</sup> Syed, Farzana Zaheer and Humaira Masood Dar, "Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment," *Orient Research Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (2017): 153–67.

<sup>414</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1433

<sup>415</sup> Syed and Dar, "Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment," 156.

<sup>416</sup> Khawar and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, pp.56-57.

<sup>417</sup>Jalal, *The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan*, 84.

<sup>418</sup>Ansari, Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan, 1434.

*with you; we are victims of evil customs.*” He further added that in every sphere of life, take your women along with you as comrades and do not lock them up as prisoners in four walls of your home.<sup>419</sup>

By investigating the early struggle of women in history of Pakistan; one can notice two pioneer organizations, namely, Pakistan’s Women National Guards (1949) and Women’s Voluntary Service (1948) introduced by Ra’ana Liaquat. The Women’s Voluntary Service played a major role in rehabilitation of millions of refugees married women and young girls who were facing numerous problems at that time.<sup>420</sup> After the creation of Pakistan, there came forward many issues related women’s rights in Pakistan, but few debates gained attention by some associations and individual ladies in different perspectives. Beginning from Miss Fatima Jinnah, who was the first such lady influenced Pakistan’s women and even today she is acknowledged and considered as a significant woman figure. She was also the founder of the Women’s Relief Committee, which contributed much in settling the refugees of the time.<sup>421</sup> Later on, All Pakistan Women’s Association (APWA), Women’s Action Forum (WAF), Shirkat Gah, Asr, and Simorgh, comparatively autonomous and independent associations came into existence to vanguard the rights of women. Their objective was to challenge the patriarchy, economical system, social inequalities, legal discrimination and to change political structure.<sup>422</sup>

The late sixties and early seventies witnessed an important flourishing of rational thinking at a minor level and grassroots political organization. Women joined the profession in larger number, though their number remains small relatively, they made a considerable contribution. They broke many taboos generally connected with music and the arts in society of Pakistan. Later on, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power in 1972, saw the emergence in Pakistan in different spheres. For the very first time of a regime that drew support from the rural peasantry, workers and women.<sup>423</sup> It was the time, when women were permitted to become a foreign officer, to take part in management services and to become either prime

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<sup>419</sup>Shami, Asma Afzal, “Political Empowerment of Women in Pakistan,” *Journal of Pakistan Vision* 10, no. 1 (2009): 141–50.

<sup>420</sup>Arab Naz et al., “A Paradigm Shift in Women’s Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview),” 22.

<sup>421</sup>Shami, Political Empowerment of Women in Pakistan., 141.

<sup>422</sup>Saigol, Rubina, “Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study),” *Country Study*, 2016, 52, <http://library.fes.de/opus4/frontdoor/index/index/docId/44715.37>.

<sup>423</sup>Rouse, Shahnaz J., “Women’s Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects,” *University of Wisconsin*, 1984.

minister or governor of the state.<sup>424</sup> The constitution of 1973 has granted women's rights more in accord with the stated principles of United Nation along with a promise to along with a promise to extend educational level to all groups including urban and rural women.<sup>425</sup>

During the regime of Bhutto, there formed some NGOs like the Women's Front, and Shirkat Gah (1975) with a primary goal to encourage passionate women, thus they may become capable of playing significant role in development at national level. The Women's front was actually founded by a women's student group of Punjab University (Pakistan). They had begun the fight for women's equal rights at the workplace and inside society.<sup>426</sup> The Women's Resource Centre of Shirkat Gah, a voluntary group was started by the professional women in 1975. The purpose of this group was to raise consciousness and to integrate women's equal rights and their development. One of its missions was to collect facts through press clipping related women's issues.<sup>427</sup>

In 1975, on launching of International Women's Year,<sup>428</sup> All Pakistan Women's Association got the government to declare it same for Pakistan as it was declared by the United Nations.<sup>429</sup> There was organized a conference in Mexico City on Women's status. For the advancement of women's rights, some goals for the next ten years were settled out in different countries through the conference. It is believed that women's International Year (1975) by the United Nations was the true period of the optimistic change in Pakistan.<sup>430</sup>

Zia ul-Huq's regime in 1979 that lasted for twelve years enacted the Hudood Ordinance intended for the implementation of Islāmic law in case of *zina* (Extra-marital relations), *qazf* (False accusation of extra-marital relations with somebody) and *harabah* (robbery) that had not been applied before in Pakistan's history.<sup>431</sup> In Pakistan, this was the

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<sup>424</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 12.

<sup>425</sup>Rouse, *Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects* 7.

<sup>426</sup>Naz et al, "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)," 24.

<sup>427</sup>Shaheed, Farida, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements," in *Women's Movements in the Global Era The Power of Local Feminisms*, ed. Amrita Basu (USA: Westview Press, 2010), doi:10.4324/9780429495557.98.

<sup>428</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 12.

<sup>429</sup>Agarwal, Deepa and Tahmina Aziz Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady* (Penguin Books, 2019), 280.

<sup>430</sup>Shaheed, Farida, "Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan," *Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (2019): 159–72, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.601553282&site=eds-live>. 160.

<sup>431</sup>Critelli, Filomena M, "Women's Rights = Human Rights : Pakistani Women against Gender Violence," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 37, no. 2 (2010), <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol37/iss2/7>, 142.

time when many organizations came into sight to liberate women and to secure their rights.<sup>432</sup> In the mid of 1980s, Shirkat Gah determined that effectiveness of being a resource centre for women depends on expanding its network from community to national and international levels.<sup>433</sup> The Women's Action Forum a collective group of middle and upper class educated women and individuals to fight against the Islāmization and martial law came into being<sup>434</sup>, formed in Karachi in 1981.<sup>435</sup> During this time, an association established in 1981, named as Pakistan Women Lawyer Association(PAWLA) became the prominent pressurized group of the time. Its basic aim was to keep forcing the government to repeal and amend those anti women laws that are based on gender discrimination.<sup>436</sup>

The specific issue brought forward, which WAF emerged was *zina* (adultery) case of a woman. The case upon which WAF came into existence combined many other issues those related to class and gender. Social morality (like marital decision making) and class discrimination (economical status of the person whom one selects to marry) were both involved.<sup>437</sup> Starting there on, the connection between the state and women changed profoundly from mutual adjustments of the earlier decades to conflict, contestation and confrontation.<sup>438</sup> The regime's agenda was opposed by the Women Action Forum that was the platform for different women's associations just to defend the women's rights in Pakistan.<sup>439</sup> They formed Women's Action Forum, a pressure group for the equal rights of women, jointly with the help of individuals and women's group across political spectrums on a similar agenda.<sup>440</sup> The Women's Action Forum with the mutual cooperation of some other independent groups decided to rally for some basic rights. These includes: employment, marital choice, physical security, planned parenthood and end of discrimination.<sup>441</sup> The

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<sup>432</sup>Jafar , Afshan, "Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women's NGOs in Pakistan," *Social Problems* 54, no. 3 (2007): 256–73, doi:10.1525/sp.2007.54.3.256.

<sup>433</sup>Iqbal , Shahnaz, "Widening the Base of Feminist Movement in Pakistan," in *Building Feminist Movements and s: Global Perspectives*, ed. Lydia Alpizar Durán, Noël D Payne, and Anahi Russo (Zed Books, 2007), [https://www.dissentmagazine.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/1389801981d14Porter1.pdf](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/wp-content/files_mf/1389801981d14Porter1.pdf).

<sup>434</sup>Zia , Afīya Shehrbano, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan," *Feminist Media Studies*, no. 91 (2009): 29–46.

<sup>435</sup>Jalal, *The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan*, 103.

<sup>436</sup>Charania , Moon, "Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan," in *Routledge Handbook of Gender in South Asia*, ed. Leela Fernandes (London: Routledge, 2014), doi:10.4324/9781315848501.ch22. 324.

<sup>437</sup>Rouse, *Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects*, 8.

<sup>438</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 14.

<sup>439</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements", 99.

<sup>440</sup>Shaheed, "Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan." 162.

<sup>441</sup>Saigol, *Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects.*, 9.

activism of women during 1980s was deeply centred on the state apparatus, trying to counteract the state's plans and to rescind women's legal rights.<sup>442</sup>

The Women's Action Forum has campaigned during 1990 jointly with some political bodies to re-establish and raise women's seats allocation in total elected bodies. Activists started the campaign lead by their own NGOs and supported by donor funds, e.g., ShirkatGah and Aurat Foundation.<sup>443</sup> During this era, Pakistan turned out to be first Islāmic state of the Muslim world by electing a woman prime minister.<sup>444</sup> It was almost a silent women's era in the midst of the 1990s to 2000. During Benazir Bhutto's regime, many women friendly measurers were instigated. In different cities, open division colleges, Women's studies centers were established, building up of the First Women bank whose one of function was to give some advances to ladies' business visionaries and women's separate police headquarters were set up, due to mobility issues. A Commission of Inquiry for Women (1994) was launched by the state government and demanded to audit every single law of the time and to recommend proper measurement for the betterment of women's status in the public arena.<sup>445</sup>

When contrasted with the past governments, General Pervez Musharraf's strategy towards women's advancement was increasingly bold and liberal. He has made some genuine strides for the dynamic interest of women in all the cultural, political and social circles of living.<sup>446</sup> During Musharraf's time, increased donor funding was available to different women's organizations. In this period, the relationship between state and women was yet again categorized as silent, peaceful with constant co-operation along with alliance.<sup>447</sup> In 2002, he has set up a National Commission on the Status of Women of permanent nature.<sup>448</sup>

In this era, the peasant women struggle in *Okara*, the development for the privileges of lady health workers, women's activism in the conflicted area of northwest, and transgender rights activism initiated.<sup>449</sup> In various towns, *thappa* brigades<sup>450</sup> has appeared, and invented in

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<sup>442</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements", 99.

<sup>443</sup>Khan, Ayesha, Sara Malkani, and Zonia Yousuf, "Women Activists' Strategic Use of the Courts in Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia* 27, no. 4 (2019): 549–57, doi:10.1080/09584935.2019.1686751.

<sup>444</sup>Jalal, *The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan*, 77.

<sup>445</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 22,23.

<sup>446</sup>Naz et al, *A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)*, 25.

<sup>447</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 27,28.

<sup>448</sup>Zia, *The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan*,37.

<sup>449</sup>Khan, Ayesha and Nida Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan," *Feminist Dissent*, no. 3 (2018): 151–91.

direct confrontation with the authorities on several occasions.<sup>451</sup> It started in 2000 for exclusive rights over land claimed by the administration and military in the territory of Punjab. Workers assembled a peaceful opposition association called *Anjuman Muzareen Punjab* (AMP) to oppose changes from sharecropping to another agreement framework for sharecroppers, which left them defenseless against eviction and constrained their income.<sup>452</sup> They outright rejected the new terms of tenancy and demanded rights of ownership over the lands instead. At that time, women holding sticks, or *thaapas* in a form of group came out to protect their villages from police action and to resist that government force.<sup>453</sup>

Activism remained state-focused but prioritized reversing laws and the *Zina* laws were only rendered ineffective in 2006 by the Women's Protection Bill.<sup>454</sup> In addition, from *Haddoo* penalties, *zina* was removed and placed in *Ta'azir* (Pakistan's Criminal Procedure).<sup>455</sup> The primary aspiration of the women activists and that of commission was actually this reform for the past twenty five years.<sup>456</sup> Later on, some parts of the women's protection bill were declared un-Islamic by the federal Shari'at Court of Pakistan and therefore unconstitutional.<sup>457</sup>

In 2012, the first tribal women's associations were formed with the support of a prominent women's NGO in Khabar Pakhtunkhawa named as Takra Qabaili Khwendo (TQK). Basically, it is a network to bring women together from diverse backgrounds and for the growth of education in FATA. Its member employs different strategies like workshops, session for awareness-raising, press statements and political meetings to ensure women's voices are heard.<sup>458</sup>

From the beginning to date, the Women's activism in Pakistan neither excessively resisted nor much appreciated by the general public. Although, it is always portrayed that women's rights activists and NGOs always have to face resistance from state, religious

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<sup>450</sup> In 2001, peasant movement in Punjab became famous as women's *thappa* brigade. *Thappa* is basically, a long wooden stick used by women to wash clothes and to thresh harvests. See, Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements."112.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.112.

<sup>452</sup> Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan."167.

<sup>453</sup> Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan",167 ; Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."28.

<sup>454</sup> Shaheed, *Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, 164.

<sup>455</sup> Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 28

<sup>456</sup> Zia, *The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan*,37.

<sup>457</sup> Weiss , Anita M., "Moving Forward with the Legal Empowerment of Women in Pakistan," 2012.11.

<sup>458</sup> Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan,170.

scholars and other women and men in general. In actuality, at most of the occasion, it revealed in literature that the resistance always had risen when the activism took the turn that went into opposition with cultural or religious values. Many NGOs are working in Pakistan actively in different cities. It is another different story that women in Pakistan themselves are confused that what role they really want to indulge in and what better go well with them. The modern secular and religious women's rights activism made them more bewildered. At one end these women are being encouraged by modern forces to embrace modernity and at the other side, this modernization process feels threatening to their traditional social structures. In Pakistan, a very recent striking trend was 'Aurat March. It has brought new debates between the older and younger generation in the Pakistani community.

### **3.1.1. 'Aurat March in Pakistan (2018-2020)**

There is an intense need to explore the ways in which female activists of Pakistan observe and project their feminism, gender roles and their relationship with religion and nationalism.<sup>459</sup> Recently, young women brought "the politics of sexuality onto the streets" with drastic results.<sup>460</sup> The women of Pakistan came out to gain empowerment through participating in social-political women movements, so they initiated 'Aurat March (2018) in Pakistan to celebrate the International Women's Day.<sup>461</sup> Basically the 'Aurat March movement in Pakistan signifies to a number of campaigns aimed at changing society's issues most probably concerning women, such as female political rights, abortion freedom, sexual abuse and equal wages at work, parental leave, and to end sexual harassment and discrimination against women.<sup>462</sup>

In 2018, young feminists in Karachi, some of whom were working in ShirkatGah or had participated in different activities, took the lead in initiating and organizing the first 'Aurat March under the prominent banner, "Hum 'Auratein" (We Women). A few older feminists helped, and the crowd was a cross section of generations as well as some transgender and rainbow activists. Simultaneously, a less significant march was held in

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<sup>459</sup>Anjum , Gulnaz, "Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals," *Open Cultural Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): 36–49, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2020-0004>. 39.

<sup>460</sup>Shaheed, Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan, 168

<sup>461</sup>Manj ,Faran, "The Illusion Of Feminism — 'Aurat March,'" *Daily Times*, March 5, 2020, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/570423/the-illusion-of-feminism-'Aurat-march/>.

<sup>462</sup>Baig et al., "Role of Media in Representation of Sociocultural Ideologies in 'Aurat March ( 2019 – 2020 ): A Multimodal Discourse Analysis", 414.

Lahore.<sup>463</sup> It was held, to highlight women as less privileged in Pakistani society according to the small group of rally.<sup>464</sup> The International Women's Day was celebrated in major cities across Pakistan by participating in 'Aurat March.<sup>465</sup> Yet again in 2019, marches were held in several major cities to mark women's day.<sup>466</sup> 'Aurat March (2019) faces much criticism from religious scholars, politicians and common people of Pakistan, calling it against cultural, social and religious values.

In Pakistan, during whole scenario, a sustained women's activism has never been favored by political developments.<sup>467</sup> In reality, it is the public who does not support such activism that is somehow at any edge contradictory with Islāmic teachings, state laws and public customs or traditions that are highly regarded in the sight of people. In the context of the Pakistani nation, 'Aurat March remained until now and might continue to be in the coming decades a contested matter.

The majority of Pakistani people are highly concerned about their traditions and cultural values. In case of the 'Aurat March, through electronic and social media, one would come across numerous reactions simply detesting 'Aurat March. It saw more resentment from public, condemnation from assembly members and especially from those people who are more attached to family values and cultural traditions. On religious basis, they are not only criticized by Muslim community instead all the communities of different religions were not supporting this march because the cultural values of their country are not allowing them to come out in support of the 'Aurat March.<sup>468</sup> There are real generational differences in the concepts and praxis of activism, however. Older activists believe that younger women engage in agenda-based activism unmindful of broader political dynamics, long-term goals, and impact; they consider most to be keener on joining international movements than building a national movement; and they view some of their concerns and online activism as elitist.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>463</sup>Shaheed, *Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, 168.

<sup>464</sup>Baig et al., "Role of Media in Representation of Sociocultural Ideologies in 'Aurat March ( 2019 – 2020 ): A Multimodal Discourse Analysis, 417.

<sup>465</sup>Alam, Zainab B., "Do-It-Yourself Activism in Pakistan: The Fatal Celebrity of Qandeel Baloch," *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 1 (2020): 76–90, doi:10.1017/S1537592719002408.

<sup>466</sup>Shaheed, *Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, 168

<sup>467</sup>Shaheed, *The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements*, 96.

<sup>468</sup>Baig et al., "Role of Media in Representation of Sociocultural Ideologies in 'Aurat March ( 2019 – 2020 ): A Multimodal Discourse Analysis, 417.

<sup>469</sup>Shaheed, *Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, 167.



These seniors activists claimed willingness to encourage the March, but they were actually cautious of the type of activism that does not have any qualms exiting the realm of respectability.<sup>470</sup> Unexpectedly, younger organizers reached out to older feminists and feminist NGOs like ShirkatGah on how to tackle the backlash, opening a vital channel of communication and trust-building. Reassured by the offers of support, these groups listened to the strategic advice of seasoned activists.<sup>471</sup> Even they have seen much criticism from self feminists, actors and many other women rights activists, e.g., KishwarNaheed<sup>472</sup> said by commenting onto them;

“Women should not call themselves *Āzad* (free), we should locate our *Āzadi* (freedom) — in the law, not in our bodies and tongues.<sup>473</sup>

In societies like Pakistan that are based on the ideology of religion, people are usually much attached to religious values and cultural customs. In Pakistan, women are facing many issues concerning their social, legal, and economical living. The need is to highlight these issues and try to eradicate social evils that are making their life tougher. There is a need to understand the cultural and religious differences of Muslim countries to those of western countries. It is not possible for every country, religion and culture to adopt and change once values by following blindly to any others. We should know our legal boundaries, our cultural limitations and our religious values.

### **3.1.1.1. The placards of ‘Aurat March**

In any protest, march or movement slogans have been represented in many mediums including, banners, posters, audio instruments, speeches and songs. Similarly, slogans to represent the sociocultural concerns have always played a vital role in inspiring people to unite and achieve their certain interests.<sup>474</sup> In the context of ‘Aurat March, within the movement reactions were split. Some felt that finally the issues had been catapulted into the public and others were heated that the posters were inappropriate, detracted attention from the issues of rural and grassroots women, and would alienate many women given that the term

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<sup>470</sup>Khatri ,Sadia, “Should Feminists Claim Aurat March’s ‘Vulgar’ Posters? Yes, Absolutely - Prism,” *Dawn*, Accessed January 22, 2020. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1469815>.

<sup>471</sup>Shaheed, Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women’s Movement in Pakistan, 169.

<sup>472</sup>Kishwar Naheed (b. 1940) is one of the renowned feminist poets of Pakistan. She is famous for pioneering feminist, bold and radical writing through her poetry. She has also received many awards for her literary contribution towards Urdu literature.

<sup>473</sup>Khatri, Should Feminists Claim ‘Aurat March’s ‘Vulgar’ Posters? Yes, Absolutely - Prism.

<sup>474</sup>Al- Sowaidi , Belqes, Felix Banda, and Arwa Mansour, “Doing Politics in the Recent Arab Uprisings: Towards a Political Discourse Analysis of the Arab Spring Slogans. , 52(5),” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52, no. 5 (2015): 621–645, doi:10.1177/0021909615600462.

feminist is still so controversial. Self-made placards were more imaginative and humorous than at traditional rallies.<sup>475</sup>

Nevertheless, slogans, banners and songs always represent your struggle for the cause, purpose and a desire to accomplish the presented subject matters. Basically, slogans act as a forum by which a large number of socio-political problems are addressed that are likely to be unspeakable otherwise. The slogans include the means by which message writers may present their problems in the confidence that they are on the cautious zone and are protected from social or political penalties.<sup>476</sup> The placards are actually a mirror of our thoughts and demands when we come forward for a specific cause and mission accomplishment. If they lack of actual representation, the whole struggle remains ineffective and vague. The inclusion of unnecessary themes on placards just to gain the attention even makes the important themes worthless.

The current march got due attention mainly of its distinct placards representation. The media have captured many placards and they got viral at national and international level. One of its controversial placards portraying, “*Mera Jism Meri Marzi*” (My Body My Choice), has become the key symbolic slogan representing the “Aurat March. The term has been directly duplicated and translated from the statement ‘my body my choice’ which has been a social campaign driven in the West that “aims to break the silence and end the stigma around a critical sexual and reproductive health issue: access to safe abortion”.<sup>477</sup> Later on, the issue became much debated and got viral on media. Even many of its supporters tried giving this slogan a new meaning of their own choice in justification that it is not borrowed from western feminism. Like, some were saying it means, nobody has right to beat their women and people must stop acid attacks on women. Some were saying that nobody has right to violate, abuse and harass women without her consent. At some other times it is explained in the sense of women not being forced into forced marriages, pregnancy, trafficking and abortion. Others were explaining as women are free of what to wear and what not to wear. Despite of the various different clarifications, these were not enough to convince public. Strangely enough,

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<sup>475</sup>Shaheed, Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women’s Movement in Pakistan, 169.

<sup>476</sup>Al-Sowaidi, et al., Doing Politics in the Recent Arab Uprisings: Towards a Political Discourse Analysis of the Arab Spring Slogans, 2.

<sup>477</sup>Asfand ,Ahmed, “Questioning the Execution of ‘Aurat March and Reasoning Alternatives to the Campaign’s Slogan ’ Mera Jism Meri Marzi’,” 2020, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ahmed\\_Asfand/publication/340427476\\_Questioning\\_the\\_execution\\_of\\_’Aurat\\_March\\_and\\_Reasoning\\_Alternatives\\_to\\_the\\_Campaign’s\\_Slogan\\_’Mera\\_Jism\\_Meri\\_Marzi’/links/5efa6f95299bf18816f3502c/Questioning-the-execution-of-’Aurat-March-and-Reasoning-Alternatives-to-the-Campaigns-Slogan-Mera-Jism-Meri-Marzi.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ahmed_Asfand/publication/340427476_Questioning_the_execution_of_’Aurat_March_and_Reasoning_Alternatives_to_the_Campaign’s_Slogan_’Mera_Jism_Meri_Marzi’/links/5efa6f95299bf18816f3502c/Questioning-the-execution-of-’Aurat-March-and-Reasoning-Alternatives-to-the-Campaigns-Slogan-Mera-Jism-Meri-Marzi.pdf), 3.

the representations of all other slogans on placards were enough to justify the slogan's genuine purpose.

Furthermore, 'Aurat March remained unsuccessful to meet the expectations of the general public. Initially, it was expected that this event would turn out to be a revolutionary accomplishment, but the reality was totally opposite. At somehow, the event of the 'Aurat March has become worthless in the sight of the public and turned into a meaningless condemned event. The actual reason of condemnation was its non-sensical source and absurd demands by the participants and distraction from the factual matters of women's sufferings. These supposed feminists have shown concern on such issues like, "If Men can Smoke Why Can't We?" It demonstrates that how much these women and their supporters were truly concerned about women's issues and their rights in Pakistan in society.<sup>478</sup>

It is illustrated that events like "Women March 2018 and Women on Bikes prove women's resistance and that progress is taking place, but it surely is slow", by eliminating religious and cultural impediments to advocate justice and equality for women.<sup>479</sup> Ironically, it is far from understanding, what kind of justice and progress is for women while riding bikes, sitting like men, staying single, smoking, wearing men-like dresses or copying men. Except some of the placards, many of them were showing that those attendants of the march are highly impressed by their males. They are not worried about women's issues, but truly concerned about what illogical and absurd things men can do and women can't. They have actually issues with women's lifestyle that is different in comparison to that of western women. Actually, we don't want our own characteristics of being women, to have diverse identity and unique style of our own culture. All of our issues are revolving around becoming men-like because we think they are some kind of superior or a better creature than us or equality is being similar to men. If not, we have thousands of serious issues concerning women's life that is in dire need to highlight and to stand for them for an entire transformation.

In a nutshell, for the promotion of women's rights and their empowerment in the country, Pakistan needs a logical and constructive solution. Women's involvement in different sectors would be helpful approach so that they may become able to defend their

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<sup>478</sup>Manj, "The Illusion Of Feminism — 'Aurat March.'"

<sup>479</sup>Anjum, "Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals",39.

rights in Governmental and educational division.<sup>480</sup> In most of the parts of Pakistan, women are treated equally, respectfully and her participation in the public sector shows it visibly. Although through many writings, the picture of the women of Pakistan is always shown worse and segregated in many terms. In a study, it is illustrated that Pakistani woman have always lived a status of the “second citizen” as Simone De Beauvoir portrayed women in her book as ‘female otherness’.<sup>481</sup> During this, we forget one thing that these feminists were securing their own needs and gains at that time which cannot equally adopted and might not suitable to all cultures’ needs globally. Such rallies and marches can contribute to women’s development, but through productive approach and positive way. It is not about fun or to gain attention on social or electronic media by playing a woman’s card such a serious issue. Although, there were many of the placards that were depicting the true position and the factual issues, but just because of some vague placards they even lost their significance.

Many of the placards were not only critically evaluated by the general public on social media, but also by different television and film stars, political and religious personals and other well-known personalities. It is to be mentioned here, many of the senior women’s rights activists isolated themselves from vulgar posters which shows that indirectly they have confirmed the vulgarity of posters and rejected it out rightly. It also depicts that many of the seniors’ women rights activists agree that feminist activism should be in limits. Furthermore, the need is to create a distinction between actual issues from those of pretended and adopted one. On the women’s International day, it is not something wrong to raise voice against social evils. We need to determine, the real issues, existent barriers and social evils. Those who are concerned about women’s progress, eventually they will realize that ‘Aurat March slogans were not accurately representing the reflection of collective and an individual’s life issues and concerns.

### **3.1.1. Status of Pakistani Women**

#### **a. Family and Social Life**

An increasing change has been occurring in Pakistan in perspective of Women’s social and family life. The women of Pakistan distinctively participate in social life and prefer their family values as well. Inside Pakistan, social life revolves around relatives and extended kin. For most people, other obligations are overridden by the family loyalty. Even the

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<sup>480</sup>Manj, “The Illusion Of Feminism — ‘Aurat March.’”

<sup>481</sup> Iqbal, *Aurat March: Religion and Feminism in Pakistan*, 10.

overwhelming value of the family relations retains its significance among the most westernized elite class. In Pakistani culture, the family is considered as the foundation of the social organization and provides protection and identity to its all members.<sup>482</sup> In contrast the picture that is shown globally of Pakistan women and their life in a family, is another suppressed story which always portrays family as a “root to patriarchy”. It mostly depicts that woman have secondary status in family institution which forces and limits her to household chorus only being faithful wives and mothers.

Gender refers to women’s and men's socially constructed roles and responsibilities within a society. The disparity between women and men in roles and obligations derives from families, communities and their culture. <sup>483</sup> In certain villages and countryside where the education system is too underprivileged for both men and women, it can be noticed that from the very begging, girls are taught to suppress their emotions, desires and to behave modestly and self-control. They are mostly confined into private domain and their mobility is restricted. On the other side, boys received better treatment, support and privileges from their family members. Eventually, they grow up more dominant, and authoritative towards their sisters and later on towards their wives.<sup>484</sup> This shows that less knowledge is one of the factors towards women discrimination in social circle.

It is argued that, those prominent laws that are affecting women’s rights in Pakistani society are chiefly family laws. Besides this, it can be noticed that the family is considered in Qur’ānic injunctions as a fundamental social unit. Therefore, it provides in depth and comprehensive code for its regulation. However, it’s worth mentioning that in practice, the rights of women are greatly violated, which is the most vulnerable area for them to be practiced rightly.<sup>485</sup>

Literature shows that in the early years of marriage, the married woman’s life is always difficult. In the household, the young bride has very little standing. She submits to her mother-in - law and has no impact on the activities of her husband. Later on, seeing that the time when she bears a son, she gains power and respect in the family. It is expected that sons

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<sup>482</sup> Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan.*”56.

<sup>483</sup>Pervez , Sara and Khalid M. Iraqi, “Gender Discrimination – Prevailing State In Pakistan,” *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies* 16 (2018): 153–70.

<sup>484</sup>Ambreen , Mamonah and Anwaar Mohyuddin, “Gender Biased Parental Attitudes towards Education: A Case Study of Village Dasuha, District Faisalabad,” *Academic Research International* 4, no. 1 (2013): 140–47.

<sup>485</sup>Shah ,Niaz A., “Women, the Koran and International Human Rights Law The Experince of Pakistan,” in *Studies in Religion, Secular Beliefs and Human Rights*, 4th ed. (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), doi:10.1163/ej.9789004152373.i-263.

will look after them in their old age while girls are a liability on parents to be given away in marriage after all. Therefore, mothers tend to favor sons on their daughters and often nursing them longer than to their daughters.<sup>486</sup> The girl child often becomes the victim of discrimination right from the time of her birth. The girl child is met with depression, especially if she born after another sister or sisters. In contrast, the birth of a male child is welcome with open hearted. <sup>487</sup> In case of property rights, women are often expected to surrender their rights in favor of their brothers.<sup>488</sup> The aforementioned mistreatments clearly show that it is not only male or one segment that is specifically targeting women and usurping their rights instead different dominant forces are playing their part in it. Basically, male and females, both are the reason of prejudice towards women.

Over 75 percent women live in the rural areas. The majority of them have little knowledge of Islāmic doctrine and much less of their citizenship rights in Pakistan state.<sup>489</sup> In the context of education, there can be observed a change. In the past, people did not even permit their daughters to attend schools, but now they have started getting their daughters well educated.<sup>490</sup> But if we focus in depth than we can find out that women are the real heirs of gender construction in family system. She is a woman, a mother, a sister or any other who teach children that how to behave who you really are. If these family women treat daughters the way they treat to their sons, then there will not remain any discrimination further. Through education and public awareness in rural and backward areas, it can be seen now that woman is being encouraged to participate in public and social life. In Pakistan woman practically enjoying her rights in many sectors, but still something is probably missing because of some old tradition and core customs that has grown deeper in families as a part of their daily life.

#### **b. Political and Cultural Life**

Based on cultural and religious structure, politics are not much appreciated by women in Pakistani society. In Pakistan generally, it is considered that women are not suitable for politics and related issues. Though a lot of women participate in political concern, but still, it's not as much as men do. Although, in politics, women remained very visible during

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<sup>486</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*.60

<sup>487</sup>Ambreen and Mohyuddin, *Gender Biased Parental Attitudes towards Education: A Case Study of Village Dasuha, District Faisalabad*,143.

<sup>488</sup>*Ibid.*,146.

<sup>489</sup>Jalal, *The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan*,77.

<sup>490</sup>Ambreen and Mohyuddin, *Gender Biased Parental Attitudes towards Education: A Case Study of Village Dasuha, District Faisalabad*,146.

Pakistan's movement and participated actively in almost all political and constitutional processes.<sup>491</sup> Before partition, many educated women were there who believed in the active role of women in politics.<sup>492</sup> The Muslim League has enabled the inclusion of women in the struggle for independence. Several NGOs in British India, were set up in India to join the men for independence from British India and for the purpose of political empowerment<sup>493</sup>

After 1947, in Pakistan, Muslim women from within the circle of the upper class continued to endorse the political strengthening of women by lawful changes. The two prominent ladies of the time Begum Shaista Ikramullah and Begum Shahnawaz represented the women in the legislative body which was composed to make the Pakistan's first constitution.<sup>494</sup> This shows that from the very beginning, women's participation in legislative bodies remained significantly visible in Pakistan. Beginning from respected Fatima Jinnah, Begum Shaista Ikramullah, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Begum Shahnawaz, Lady Hafizullah, Lady Abdullah Haroon and Begum Hafeezuddin, are the few to name. In the current politics Benazir Bhutto (Late), Sherry Rahman, Fehmida Mirza, Hina Rabbani Kher and Maryam Nawaz and many other female leaders hold the important portfolios in different government.<sup>495</sup>

From 1999 to 2008, the allocation of 10 percent quota for females in central Superior and 5 percent quota for females in all other departments of the public sector was further affirmed. Additionally, literature shows that in local governments, the quota has been increased to 30 percent and, under the 2002 Legal Framework Order(LFO), it has been raised to 17.5 percent at the national and provincial level.<sup>496</sup> During the last national elections held in 2013, women voters' percentage and participation for positions in national and provincial bodies has been increased significantly.<sup>497</sup> However, this percentage is not limited to male or female choices only, women voters' turnout, their eligibility criteria, their population choices,

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<sup>491</sup>Ahmad ,Akhlaq and Haq Nawaz Anwar, "Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan," *The Pakistan Journal of Social Issues* VIII (2017): 73–84.

<sup>492</sup>Shahid ,Ramzan, Imran Ali, and Sumaira Rehman, "Emergence of Women Empowerment Through Inclusive Democracy in Pakistan," in *Proceeding of the International Conference on Future of Women '18*, vol. 1 (TIKM, 2018), 1–7, doi:<https://doi.org/10.17501/icfow.2018.1201>.

<sup>493</sup>Syed and Dar, "Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment," 156.

<sup>494</sup>Shahid, Ali, and Rehman, "Emergence of Women Empowerment Through Inclusive Democracy in Pakistan."3.

<sup>495</sup>Ahmad and Anwar, "Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan." 78.

<sup>496</sup>Shahid, Ali, and Rehman, "Emergence of Women Empowerment Through Inclusive Democracy in Pakistan," 3.

<sup>497</sup>Ahmad and Anwar, "Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan"; Syed and Dar, "Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment," 159.

and vote registration also contribute towards their political participation, selection and then political empowerment.

It is claimed that it is very difficult to struggle for political rights in a male-dominant society. In involvement in national politics and organizational recognition, women in the east and west have more or less equal problems.<sup>498</sup> Instead, it is based on the true conception that in regard of politics women are very skeptical. They found politics as a dirty game with false promises, deception, tricks, interest groups, violence and fights. Adding to that, it is basically a power play for power elites.<sup>499</sup> Although there exist socio-cultural and economical barriers in women's political participation, but truly mentioning, these are not the only constraints. Furthermore, it is not merely male counterparts who are not allowing them to officially participate in the political domain, women themselves show less interest and skepticism.

In a variety of cultural and political events, women with less literacy rate, low self-confidence, fewer economic resources, inadequate knowledge of politics and lack of resources develops additional barriers for women's public affair participation.<sup>500</sup> Moreover, Pakistani political field revolves around economical resources together with influence, public and political vast networks. In this sense, women are usually less likely to be part of a powerful political network and have relatively limited access to financial sources, unless they come from a strong political background. Furthermore, the dual responsibilities of home and work makes it more difficult for women to participate in such like activities. During political campaigns for elections, sessions of parliaments, a time when the political process has to be devoted to full attention, household works together with childcare, often becomes a burden for women.<sup>501</sup> This also can't be denied that participation in governmental affairs is not a solemnly a right, it's an immense duty to be fulfilled by a responsible person either male or a female. These are some reasons for which women avoid to partake in political activities. But it would be an injustice, if it is claimed that Pakistani women is not taking part in politics much because of gender discrimination as former underlined factors are also contributing to their less participation and interest in politics.

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<sup>498</sup>Syed and Dar, *Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment.* 163.

<sup>499</sup>Ahmad and Anwar, *Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan*, 78

<sup>500</sup>Syed and Dar, *Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment*, 163.

<sup>501</sup>Zakar, Rubeena, Muhammad Zakria Zakar, and Naqib Hamid, "Gender Mainstreaming in Politics: Perspective of Female Politicians from Pakistan," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 24, no. 2 (2018): 224–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2018.1464109>.



### c. Employment and Financial System

In social and organizational spheres, women of Pakistan have been struggling hard to establish an identity and to create their prominent mark. Over the past two decades, educational institutions have expanded enormously, providing women with the requisite education, enabling them to pursue professional occupations and allowing them to participate in economic activities.<sup>502</sup> But besides all this, a woman faces much stress and burden because of their dual responsibilities. They have to focus on their work and at the same time they can't neglect their homes chores and responsibilities. It creates trouble to cope with all this. It is indicated in a study that women teacher e.g., they are reported to have more stress symptoms than males.<sup>503</sup>

Generally, it is perceived that females are often less competent in handling the stressful circumstances. It is believed that they experience very tough time to deal with the workload and pressures at the same time. The pressurized workplace environment is an intense source of tension and because of its fragile nature, females are not as likely to cope with this condition as males do.<sup>504</sup> Women are always thought to be more nurturing, relationship-oriented and kind. Women are not seen only as communal but also not as agnetic.<sup>505</sup> In Pakistan, mostly women, are infuriated because of the non-acknowledgement of their part in homes. It is argued that women's work participation is not acknowledged or appreciated as a part of contributing to the economy of the household. Beyond this, they are also deprived of their right of property.<sup>506</sup> Despite the fact, it is a cultural and social practice, discouraged by many educated and reasonable families who practice religious and national laws.

In the context of financial exclusion and economical exploitation, different dimensions are contributing towards this domain. Its massive characteristics can be explored within social, cultural and financial structures of a society. While one cannot also deny the

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<sup>502</sup>Arif ,Ahmed, Shaheryar Naveed, and Ramsha Aslam, "Factors Causing Stress among Pakistani Working Women Factors Causing Stress among Pakistani Working Women," *Pakistan Administrative Review* 1, no. 3 (2017): 160–74, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2895886>.

<sup>503</sup>Akhtar, Naima, Malik, Kaj Björkqvist, and Karin Österman, "Factors Associated with Occupational Stress among University Teachers in Factors Associated with Occupational Stress among University Teachers in Pakistan and Finland," *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology* 6, no. 2 (2017): 1–14, doi:10.12928/jehcp.v6i2.7047.

<sup>504</sup>Arif, Naveed, and Aslam, Factors Causing Stress among Pakistani Working Women Factors Causing Stress among Pakistani Working Women, 162.

<sup>505</sup>Heilman Madeline E and Suzette Caleo, "Combatting Gender Discrimination : A Lack of Fit Framework," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 21, no. 5 (2018): 725 –744, doi:10.1177/1368430218761587.

<sup>506</sup>Ambreen and Mohyuddin, "Gender Biased Parental Attitudes towards Education: A Case Study of Village Dasuha, District Faisalabad."140.

importance and contribution of education in this sector. It is a worth mentioning that the knowledge, decision-making and access to resources are interconnected. Women's low rate of education retains many financial and decision-making rights from them. Further social and cultural practices emphasize the role of women and men in terms of financial authority and resources. Although, religion and state's law fully acknowledge women financial independence and many other rights related to property and financial decision-making.

#### **d. Legal System**

The authenticity of the legal position of Muslim women in the Holy Qur'ān, which acknowledges the remarriage of widows and divorcees, right of female inheritance, female marriage consent and much more right. However, Muslim women's options traditionally have been limited because of the traditions and culture so that the above legal rights have not always been enjoyed.<sup>507</sup> Because of the supremacy of some old customs and cultural practices, women's choices were limited, that is why the above mentioned legal rights were not always enjoyed by these women.

For the growth of every country, women's education is crucial. As a result, Pakistan's government and society organizations have successfully played a role in providing education to the women of Pakistan.<sup>508</sup> In participation to legal activities of country, some educated women also participated as women legislatures. Pakistan's first legislature had two women members, named as Jahanara Shahnawaz, the leader of All-India Muslim League Council in 1937; and Shaista Ikramullah who belongs to an East Pakistan's Suhrawardy family.<sup>509</sup> It is a fact, without education and required knowledge, women are not capable to know their rights that are specified for them by Islām and their country's law.

Most of the Pakistani women are living in the countryside. They are not well educated to know even their basic rights granted to them by their religion and country as a citizen of Islāmic nation. The aforementioned discussion clearly shows that most of the women in Pakistan who are still deprived of many rights granted to them by religion or country's law are due to their ignorance. Those who belong to educated, financially stable families are

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<sup>507</sup>Weiss, Anita M *Women's Position in Pakistan : Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization*, vol. 25 (University of California, 1985), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644115>.

<sup>508</sup>Abrar-ul-haq, Muhammad, Mohd Razani Mohd Jali, and Gazi Md Nural Islām, "Empowering Rural Women in Pakistan : Empirical Evidence from Southern Punjab," *Springer*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-016-0365-7>.

<sup>509</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."8

enough educated and advanced currently. They are participating in social, political, legal and educational domain actively. In Pakistan, educated women are not restricted by any means. If they are not able to participate in the public domain, it is because of their limited access to the basic education, low income resources and fewer facilities while living in a developing country. The positive picture of Pakistani women would rarely present at international level. Furthermore, the focus is only to show Pakistani community as patriarchal and male dominant. Although many of these factors are contributing towards women's low status, but on the other hand, many of them are remarkably participating without any discrepancies and they are also Pakistani women.

### **3.2. Pakistani Women Activist**

The debates between religious and secular activists/feminist is still far from resolved.<sup>510</sup> In Pakistan, there is an intense necessity to investigate the methods in which these activists examine and develop their feminism revolving around the sex roles by developing their connections with independent community and religious traditions.<sup>511</sup> By concentrating on either self-professed secular feminists or explicitly Islāmist women's groups, it has been frequently reproduced about women within the scholarship, ends up reinforcing the idea that women must fall into the one or the other group.<sup>512</sup>

In the twentieth century, the internationalization of feminism has further complicated the idea. Historians, while giving consideration over the issue, suggested different schemes based on the philosophy of gender, specifically perceptions of women's differences or sameness to men.<sup>513</sup> Some NGO's, associations or individual activists may prefer secular thought and some may prefer other ideology that considers religion prior to any ideology.

There is a misconception about Islām as liberal and conservative. It is true that there is only one Islām; it can't be liberal or conservative. Though some people for their own personal settlements translate it as liberal/conservative, but it sounds something strange. Beyond this it can be interpreted as Islāmic or Secular. Islāmic feminism, scholars sometimes attempt to differentiate between groups of Muslim women on the basis of their differing relationships to Islāmic injunctions and secular precepts. Some of the terms

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<sup>510</sup>Ibid.36

<sup>511</sup>Anjum, "Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals."

<sup>512</sup>Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan."

<sup>513</sup>Rupp and Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement : A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism."363.

suggested are: “Muslim feminist,” “secular Muslim feminist” and even “atheist Muslim feminist.”<sup>514</sup> So is the case in Pakistani society, there are different number of activists who also differs in their thoughts while adopting different feminist approaches. Some prefer being secular and other might prefer to follow religious commandments while working for the rights of women or raising voices against women exploitation.

The relationship between the women’s rights activists, religious scholars and the Pakistani state has undergone noteworthy shifts from confrontation to mutual accommodation at many different stages. Instead the debate of women’s rights further divided into secular and religious context by the women rights activists and the coexistence of Islāmic feminism and secular feminism developed in Pakistani society. Furthermore, the women’s rights organizations and groups work for women’s rights in the Pakistani community remained less attractive to general people including men and women. Specifically, in rural areas, these NGO and women’s rights activists were remained less affective and striking. Evidently, there is an enormous need to address the constructed image of NGOs as westernized and the women NGOs belief towards endangered Muslim’s identities. After all, it is not only limiting their scope of activism, but it also elaborates its different ground struggle.<sup>515</sup> A group of some people, with same class or background without the mutual conformity of those belong more to sufferer groups at a higher level does not produce any ability to profound transformation. If these bodies, individually or collectively concerned truly to the social change and want to elevate the status of women, they must first identify the public aspirations either men or women. Public support always generates a revolutionary transformation in societies.

### **3.2.1. Pakistani Activists (Secular Thought)**

In Muslims societies, feminist do not share only an “Enlightenment” or progressive interpretive Islāmic view instead many have challenged the specific connection between religious and cultural patriarchies.<sup>516</sup> In newly emergent countries like Pakistan, secular and democratic ideas always direct towards society’s drastic changes at the level of social relation.<sup>517</sup> Secular feminists in Muslim contexts advocate secular activism and look at the

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<sup>514</sup>Jamal, Amina, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013). p.50.

<sup>515</sup>Jafar, “Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women’s NGOs in Pakistan.” 265.

<sup>516</sup>Zia, “*Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*”, 23.

<sup>517</sup>Rouse ,Shahnaz, Pakistan Women’s Movement in Pakistan : State , Class , Gender,” *South Asia Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (1986): 30–37, 10

interplay of structural and legal factors in order to explain women's status.<sup>518</sup> Simultaneously, Western culture has been a devoted supporter of freeing Muslim women in order to elevate women's status by objecting on veil and exhorting on their 'plight'.<sup>519</sup> Those who have secular vision are almost similar to those of Mohanty, who argued that women are sexually controlled as they wear a veil etc;

“With regard to women's movement, especially in Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon and Palestine, there is an urgent need to fight back and reverse the fundamentalist trend in terms of both educating and organizing people.”<sup>520</sup>

Nonetheless, women are veiled does not necessarily mean that they are miserable, victimized or inactive.<sup>521</sup> The Elite or upper class women are trying to borrow western culture as their own by leaving their own traditional culture back to stage by considering it backward and old fashioned. Despite of the fact, secularization or westernization is not the basic concern of the general public except for those belong to a specific class. In the sense of secularization/westernization, modernization has always been remained a true concern of little elite class group of a society. It is not an easy process to transform the minds and culture of the majority into secularization. Although, a minority has accepted and implemented it, the majority did not prefer the secular outlook and traditions.<sup>522</sup>

A few women in Pakistan self-identify as feminist, although relatively numbers are increasing. Most of them are urbanized and well-educated women; pre-existing links with either leftist ideology if not groups or transnational women's movement. Since 1980s, those have classified as feminist yet in a state to differentiate between women's rights movement from that of feminist or women's rights movements.<sup>523</sup> On the matter of achieving the desired ends, because of belonging to privileged backgrounds, these activists always try to use their different links to ensure that women related issues must not be skipped from government's agendas.<sup>524</sup> In Pakistan, on the basis of diverse ideologies, thus feminist or women activist may be classified into numerous different schools, at times wilfully or at

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<sup>518</sup>Zine, “Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism : Reflections of a Muslim.” 173.

<sup>519</sup>Shahzadi, Pakeeza, “Reforming Muslim Women's Rights: Transforming Modernism, Identifying Secularism and Re-Defining Islām,” *Pakistan Journal of Islāmic Research* 14 (2014): 19–26.

<sup>520</sup>Chandra, Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, 632nd ed. (Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 1991), 260.

<sup>521</sup>Haeri, Shahla, *No Shame for the Sun: Lives of Professional Pakistani Women* (Syracuse University Press, 2002), p.XXV.

<sup>522</sup>Esposito, John L., *The Islāmic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford University Press, 1999), p.7.

<sup>523</sup>Shaheed, “The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements.”94.

<sup>524</sup>Ansari, Sarah, “Winds of Change?: The Role of Women Activists in Lahore before and after Partition,” *Pakistan Vision* 9, no. 2 (n.d.): 1–15.

other times unknowingly.<sup>525</sup> Many of the feminists in Pakistan are struggling hard to create a third way through the combination of modern and religious thought at the same time. Their activism basically deals with making women modern while living within the sphere of Islāmic teachings because these women think that it is not Islām but the patriarchal interpretation that is making women's status low and subordinated.

The two of such early voices, Asma Barlas and Riffat Hassan are <sup>526</sup> US-based Pakistani scholars that stood up in support of women and human rights at the international level. Both have undertaken projects to debunk male (mis)use of linguistics and interpretation of Islāmic scripture.<sup>527</sup> Riffat Hassan is one of the famous feminists of Pakistan. She argued that the legal and social structure is reducing women's status to less than that of men virtually mathematically, and systematically. She herself stated that; 'it was not until 1983-84, when I spent almost two years in Pakistan' was the beginning of her career as an activist.<sup>528</sup>

There were certain issues she claimed, on the basis of which her activism has begun in Pakistan. She has started studying women's issues in context of Islāmic theological traditions in 1974. During two years (1984-85) in Pakistan, her career as a woman's rights activist begun.<sup>529</sup> Riffat Hasan has written extensively about women-specific verses.<sup>530</sup> She has gone abroad. Her work often gives a quick look and portrayal of Islāmic feminism. On the other hand, she was the only educated, secular person who knew the Qur'ān at that time.<sup>531</sup> She acclaimed:

“Having spent almost three decades in doing research on women-related texts in the Qur'ān, I know that the Qur'ān does not discriminate against women.”<sup>532</sup>

Some of other Pakistan's leading contemporary secular feminists include, but not limited to, Khawar Mumtaaz, Farida Shaheed, Shahnaz J. Rouse, Fouzia Saeed and Nighar Said Khan. Notably, these feminist scholars have produced much literature on women's issues, theorizing it within the secular feminist approach and supported several times secular

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<sup>525</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).”1.

<sup>526</sup>Nurmila, “The Influence of Global Muslim Feminism on Indonesian Muslim Feminist Discourse.” 35.

<sup>527</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 25.

<sup>528</sup>Hassan , Riffat, “Feminist Theology: The Challenges for Muslim Women,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 9 (1996): 53–65, doi:10.1080/10669929608720092.57.

<sup>529</sup>Ibid.58.

<sup>530</sup>Sattar ,Nikhat, “Female Scholarship,” *Dawn*, November 4, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1294092>.

<sup>531</sup>Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun: Lives of Professional Pakistani Women*.273

<sup>532</sup>Hassan ,Riffat, “Islām and Human Rights in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of the Positions of Three Contemporary Women,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 10, no. 1 (2002): 131–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2002.9673311>.

activism in Pakistan.<sup>533</sup> Much of the social scientific literature on women in the 1990s was produced by the non-profit developmental organizations and the more widely cited work is by Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed (1987).<sup>534</sup>

Farida Shaheed is one of the affiliates of the NGO ShirkatGah and the member of the organization Women Living under Muslim Laws. Shaheed's collaborator and co-author is Khawar Mumtaz, who also works on women related issues.<sup>535</sup> Farida Shaheed also the founder of WAF, has worked for more than 30 years promoting the rights of women and gender equality in Pakistani state and transnationally. Her research work is basically a combination of advocacy and capacity building, and has published widely on the interface of women, cultural and religious identities, state-citizenship dynamics and how this impacts rights.<sup>536</sup> Their work grappled with the feminist engagements with religion, primarily during the Zia's regime (1977–1988).<sup>537</sup> These Pakistani feminist scholar-activists Shaheed and Mumtaaz attempted to theorize the plea of the veil among women and linked it to the socio-economic state of the country.<sup>538</sup>

Among self stated secularist, Nighat Said Khan is one of them. Applied Social Research Institute (ASR), known as one of the founding organizations in women's activism by combining it with theory and research is founded by Nighat Said Khan. She in addition, assisted establishing the Institute of Women's Studies Lahore (LWSL) whose aim is to ending up existing tension between 'theory and practice' in social and political engagements.<sup>539</sup> She is the director of this institute. In the politics of Pakistan, they are believed sometimes to be authoritative owing to their extensive efforts in theorizing the women's movement and related traditions either political identities or beliefs based on religion. It is important to highlight, beyond important ideological differences of these scholars in theorizing their feminist approaches, Said Khan, Shaheed and Mumtaaz, all of

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<sup>533</sup>Serez ,Annie, "Feminism in Pakistan: Dialogues between Pakistani Feminists," *Laurier Undergraduate Journal of the Arts* 3, no. 3 (2017): 62–80, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/luja>.64.

<sup>534</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 26.

<sup>535</sup>Jamal ,Amina, "Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan," *Feminist Review* 81 (2005): 52–73.

<sup>536</sup>Shaheed, "Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women's Movement in Pakistan."170.

<sup>537</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 26.

<sup>538</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.57.

<sup>539</sup>Jahan ,Tanveer, "The Sole Voice: Women's Rights Activist, Nighat Said Khan," *Herald*, March 8, 2017, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153358>.

them are considered amongst the pioneers of the group of women activists that can be attributed as a modern women's movement in Pakistan.<sup>540</sup>

The key founder of Dastak and the executive director Hina Jilani, Victoria Bhajan and Shahtaj Qizilbash, have also worked together as women's rights activists for the rights of women and women's movements. Jilani, advocate in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, is an internationally recognized human rights leader. She is also one of the founding affiliate of the pressure group named as a Women Action Forum (1980) that came into existence in Zia's regime out of the consequence of Haddood Ordinance.<sup>541</sup>

Asma Jahangir, is known as one of the prominent activists of women's right. She was the associated member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and a Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings of the United Nations.<sup>542</sup> Asma Jahangir and her sister with the support of some lawyers were directing a women's center named as AGHS just to provide women's victims' legal aid. In Pakistan, Asma was often charged of destroying Pakistan's reputation abroad. She was also held responsible for "encouraging young Pakistani women to turn against their familial duties and thus leading them to ruin."<sup>543</sup>

There are many other Pakistani names that are classified as feminists on the ground of understanding their activism and feminist approaches related women's rights debates. In a country study, researchers mentioned different feminist activist of Pakistan by dividing them in different categories based on their work like , feminist activist, Tahira Abdullah, feminist researcher, Saba Khattak ,feminist activist and researcher, Afiya Zia Shehrbanu, feminist and Human rights activist, Nasreen Azhar, feminist artist, Lala Rukh and feminist researcher and activist, Ayesha Khan.<sup>544</sup>

In the history of Pakistan, until now, the different demands might range from advocacy for the faith-based policies towards secular principles, Islāmic law reform and equality for all especially, women and minorities. It often includes the annulment of many existing laws and demand of International Human Rights Law as a substitute.<sup>545</sup> The capabilities of secular and NGOs based feminists are often considered suspect because of their disconnectedness from the "authentic" culture. At times even their sincerity to the

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<sup>540</sup>Jamal, "Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan."67,69,57.

<sup>541</sup>Critelli, "Women's Rights = Human Rights : Pakistani Women against Gender Violence."144.

<sup>542</sup>Charania, "Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan."320

<sup>543</sup>Toor ,Saadia, "Moral Regulation in a Postcolonial Nation-State: Gender and the Politics of Islāmization in Pakistan," *Interventions:International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007): 255–75, 263.

<sup>544</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."36.

<sup>545</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?* ,24.



movement is doubted as they are seen to be motivated by greed and professionalism rather than egalitarian or patriotic impulses.<sup>546</sup>

The limits of secular feminism and to secular activists can be drawn through the examination of confrontation and backlash from the public from 1947 to current date. The reason of less effectiveness of secularism and secular feminism is because of the state's foundation which was formed in the name of religion. Another reason which can be traced out is the outlook and approach of secular activists which resembles further to Western culture and less similar to Pakistani culture. Most of the people of Pakistan are living in remote areas and those are the parts where women facing many inequalities in terms of their social domain. These people are genuinely attached to their values and culture. When these secular NGOs and activists try to approach these rural areas for awareness and to develop certain projects they met with resistance. The reason people do not want their interruption and even refuse to offer facilities is their outlook and disconnectedness from local culture. Their foreign ideologies lead them to encounter with criticism and rejection in general. Although, the highlighted causes at many forums are male dominance, patriarchal thinking, religious community and strict family systems that do not allow modern forces to spread awareness and to change their women's situation. The gap between their foreign approaches and local cultural acceptable trends always remains missing from their lists to mention it. The gap that is the barrier between locals and to them is essential to deal with, if they are truly concerned to change the situation of women in society and desire to fill the gender gap Muslim communities. The representation of secular feminist trends shows that it is not something easy to capture the secular feminist debate in perspective of Pakistani society.

### **3.2.2. Local Pakistani Activists (Religious Thought)**

There are number of detailed studies conducted by different scholars based in Pakistan and in the diaspora that explores women's participation in Islamic political parties and movements.<sup>547</sup> There are number of religious women's group at different levels with widely differing constituencies are presently noticeable in contemporary urban societies in Pakistan.<sup>548</sup> Instead of International human rights structures, which are viewed as Western

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<sup>546</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islami Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.52.

<sup>547</sup>Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan."162.

<sup>548</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islami Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.3.

secular and liberal ideologies, the majority of the popular Muslim community may choose to live by their religious values and doctrines.<sup>549</sup>

Among many secular and those Muslim feminists who based their doctrine on Islāmic teachings is less cooperating in their attitudes towards mutual struggle to combat women's rights exploitation issues. What many feminists and activist scholars call it the insider-strategy, wherein feminists or women rights activists turn to the religious doctrine of justification and to call upon the emancipation of women in context of Islam.<sup>550</sup> Many Muslim women who are faith based, in turn, are distrustful of the purposes and logics of secular Muslim feminists. The existing boundaries of Muslim 'women's voices in transnational feminist organizing and policy-setting agendas is further fragmented and compromised by the lack of solidarity' between faith based Muslim activists and of those secular activists.<sup>551</sup>

Women in religious political parties such as Jama'at-e-Islāmi<sup>552</sup> or the Islāmic academy for women, Al-Huda are prominent in women rights ideologies.<sup>553</sup> Dr. Samia Raheel Qazi, president of Jama'at-e-Islāmi's women commission (Punjab), a former MNA, is well known bold, Islāmic women's rights activist of the current time. She is the daughter of well-known Pakistani Islāmic political personality, Qazi Hussain Ahmad (Jama'at-e-Islāmi's leader). Qazi Hussain Ahmed identified five priorities of Jama'at pertaining specifically to women that includes, speedy and free justice, education, health, empowerment and social rights that are granted to them by Islām but practically invisible in Pakistani society.<sup>554</sup>

In Pakistan, Jama'at women express widespread suspicion regarding the activities of feminist, particularly about those projects funded by United Nations agencies and International aid-dispensing body. They believe that actually these feminists are promoting a western agenda to destabilize Islāmic values and culture.<sup>555</sup> Apart from this, some of NGO's working for the rights of women have close links to the upper/privileged class of Pakistan. Due to their close connections and access to resources, these NGOs took advantage out of it,

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<sup>549</sup>Shah, "Women, the Koran and International Human Rights Law The Experience of Pakistan."4.

<sup>550</sup>Charania, "Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan."324.

<sup>551</sup>Zine, "Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism : Reflections of a Muslim."173.

<sup>552</sup>The Jamaat-e-Islāmi is a movement for moral reform of Muslims that was set up by Maulana Abul Ala Maududi in 1941 in British colonial India. Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.3.

<sup>553</sup>Khan and Kirmani, "Moving beyond the Binary: Gender-Based Activism in Pakistan."152.

<sup>554</sup>Weiss, *Women's Position in Pakistan : Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization*.104.

<sup>555</sup>Jamal, "Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan."71.

whereas the other religious parties may not.<sup>556</sup> They feel “uncomfortable with the notion of breaking boundaries, which includes adopting the views of international feminism and Western women’s rights, homosexuality, and legalized abortion.”<sup>557</sup> One of the key leaders of the Women’s Commission of Jama’at-e-Islāmi in Karachi remarks a very comprehensive expression in this regard:

“Secular feminists groups have workers who are professional people. We say to them that we are willing to cooperate with you since we have people who can do jobs that you cannot do. But you have aid from UNO which we do not receive. Such aid also carries with it certain agenda which we do not subscribe.”<sup>558</sup>

More interestingly, though their efforts seem to be westernized, Jama’at women did not outlaw themselves supporting the struggle of secular activists for women’s approach to current socio-political rights. They want to work within certain limitations; distinctively the ultimate purpose of modernization must not to suppress Islāmic traditions but to improve instead.<sup>559</sup> Jama’at women’s holds comprehensive and very clear verdict in this regard;

“We want to tell them (the secular NGOs) that we have a lot of workers at the grassroots level. If you come into the limits prescribed by Qur’ān and Sunnah, then we are willing to work with you and we are ready to prove that what we are doing is strictly in line with Qur’ān and Sunnah and it is in women’s interest.”<sup>560</sup>

According to the stance of Jama’at women, female and male specific roles and those responsibilities based on gender differences did not contradict with the Islāmic women’s rights ideology that truly adheres and organize everything according to the heavenly will.<sup>561</sup> The Jama’at women explicitly declared their stance and goals regarding rights of women. They have been focused on ensuring women to achieve the complete rights that Islām bestowed to them predominantly obtaining their inheritance right and *Kafala* (men’s responsibilities of supporting women). It also includes eradication some customs e.g.,

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<sup>556</sup>Jafar, “Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women’s NGOs in Pakistan.”264.

<sup>557</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan*.110

<sup>558</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.53.

<sup>559</sup>Jamal, “Feminist ‘Selves’ and Feminism’s ‘Others’: Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan.”71.

<sup>560</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*.53.

<sup>561</sup>Jamal, “Feminist ‘Selves’ and Feminism’s ‘Others’: Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan.”71.

*swara*<sup>562</sup>, *karo-kari*<sup>563</sup> that are entirely anti-Islāmic and have no roots in Islāmic laws but are in practice within some parts of Pakistan.<sup>564</sup>

Women with a secular orientation also assess critically to these faith-based women working for the rights of women. The way Jama'at evaluate secular feminists with suspicion, secular feminists in return back criticize Jama'at-e-Islāmi as well. It is widely used to portray their vision regarding traditionalism in context of mobilizing Islām for the advancement of some particular political ends.<sup>565</sup>

In Pakistan, many institutes in different cities are working to educate women through Islāmic education.<sup>566</sup> These institutes are under various women's leadership who are trying to make women conscious of their basic rights and responsibilities and to enhance their personalities living within a society. One of the prominent Islāmic women rights activist, Dr. Farhat Hashmi is well recognised of local interpretations of women's rights based on Islāmic values. She is the director of al-Huda; a very recent institute for women in Islāmabad to provide Islāmic education.<sup>567</sup> With the passage of time, in several major cities of Pakistan, the entire nature of the society also got affected as middle class families started taking interest in Islāmic education and begun managing Qur'ānic education (*dars*) classes at their houses. The institute of al-Huda and its affiliates, especially Dr. Farhat became admired identities among youth who begun wearing *hijāb*(Islāmic dress) according to the religious doctrines. This transformation of women's lifestyle and their changed ideologies was not manifested among sixties and seventies generation.<sup>568</sup> This resulted into young women's cultural and social transformation and this aspiration led them further to promote these styles, behaviors and values to their family members, friends and towards closed ones.

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<sup>562</sup>Swara or Vani is a practice in some parts of Pakistan, that is now rarely practiced in which a girl is given in marriage or servitude as a compensation to the other family to end family disputes or to settle any murder by the member of girl's family.

<sup>563</sup>Karo kari is basically honour killing, an act of murder, in which he or she is killed because they are involved in immoral behaviour (illegal relations with someone, love marriage like matters).

<sup>564</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*.104

<sup>565</sup>Jamal, "Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan."57.

<sup>566</sup>Naveed, Juhi and Anwaar Mohyuddin, "Female Islāmic Education in Pakistan," *International Journal of Education and Management* 6, no. 3 (2016): 346–49.

<sup>567</sup>Weiss, Anita M., "Interpreting Islām and Women's Rights: Implementing CEDAW in Pakistan," *International Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2003): 581–601, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809030183007.590>.

<sup>568</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."33.

She has set up this Islāmic school al-Huda, for women in Islāmabad in 1994 which was initially a branch of the International Islāmic University.<sup>569</sup> The basic understanding of the rights of women endorsed by al-Huda is mainly to pay attention on educating women about Islāmic values and its teachings.<sup>570</sup> Al-Huda which is a competitor to Jama'at women and feminists group has become popular throughout the country as well as to other countries including Canada.<sup>571</sup> Al-Huda is mainly famous for proposing different Islāmic courses to women.<sup>572</sup> These courses are influencing the lives of female learners in diverse dimension.<sup>573</sup> Currently, it is encouraging to a new educated middle class women generation who are becoming traditional veiled women practitioners of Islāmic traditions.<sup>574</sup> Dr. Farhat Hashmi demonstrated that each person has their own sphere and specific obligations for good functioning purpose. Outside the household, a man has to work; woman has to serve in the house. It does not signify that woman cannot work outside or for men to never work at home. If they complete their obligations, they may even perform other duties.<sup>575</sup>

The Islāmic identity advocated by al-Huda has been supported by universal ideas of Islāmic traditions and are regarded as less conventional. <sup>576</sup> Unlike Jama'at, Dr. Farhat Hashmi avoids to participate in formal political activities and religious modifications. They consider that if we succeeded in transforming individuals into practicing Muslims, it will help rising social transformation at a higher level.<sup>577</sup> They believe that by following the right system and exercising it in daily routine definitely brings changes. It will help upgrading moral and ethical conduct of individual and gradually it will affect the whole society's structure towards advancement.

So these Islāmic women have also commonalities in interests with secular/local feminists as they also want women empowerment, her educational transformation, her health and economic development in all spheres of life. The difference of opinion comes in some notions. Basically, these faith-based feminists charged that these secular feminists, though took some important projects like challenging patriarchal authoritarian structures, were not sufficient dutiful towards the matters of race, class, ethnicity including minorities in their

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<sup>569</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*. 58.

<sup>570</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*.121

<sup>571</sup>Jamal, *Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan\_ Vanguard of a New Modernity*, 58.

<sup>572</sup>Ahmad, Sadaf, "Al-Huda and Women's Religious Authority in Urban Pakistan," *The Muslim World* 103, no. 3 (2013): 363–74, doi:10.1111/muwo.12019. 364

<sup>573</sup>Naveed and Mohyuddin, "Female Islāmic Education in Pakistan." 349.

<sup>574</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*.121

<sup>575</sup>Weiss, "Interpreting Islām and Women's Rights: Implementing CEDAW in Pakistan."590.

<sup>576</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*, 121

<sup>577</sup>Ahmad, "Al-Huda and Women's Religious Authority in Urban Pakistan." 363.

movement.<sup>578</sup> The sole purpose of Islāmic women's wing is to ensure that women must be entitled to all rights that are also in harmony with Islāmic teachings. They believe that woman's right in Islāmic sphere are more secure and are designed in better compatibility with her temperament and aptitude. Instead of following western women rights ideas that are just to break our religious and cultural boundaries, Muslim women can be more secure and comfortable in their own prescribed values that are more balanced.

The cultural struggle of women in Muslim societies is not a new one. The philosophical difference between these feminists like Riffat Hasan and Farhat Hashmi lies under the approaches they picked for women's rights interpretations. For example Riffat Hasan finds out some of Qur'ānic text interpretations patriarchal in terms of their explanation and she illustrates that it is not Qur'ānic text which discriminate women but the patriarchal interpretation that does. On the other hand, Islāmic scholars like Farhat Hashmi does not constitute as such judgments. However, there is also exist a great deal of disagreement between these two approaches and their activists. Because one of them focuses on women's rights through utilization of modern approach with Islāmic teachings and the other one considers the classical approach more suitable for women's rights instead seeking solution from a modern perspective. Nevertheless, they both are trying to transform the women's situation while limiting themselves within the spheres of Islāmic teachings. On the other hand, the narratives of secular feminist are totally dissimilar with other groups. Secular feminist often blames religious feminist of planning together with 'patriarchal theoretical rule', and that's what these secular feminists perceive as the fundamental cause of women's discrimination in Islāmic perspective.<sup>579</sup> They see religion and women's rights collectively unattainable. Because many of these feminists perceive the incompatibility of feminism with Islāmic teachings. Within religion and Islāmic conceptions, women with secular orientations regarded as unconvinced and less acknowledged in the Pakistani community. Although their activism at certain points affecting radically to a new generation. Despite the fact, in relationship to women, religion and rights many of the current scholars come into sight to re-emerge modern and religious perspectives.

### **3.3. Origin of the APWA in Pakistan**

#### **Historical Background**

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<sup>578</sup>Zine, "Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism : Reflections of a Muslim." 172.

<sup>579</sup>Zine, "Creating a Critical Faith-Centered Space for Antiracist Feminism : Reflections of a Muslim." 173.

Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan formed the pioneer Women's Welfare Organization in Pakistan, known as the All Pakistan Women Association (APWA), in 1949. She was the wife of Pakistan's first Prime Minister. The aim of APWA was to support the socio-economic rise and civil liberties of women, children and deprived section of the society.<sup>580</sup> It is pointed out that there are roughly two types of organizations: charitable organizations for women and NGOs run by progressive women. The All Pakistan-Women 's Association (APWA) was the most well-known among the former elite. APWA is argued to be an organization of upper-class women supplying females with resources from the less affluent socio-economic division.<sup>581</sup>

Initially, Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, convinced hundreds of young, educated Muslim girls to become nurses and she encouraged the setting up of the first Pakistan Nurses Federation. She invited qualified foreign nurses to train the young girls and also sent the trainees abroad. Within a span of two years, people started viewing the nursing profession differently and also started accepting it as a career option for young girls from middle-class Muslim families. Many of these nurses joined the forces when the Army Medical Corp (AMC) was founded.<sup>582</sup> Shortly after, the Pakistan Women's National Guards was formed in order to learn some basics of defence.<sup>583</sup>The Pakistan Women's Naval Reserve (PWNR) was also formed at "her behest, but this too met with opposition from certain quarters. The PWNG came under the army whereas the PWNR was attached to the navy. Ra'ana was appointed the chief controller by the Armed Forces of Pakistan for both NGOs, with the rank of a brigadier.<sup>584</sup>Women were given different training i.e. use guns, learn marksmanship and signalling as well as first aid, typing, social welfare work and further in a very short time.<sup>585</sup> The girls were required to do parade and foot drill and trained National Guard corps of three

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<sup>580</sup>"Prevailing Laws for Women in Pakistan," *APWA Punjab*, n.d., <http://apwapunjab.com/extra-images/legal-pdf/Prevailing Laws for Women in Pakistan 01.pdf>.

<sup>581</sup>Rouse, "Pakistan Women's Movement in Pakistan : State , Class , Gender." 11.

<sup>582</sup>Deepa Agarwal and Tahmina Aziz Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady* (Penguin Books, 2019),210.

<sup>583</sup>Sylvia A. Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association," *Islām and the Modern Age* 1, no. 3 (1970): 69–90. 69

<sup>584</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 210.

<sup>585</sup>Naz et al., "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)."23.

battalions with 2,400 women had been formed for the whole country to serve their purpose. The main idea was to train young girls in defense methods and physical fitness.<sup>586</sup>

According to the political and administrative survey in NWFP (2004) this later became the All Pakistan Women's Association and raised issues of health, education, and family laws largely within the framework of welfare.<sup>587</sup> However, she encountered criticism from the religious clergy for 'leading Muslim women astray' as also from certain segments of the right-wing press and media.<sup>588</sup> Pakistan Women National Guard met with vehement opposition by many religious scholars. Women's military training as a national guard was considered as too radical. Consequently, in 1954 after its disapproval, it was disbanded.<sup>589</sup> It was asserted that young women being trained for self-defence by males was un-Islāmic.<sup>590</sup> During these times, it was her husband, Liaquat Ali Khan, who defended her. At a public rally he declared openly and unabashedly, "Where has my wife taken the people of Pakistan to? To the dance halls? No, she has taken them to work in refugee camps! Where has my wife led the women of Pakistan to? To gambling dens? No! It is to the hospitals to work as nurses."<sup>591</sup>

On February 22, 1949 Begum Ra'ana Liaquat began to organize something permanent of nature. She called for inaugural meeting at her home.<sup>592</sup> Along with her team of dedicated volunteers, Ra'ana started to envisage and plan the setting up of a national-level which would replicate their efforts throughout the country.<sup>593</sup> This resulted into the All Pakistan Women's Association.<sup>594</sup> The women's NGOs existing at the time of creation of Pakistan, All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) being the best known among these, were primarily social welfare and charity NGOs and the nature of their work reflected this.<sup>595</sup> The APWA is a group of women, many of whom have led active lives in politics, social service and the

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<sup>586</sup>Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association",70; Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,211.

<sup>587</sup>Naz et al., "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)."23.

<sup>588</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,210.

<sup>589</sup>Khan, Leena Z., "Women's Action Forum (WAF) Women's Activism and Politics in Pakistan," *ICWA Letters - South Asia* (Hanover, NH, 2001),4.

<sup>590</sup>Farida Shaheed, "Contested Identities: Gendered Politics, Gendered Religion in Pakistan," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 851-67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2010.502710>, 853.

<sup>591</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,210.

<sup>592</sup>Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association."70.

<sup>593</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,231

<sup>594</sup>Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association."70.

<sup>595</sup>Rouse, "Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects."60.



professions. Most are the wives of prominent civil servants, politicians and professional men.<sup>596</sup>

APWA is considered as non-political voluntary NGO that welcomes young women not less than sixteen years old irrespective of social background, color, caste, belief and class.<sup>597</sup> The declared aim of their efforts is to include Pakistani women in the growth of the country and to advance Pakistani women's rights by enhancing their constitutional, economic, political and social status.<sup>598</sup> Karachi being the headquarter of APWA and capital of Sindh, has hosted from the beginning both politicians and top officials, precisely those men whose women showed themselves to be stalwart supporters of the APWA.<sup>599</sup> In all four provinces, there are four regional divisions, with a Liaison Branch in Islāmabad and provincial headquarters in Karachi, Quetta, Lahore, and Peshawar. Across Pakistan, there are 18 regional branches. APWA also runs its overseas branches in Canada, USA, U.K as an international platform for women's rights.<sup>600</sup>

APWA's widespread state coverage is an indicator of the willingness of the state to support women's rights promoters who are committed to function under the set parameters and limits.<sup>601</sup> The close alliance of APWA with modern civilian and military rulers was one of the reasons to accomplish some of the set goals by this organization<sup>602</sup> APWA, the main platform for early women's activism in Pakistan, enjoyed close relations with the new state: its formation in 1949 was primarily due to the support of the wife of the then prime minister, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, and depended on a core membership drawn from women's relatives of politicians and civil society.<sup>603</sup>

At the end of this decade APWA was able to lay the foundation stone of its national headquarters at Karachi. This was formally inaugurated in 1964, and the functions from the same premises even today. Initially, APWA with steady and persistent progress, has

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<sup>596</sup>Chipp, Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association, 70.

<sup>597</sup>Saigol, Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study), 33.

<sup>598</sup>Chipp, Sylvia A., "The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society," in Asian Women in Transition, ed. Sylvia A. Chipp and Justin J. Green (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1980), 204–26, 204.

<sup>599</sup>Ansari, "Winds of Change?: The Role of Women Activists in Lahore before and after Partition." 6.

<sup>600</sup>Accessed June 5, 2020, <http://www.apwapunjab.com/about-us.html#backAndMission>.

<sup>601</sup>Jalal, The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan, 89.

<sup>602</sup>Jamal, Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan., 58.

<sup>603</sup>Ansari, Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan., 1423.

established an amazing number of social welfare platforms.<sup>604</sup> Several overseas branches in countries such as Canada, North America and UK were opened under its aegis. They were able to sponsor hundreds of deserving students for advanced studies under the Maple Scholarship program of the Government of Canada.<sup>605</sup>

Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali's personal involvement and commitment, along with her official status, enabled APWA in building a well-coordinated female's wellbeing and development set-up. The fight for women's equality and their basic rights by APWA in the following time encouraged other women's organizations to step forth in activism for women's rights.<sup>606</sup> APWA is affiliated with many national bodies as well as International bodies. APWA has been affiliated with different international bodies like, International Council of Women, Associated Country Women of the World, International Alliance of Women<sup>607</sup>, General Federation of Women's Club, U.S., and Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association.<sup>608</sup> APWA also secured the UNESCO Adult Literacy Prize in 1974 for the success of its countrywide adult literacy program. At the governmental and administrative level, APWA proved to be the harbinger of the establishment of a special women's division under the Ministry of Social Welfare to look after all affairs pertaining to women. Later, under the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1988, it became an expanded and fully fledged women's affairs ministry.<sup>609</sup> In recent times, APWA celebrates such as women's day, UN days and other events to show their alliance with women's rights activities around the world. The present active Chairperson of APWA is Charmaine Hidayatullah. The current targeted group of APWA is children living in urban slums, out of school children, artisans, disadvantaged women and jail prisoner. The projects include but not limited to education, health and jail projects and further distribution of *Zakat* and *Rashan*(food and grocery) is also listed.

### **3.3.1. Factors of establishment of APWA**

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<sup>604</sup>Naz et al., A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview), 22.

<sup>605</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady, 240.

<sup>606</sup>Naz et al., A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview), 22.

<sup>607</sup><https://womenalliance.org/member-s>, Retrived on 6/4/2020

<sup>608</sup><https://www.ppseawa.org/membership/pakistan>, Retrived on 6/4/2020

<sup>609</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady, 240.

During the era of 50s and 60s in Pakistan, women activists placed themselves within the developmental nation state's modernist project to defend their interests.<sup>610</sup> The idea of the establishment of national level NGOs, including APWA in Pakistan for women's rights has taken from neighbor countries e.g., India and China. Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz also advised her to follow the pattern of the All India Women's Conference for the creation of APWA. Later, Ra'ana requested Begum Jahanara to frame the constitution of the Association and appointed her as the senior vice president while she herself became its founder president. She held this position till the very end.<sup>611</sup>

In 1955 Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra took a second wife, which instigated women's NGOs to launch a campaign against his second marriage.<sup>612</sup> The first wife of the prime minister, Begum Hamida Muhammad Ali, became the strong supporter of APWA, like many other wives of politicians, and many of its members, thus gathered to give her moral support during what they considered to be her hour of need.<sup>613</sup> Life President of the APWA offered a set of "Ten Commandments" to serve as guidelines for the personal lives of the group members as well as for their plans. Which concludes cut out of all luxuries in indoor and outdoor, to support national products and investments, rural welfare work, family planning and alike other opportunities that are good for the economy and politics.<sup>614</sup>

A broad gathering, supported by leaders of major women's NGOs and a number of influential social workers, was held on 15 April. Begum Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, president of the APWA Karachi division, held the responsibility, by encouraging these women to join a new branch clearly mandated with an aim of their legal protections. Although recognizing their mutual debt to APWA, she was ready to be affiliated with the prospective commission. Begum Chaudhry Muhammad also emphasized that the new would be totally independent in terms of its action.<sup>615</sup> In an address Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan read out at the UN while receiving an award for human rights in December 1978;

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<sup>610</sup>Jamal, Feminist 'Selves' and Feminism's 'Others': Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan, 59.

<sup>611</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 232.

<sup>612</sup>Khawar and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, pp.56-57.

<sup>613</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1423.

<sup>614</sup>Chipp, Sylvia A., "The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association" (Syracuse University, 1970).3-4.

<sup>615</sup>Ansari, Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1424.

“APWA will continue to struggle through the next decade and the next, until one day the Pakistani woman shall emerge from all her shackles—economic, social and political—and face a future over which no shadows appear to obstruct her path towards her maximum development.<sup>616</sup>”

The basic purposes for which the APWA was established are set forth in the NGO’s constitution. It includes, women’s participation in developmental and country’s growth program, advancement and welfare of women by improving their legal, political, economic and social position, promotion of educational and cultural programs for women and children, health facilities and prevention of physical sufferings, promotion of goodwill and brotherhood, setting up projects to fulfil these objectives, and collaboration with national and international agencies working for the same causes.<sup>617</sup>

### **3.3.2. APWA’s Activities Consistency with Islāmic Theology**

The Women’s Voluntary Service (WVS) originally began in 1948, delivering first aid to women, arranging food delivery, coping with physical health problems and disease outbreaks, distributing clothes for the poor, and offering moral and emotional encouragement. This welfare work was broadly accepted and supported by the community as it was seen as an expansion of the motherly role that women were generally supposed to play.<sup>618</sup> It was argued that APWA’s approach was reactive, reformist, and corrective,<sup>619</sup> their attitude was patronizing and their reach was limited which has been run by the wives of senior bureaucrats and politicians. Reforms, therefore, were not posed in terms of the self-realization of women, but merely in terms of an improvement in their conditions.<sup>620</sup>

A significant number of female’s NGOs have been founded by Ra’ana Liaquat Ali, and have taken part in several diverse fields affecting women’s life, in particular education and law reforms.<sup>621</sup> The potential of groups led by women of the working class, albeit distant and remote, was sufficient to convince the government to accept APWA’s welfare benefits

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<sup>616</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan’s Pioneering First Lady*, 243.

<sup>617</sup>Chipp, *Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women’s Association*, 71.

<sup>618</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 9.

<sup>619</sup>Haider, Nadya, “Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan, and Family Law,” *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 12 (2000): 287–341, <http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yjlf/vol12/iss2/5>. 301

<sup>620</sup>Rouse, *Women’s Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects*, 7.

<sup>621</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 9.

and educational programs and related activities.<sup>622</sup> The sponsorship of the APWA by the state was a way of ensuring that the opposition of women did not undermine or challenge the state policies.<sup>623</sup> The relationship between APWA and the government has been one of mutual collaboration and cooperation. Consequently, it has earned both government grants and endorsement. Its focus was totally on women's welfare and development in their position and this was something non-threatening to government policies. It opened girls' schools, technical colleges, industrial houses and arranged *meena bazaar* for income generating activities.<sup>624</sup> Basically, the objective of APWA was women's education and developing technical skills for their well-being and advancement.

The All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) has its regional headquarters in Lahore and is Pakistan's first and largest NGO. APWA Punjab has 13 district branches serving the needs of women in improving the quality of education and skills development. APWA Punjab operates in Punjab's rural, semi-urban and urban districts. It also runs 24 multipurpose centres, concentrating primarily on children's primary education, adult education and the growth of women's skills.<sup>625</sup> Multiple health care centres and some hospitals are also maintained by the APWA.<sup>626</sup> It is illustrated that these established centers of APWA offer fully free services and target the most deprived and needy in the society.

They placed a strong emphasis on quality education in addition to providing relief during crises and taking care of the homeless, orphans and refugees, but took a limited approach to its service, limiting it to the establishment of the APWA College in Lahore and the founding of a few vocational training and handicraft centers.<sup>627</sup> APWA has stressed primary education. They also, with the aid of Asia Foundation attempted start technical education for women. Girls from lower income families provided with an opportunity to equip themselves to earn their own income and become productive members of society. APWA's focus was primarily in urban areas.<sup>628</sup> The APWA considers its education projects of major importance. The basic object of APWA's education program is literacy and better

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<sup>622</sup> Jalal, *The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan.*, 90.

<sup>623</sup> Haider, *Islamic Legal Reform: The Case of Pakistan and Family Law.*, 301.

<sup>624</sup> Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)." 10

<sup>625</sup> "Back and Mission," accessed November 5, 2020, <http://www.apwapunjab.com/about-us.html#backAndMission>.

<sup>626</sup> Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association." 78.

<sup>627</sup> Rouse, "Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects." 7.

<sup>628</sup> Chipp, "Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association." 76, 77.

citizenship. They believe that only education can play an important role in changing woman, man and children's position.

### **3.3.3. APWA's Activities Inconsistency with Islāmic Theology**

The condition in current Pakistani society cannot be seen explicitly in terms of the suitability of implementing Islāmic rules into the government apparatus.<sup>629</sup> Around the same time, in the international sphere, stronger pressure exists to claim rights of women at the level of states being parties to international declaration of human rights.<sup>630</sup> The Government of Pakistan is obligated to achieve gender equality by becoming a signatory to international conventions such as the Convention to Eliminate All Discrimination against Women and the International Conference on Population and Development.<sup>631</sup>

Conversely, Islāmic nations, particularly those nations that have fixed their internal political debate within an Islāmic context seem to have some challenges that are difficult to resolve.<sup>632</sup> Whereas the government of Pakistan works to comply with the provisions of CEDAW to reform rules, practices and perceptions to remove gender inequality, it confronts a torrent of approval as well as backlash to its decisions.<sup>633</sup> Because it is reality that on one hand Islāmic teachings and on the other hand legitimization of human made secular framework is irresolvable.<sup>634</sup>

The NGOs significantly can play a role in nation building activities with the help of common people and state's cooperation. In Pakistan, NGOs are under scrutiny and the purpose is to secure the public's interest. The constitution of all voluntary organizations must be scrutinized under the Voluntary Social Welfare Organization Control Ordinance of 1961. It has set minimum standard and regulations for NGOs for its functionality. The concerned rules include registration, monitoring and evaluation means, maintenance and updating of accounts and database, coordination for holding seminars, workshop, projects and other developmental activities (district or provincial level). All Pakistan Women's Association is registered with it and district branches are registered with the Provincial Social Welfare

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<sup>629</sup>Weiss, *Women's Position in Pakistan: Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization*. 866

<sup>630</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*. 6.

<sup>631</sup>Rizvi, Narjis, Kausar S Khan, and Babar T Shaikh, "Gender: Shaping Personality, Lives and Health of Women in Pakistan," *BMC Women's Health*, 2014, 1–8, <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6874/14/53>. 2.

<sup>632</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*. 7.

<sup>633</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*. 9

<sup>634</sup>Majid, Anouar, "The Politics of Feminism in Islām," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 23, no. 2 (1998): 320–61, <https://doi.org/10.1086/495253.345>.

council.<sup>635</sup> In doing so, the NGOs are bound to locate their area of limitation while working for the social welfare or developmental progress.

Literature represents that amongst many country's educated Muslims, who were supportive of women's role in the modern Islāmic democracy of Pakistan has also shown positive response to APWA with harmony.<sup>636</sup> Due to this, APWA was able to win many of its efforts and come forward for more achievements. Soon APWA enabled invasions into the legal and political arenas, aside from health and development activities. This was the time APWA faced criticism from scholars and APWA's activities was not approved by religious scholars on certain grounds.<sup>637</sup> There exists an inconsistency between many religious and non religious scholars and APWA's vision from the very initial stage. An in interview with Afsheen Zubair with The Herald, APWA's leader Ra'ana Liaquat Ali clarified her vision and distinctive nature as she asked that Pakistan was visualized as a Muslim homeland:

“Yes, but not the religious one of this type; it was a more liberal kind. Quaid-e-Azam himself said the basis was religious, but Pakistan was visualized as secular and democratic. Today Pakistan is out and out a theocracy and under that garb, every vestige of personal freedom is snatched away.”<sup>638</sup>

The rivalry and confrontation among right-wing religious groups and women's rights advocates dates back in history, but it did not become an open war at that time as it did in later years.<sup>639</sup> The MFLO (1961) which passed by the effort of APWA, also faced a lot critique because of its some articles were in contradictions to Islāmic law. Further, It is mentioned that it might well have been impossible for the government of General Ayub to protect the Ordinance from the religious resistance if it had not been for the campaign led by women's organizations like APWA.<sup>640</sup> These policies regarding population control and activities, though that were supported by the government was also criticized by many scholars because of its inconsistency with Islāmic rulings.

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<sup>635</sup>Chipp, “Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women's Association.”72.

<sup>636</sup>Abbott, Freeland, “Pakistan's New Marriage Law : A Reflection of Qur'ānic Interpretation,” *Asian Survey* 1, no. 11 (1962): 26–32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3023637>. 26

<sup>637</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).”10

<sup>638</sup>Zubair, Afsheen, “Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan,” *Herald*, October 1984, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153802>.

<sup>639</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).”10.

<sup>640</sup>Jalal, “The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan.” 104.

Here the major concern that can be illustrated is, either to blame APWA or Government for the promotion of any such taken steps? The reason is, basically, if these NGOs are working under restrictions of state policies, then their activities are mutually affirmed in terms of its applicability. Anyways, the work of APWA mainly focused on welfare activities and less towards controversial issues, so the confrontation towards this NGO and their work was nominal in comparison to other NGOs that are developed after 1980s. Another noticeable thing is, in the life time of Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, the NGO was more active, but now their appearance in public issues is less visible.

### **3.4. APWA and Promotion of Western Feminist Approach**

The feminist movement is composed of different political, social and rational viewpoints that overlap in complicated ways. This movement not only influenced by but drastically influenced many sectors of human traditions, including, race, class, ethnicity and gender norms. The ability of women's movement to bridge women's distinct identities of class, ethnicity and urban-rural locations has so far been analyzed in terms of the class background of activists and whether the feminist discourse was secular or not.<sup>641</sup> It's not really unexpected, despite this complexity, that there is substantial uncertainty, both inside and outside the feminist's campaigns, about what the values of feminism are and how they contribute to each other or to other values.<sup>642</sup> In the past, feminists demanded an agrarian society, but the modern battle against capitalism and patriarchy has gone deeper and farther.<sup>643</sup> In addition, reaction against feminism can account for some of the obvious inherent contradictions between those who feel that feminists have progressed too far, while claiming to promote egalitarianism.<sup>644</sup>

For women, based on their background, colour, or nationality, the effect of changes has been distinct. Many who gained from the modernization movements in general were mostly women from the middle and upper urban classes or the ruling class. Modernization, at the same time, may also suggest a limitation or lack of traditional modes of power for women of

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<sup>641</sup>Shaheed ,Farida, "The Other Side of the Discourse," in *Appropriating Gender: Women's Activism and Politicized Religion in South Asia*, ed. Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu (New York: Routledge, 2012), 143–65, doi:10.4324/9780203379585. 143.

<sup>642</sup>Flynn ,Elizabeth A., *Feminism beyond Modernism* (Carbondale,USA: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3594190>,1-2.

<sup>643</sup>Aslam, "A New Feminism in Pakistan."

<sup>644</sup>Kanner, Melinda and Kristin J. Anderson, "The Myth of Man-Hating Feminist," in *Feminism and Women's Rights Worldwide*, ed. Michele A. Paludi (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 1–25,20.



other groups or minorities.<sup>645</sup> The effect of modernism, however, has been global since Western and non-Western societies interact in complicated ways. Most obviously, Europeans political superiority over native peoples has developed the shape of colonialism and advanced countries' industrial dominance over developing nations.<sup>646</sup>

In Pakistan's context, irrespective of conflicting definitions, the nonexistence of a roughly equivalent word for feminism in any of the native dialects, besides restricting its usage, introduces its own challenges.<sup>647</sup> The lack of colloquial words facilitates in either way. The feminists of Pakistan disagree about what comprises a movement and whether a politically and ideologically independent women's movement exists at the modern point of development.<sup>648</sup> The history shows so clearly that a single philosophy or individual style does not determine a feminine identity. If unity and group ideologies work in unison to organise how activists identify themselves, the statements they produce, and also their methods of doing politics, as social movement scholars believe, so feminism can only be interpreted as a political identity in relation to feminism and their NGO.<sup>649</sup>

The notion that feminism is a philosophy of emancipation originated in the West and the portrayal Pakistani feminists' as Westernized continues to influence Pakistan's current collective consciousness.<sup>650</sup> Some NGOs working for women's rights also have the benefit of being closely associated to Pakistan's privileged section. They thus have access to services and close connections that may not be open to most religious women's rights organizations.<sup>651</sup> In Pakistan, there comes always a complexity and contestation while dealing the gender related issues. Moreover, In Pakistan, feminism is always charged with the notion of 'Westernization' or of promoting a specific foreign agenda.<sup>652</sup> The reason is the background of the women working for women's rights mainly linked to class interests as they belong to the upper class or elites. It makes people ambiguous on the basis of selected demands and their interest that mainly serves to their own cluster not to the general sufferer group.

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<sup>645</sup>Ilkcaracan, Pinar, "Women , Sexuality , and Social Change in the Middle East," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2002): 753–79.76

<sup>646</sup>Flynn, *Feminism beyond Modernism*,45.

<sup>647</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements." 94.

<sup>648</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."36-37

<sup>649</sup>Rupp and Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement : A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism."363.

<sup>650</sup>Charania, "Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan." 318

<sup>651</sup>Jafar, "Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women's NGOs in Pakistan."264.

<sup>652</sup>Fleschenberg ,Andrea, "Military Rule, Religious Fundamentalism, Women's Empowerment and Feminism in Pakistan," in *Women's Movements in Asia*, ed. Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (New York: Routledge, 2010), 166–88, doi:10.4324/9780203851234. 166

APWA has been criticized in terms of its vision and legal, economical and social activities. The ‘Ulamā’ charged that the APWA is attempting to lure the women of Pakistan away from the true Islāmic path into the corrupt realm of western thought and practices.<sup>653</sup> It is proposed that the Pakistani women’s movement is engaged in feminist work for numerous social, economic, legal and political transformations from the founding of the All Pakistani Women’s Association (APWA) in 1949, a pioneer women’s organization in Pakistan, to the creation of the Women's Action Forum (WAF) in 1981.<sup>654</sup> Chipp Sylvia concludes in this study by mentioning their justification, like they are trying to improve women’s social, political, and economical condition in their country on the Islāmic teachings of *zakat* and almsgiving :

“On the whole there is very little evidence among the APWA ladies of a radical feminist<sup>655</sup> spirit which characterized the women’s movement in the United states and western Europe. There is a little claim to equality. The Muslim women in Pakistan are socialized to know their actual place.”<sup>656</sup>

Further it is stated, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has played a part in advancing the ideas that women have equal dignity and that women’s human rights strengthen existing conceptions of human rights.<sup>657</sup> Ironically, besides all what international human rights legislation has done for western women, for Muslim woman, its not the CEDAW rather Islāmic rulings that elevated the women’s status and has given her a proper place that suits her most and it was Hazrat Muḥammad (ﷺ) who has acknowledged, “Women’s human rights” hundreds of centuries ago.

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<sup>653</sup>Chipp, “The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society.” 226.

<sup>654</sup>Charania, “Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan.”318.

<sup>655</sup> Radical feminists concentrate specifically on the gender, fertility, sexuality, family, childbirth, and the context in which women’s inequality starts with the most intimate opponent inside the family and home.. See Saigol, “Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).”1.

<sup>656</sup>Chipp, “The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society.”205.

<sup>657</sup>Runyan ,Anne Sisson, “Global Feminism,” in *Feminism and Women’s Rights Worldwide*, ed. Michele A. Paludi (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 1–16,6.

## Conclusion

In today's world, the term equality has changed in its entire sense. Individual's personal interests over community and societal benefit are becoming more familiar and trending. The adoption and adaptation are becoming very natural among any different cultures and tradition around the globe. The relationship between Islām and the West is viewed as a conflict of cultures across both sides. It is observed that the next fight in the West would probably come from the Muslim world. The fight to win a new world order continues in the sweep of the Islāmic nations from the "Maghreb to Pakistan".<sup>658</sup> On the other hand, it is productive to analyse gender theory in feminism, but it does not justify the absence of fit between the roles of feminists on commonality and distinction and their strategic choices in the quest for equality. Women advocated for the voting right on the grounds that women, like men, are people, but also on the grounds that the unique characteristics of women would enhance the political world.<sup>659</sup>

The aforesaid contextualization of women's activism, secular and religious narratives, women's NGOs activism, debates, and controversies illustrates the status of women's rights activism in context of Pakistani society chronologically exists from the birth of Pakistan to date. In Pakistani context, women's rights NGOs and activists were engaged in activism from very soon after the birth of Pakistan. Some of the Muslim activists were even active before the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Although, the focus of these activists was mostly on the issues concerning education, social malpractices and inhumane treatments towards women, but it remained limited and ineffective. The reason was actually their limited approach that is just focusing on how a man treats woman. The given sense shows that women can only be liberated or treated equally when they will have what men have. Merely copying men is a not a solution. For example, if we notice our family unit and family norms where most of women spend their much of the time; they have been tortured by their female relatives more than their male relatives. Those flaws that are highlighted by activists often are not purely generated by males only. No doubt, there are tons of flaws in the system, but it is not merely men, patriarchy or male domination. We need to explore justly all the factors that are creating any hurdles for women and men together.

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<sup>658</sup>Huntington, Samuel P., "The Clash of Civilizations?," in *Culture and Politics A Reader*, ed. Lane Crothers and Charles Lockhart (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 99–118, doi:DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-62965-7.107.

<sup>659</sup>Rupp and Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement : A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism."364.

So on, from the very beginning, APWA has worked for women's rights, to make women more self-governing and prolific. To quiet a lot of extent, APWA has tried to accommodate a new version of feminism, Islāmic feminism, by intermingling it with secular feminism to its demands. This demonstrates its insistence of moral teachings and upbringing of the right kind of women in a hugely problematic era. It adheres to an essential view of a traditional society where women will only be accorded some specified freedom but not beyond that. They tried amending many demands within Islāmic perspective.

The reason they have faced critic from many Islāmic scholars was that to some extent APWA's leaders and organizer tried to amalgamate modern western thought with Pakistani cultural values. It is a fact, that globalization has impacted the whole world. Feminism spread around the world, and it would be quite natural to say that APWA that was the first women's rights NGO in Pakistan might also be affected by the modernization and started its struggle for women in Pakistan though with a little different perspective. They struggled for women's educational rights, equal employment opportunities, political rights and legal rights and in contrast this is for what feminism was begun once in Europe.

## Chapter 4

### APWA's Debate on Different Women's Rights Issues in Pakistan

#### 4. Introduction

The paradigm for human rights supports rights of women under the idea that all people, irrespective of culture, religion or gender, are subject to such fundamental rights, such as protection from discrimination and economic, political and social liberties.<sup>660</sup> In order to unite another interpretation of socio-political trends in the Muslim world, Pakistani scholars are increasingly connected with the inquiry, re-examination and reclassification of Islāmic legal, social and fiscal policies.<sup>661</sup> A large group containing clashes over lands, land and political influence supported by a religious ideology form a religio-political movements.<sup>662</sup> Pan-Islāmist religious<sup>663</sup> and nationalist movements<sup>664</sup> helped pave the way for the empowerment of women, their education and contributed to the early recognition of freedom and rights.<sup>665</sup> Patriotism originated in Pakistan when it emerged in 1947, as an independent country in the Indian subcontinent. Since this nation's development relied on the plea that Muslims are indeed a unique community based on Islāmic ideology, it had a significant element of Islāmic nationalism, even before the nation was created, as religion was the foundation of a separate nation for the Muslims of the subcontinent.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>660</sup>Critelli ,Filomena M, "Women's Rights = Human Rights : Pakistani Women against Gender Violence," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 37, no. 2 (2010): 135–60, <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol37/iss2/7>, 137.

<sup>661</sup>Zia, *The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan*,34.

<sup>662</sup>Parashar, Swati, "The Sacred and the Sacrilegious: Exploring Women's 'Politics' and 'Agency' in Radical Religious Movements in South Asia," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11, no. 3–4 (2010): 435–55, doi:10.1080/14690764.2010.546117.

<sup>663</sup>A pan-Islāmic movement, it insisted the British to defend Turkey's caliphate, and to unite and keep the British accountable to Indian Muslims for this reason. However, the movement ended with the abolition of the positions of the Sultan and Caliph and transformed it into a secular Turkey. See Rubina Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)," *Country Study*, 2016, 52, <http://library.fes.de/opus4/frontdoor/index/index/docId/44715>, 5.

<sup>664</sup>It was basically a struggle of Indian Muslims of Sub-continent for the independence that has lead to the formation of our own homeland in the form of Pakistan.

<sup>665</sup>*Ibid*,6.

<sup>666</sup>Gulnaz ,Anjum , "Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals," *Open Cultural Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): 36–49, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2020-0004>, 37.

In 1947, freedom and a modern nation state had been won from both the British colonisers and Hindu majority India.<sup>667</sup> Historically, the policies of colonizers led to a growing sense of Western interference in cultural, social, moral and legal standards.<sup>668</sup> Women’s activists started their struggle in the colonial days for their country’s independence from (British) India and, for the last sixty years, undertook efforts to secure an equal citizenship and space for women in Pakistani society with regard to their personal status (such as personal and family law, Hudood Ordinances), the assertion and safeguarding of woman’s human rights (such as violence against woman like so-called ‘honour killings’ and forced marriages).<sup>669</sup> Women, those belong to royal elites or ruling family continued to campaign for participation in the democratic sphere and for rights in civil and political contexts.<sup>670</sup> Particularly, (in)formal state and judicial structures as well as legal pluralism, have been a constant site of struggle and protest for the feminist cause, linking gender, traditions, religion and democracy in an intricate.<sup>671</sup>

Contemporary definition of women’s rights, including the financial, public and social and political involvement of women, creates diverse, competing depictions.<sup>672</sup> Much of the literature marking out the women’s activism on gender issues, socio-political and religious debates in Pakistan since its birth.<sup>673</sup> The advocacy of Pakistani women in religious and political protest is on the rise in recent narratives of the connection between Islām and woman. In current feminist discourse, such critiques are becoming widespread, trying to recognize and justify the role of Muslim women as activists.<sup>674</sup> By using the Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth and by examining the standard of living of influential women in the early era of Muslim history as references in relationship between Islām and politics in the country, traditionalists confirmed that current gender associations are divinely ordained. On the other

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<sup>667</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?* 6.

<sup>668</sup>Hursh ,John, “Advancing Women’s Rights through Islāmic Law: The Example of Morocco,” *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice* 27, no. 2 (2012): 252–306, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2173872>, 287.

<sup>669</sup>Fleschenberg, “Military Rule, Religious Fundamentalism, Women’s Empowerment and Feminism in Pakistan.” 168.

<sup>670</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).” 8.

<sup>671</sup>Fleschenberg, “Military Rule, Religious Fundamentalism, Women’s Empowerment and Feminism in Pakistan.” 168.

<sup>672</sup> Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan*, 13.

<sup>673</sup>Shaheed ,Farida and Khawar Mumtaz, “Islāmisation and Women: The Experience of Pakistan,” *New Blackfriars, Special Issue: The World of Islām* 71, no. 835 (1990): 67–80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1990.tb01387.x>; Zia, “The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan”; Shaheed, “The Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements”; Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 6.

<sup>674</sup>Anjum, “Women’s Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals.” 39.

hand, feminists inferred possibilities for a more liberal gender politics focused on woman's status and bringing the issue of Islām and women specifically, they revealed that Islāmic ideology tended to offer the acceptable discourse for both feminists and anti-feminists to examine and reconsider women's rights.<sup>675</sup>

The campaign for women's equality and rights was initially scattered, gradual and a little progressive in the early era of Pakistan's history. Further, it countered with frequent oppositions by religious scholars who interpreted these moves into the direction of women's rights as westernized and completely contrary to religion and culture.<sup>676</sup> It is claimed that during the twentieth century, the Muslim world witnessed a notable transition in women's movement. It is demonstrated although contrary to the existing ground reality that the legislation on education, politics, and industry has been modernized, but still, besides all struggles, women's position has not been much advanced and religious ideologies are raised whenever gender equality is considered to be re-examined.<sup>677</sup>

APWA was the largest and best known for the aforementioned motives. Although, its members were educated, qualified, affluent, and well-connected, headed by Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, the wife of a significant political official, but their struggle did not gain much attention and remained least effective in the context of change in women's life by the association and it involved many factors.<sup>678</sup> The stated primary aim of APWA is the enhancement of women's social, educational, political and cultural status in society. The founder of APWA had always held dearly the following vision of an ideal Pakistani woman:

“I believe very sincerely that women should take an active interest and part in public life, but within the sphere of their own specific interests, capabilities and limitations and not to the detriment of their homes and families or their own intrinsic strength and finer qualities as women”.<sup>679</sup>

It was hoped that APWA would become the representative body for the women of Pakistan internationally too. APWA was also officially recognized as an NGO and was granted

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<sup>675</sup>Kandiyoti, Deniz, “Women, Islām and the State,” (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 77–114, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3012623>.

<sup>676</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>677</sup>Anjum, “Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>678</sup>Haider, “Islāmic Legal Reform: The Case of Pakistan and Family Law.” 301.

<sup>679</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 231.

consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Throughout Ra'ana Liaquat Ali's working life, she continued her efforts for women's active participation in the political, administrative and economic arenas and many of her dreams were realized in her lifetime.<sup>680</sup>

#### 4.1. APWA's debate on legal Issue

The Muslim Family Law Ordinance of 1961, written in response to the Marriage Commission Report of 1956, was the most important reform of Pakistan's family law in the last decades.<sup>681</sup> Perhaps the stand held by the founder and life president of APWA, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, was far more important for those spearheading the fight against male exposure to unrestricted polygamous marriage.<sup>682</sup> This section discusses the key responsible parties for promulgating the ordinance, the disputes and controversies over the draft and the resulting Ordinance between modernists and traditionalists, and the success of the legislation.

Women NGOs launched a protest against the second marriage of Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra in 1955, and this was driven by the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA), which subsequently played a major role in legislative change.<sup>683</sup> The Pakistani influential section also embarked on transforming the personal legislation.<sup>684</sup> The members of the Status of Women Committee of the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) had been concerned a few months earlier by the rise in second marriages after independence, and by the recurrent urge to deny the interests of the first wife in such situations. APWA filed a plea for a dramatic modification in the family law of the nation.<sup>685</sup>

Women from the more progressive political families used the ability to challenge the opposition to polygamy, veil and the deprivation of legal privileges given to them under the Sharī'ah, on the grounds that there was a conflict between Islāmic precepts and Islāmic society's traditions.<sup>686</sup> In the 1950s, APWA became an influential force in pressuring the state to become a party to this convention, advocating additional laws in the context of advancing the basic interests of women. Later on, the result was the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance

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<sup>680</sup> Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 232, 241.

<sup>681</sup> Haider, "Islāmic Legal Reform: The Case of Pakistan and Family Law." 289.

<sup>682</sup> Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1430.

<sup>683</sup> Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)." 9.

<sup>684</sup> Yilmaz, Ihsan, "Legal Instrumentalisation, Social Engineering and Islāmic Law in Turkey and Pakistan," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2018, 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3278478>. 2-3.

<sup>685</sup> Abbott, "Pakistan's New Marriage Law: A Reflection of Qur'ānic Interpretation." 28.

<sup>686</sup> Jalal, *The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan.*, 84.



(MFLO).<sup>687</sup> These Modern forces, including All Pakistan Women's Association and with alliance of some other group, dedicated their energies to update ordinances redefining the interests of women in polygamy, divorce, marriage, and related inheritance rights.<sup>688</sup> The government under the pressure of certain groups including APWA then has taken the step and appointed a commission consisting of seven members in 1955. The objective was to review the existing legislation concerning, marriage, divorce, maintenance and to make reforms according to the recommendations.<sup>689</sup> These members of the commission were consisting of Dr Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din (President), Dr Khalifa Abdul Hakim (Member-Secretary), Maulana Ehtesham-ul-Haq Thanvi, Mr Enayet-ur-Rahman, Begum Shahnawaz, Begum Anwar G. Ahmad, and Begum Shamsunnahar Mahmood.<sup>690</sup> The Commission recommended several measures, some are;

- Putting restrictions on polygamy<sup>691</sup> and the written permission of a man's wife (or wives) before an arbitration council decides if he may marry again<sup>692</sup>
- Requiring the registration of marriage and divorce<sup>693</sup>
- In one session pronouncing three divorces amounts to one pronouncement

Arbitration councils were set up in rural and urban areas at the level of the union council (lowest tier of local government) which were to

- Grant sanction to anyone seeking a second marriage after ascertaining that proper procedure was followed
- To attempt to bring reconciliation of the marriage dispute over a mandatory period of three months
- Ensure the granting and payment of maintenance allowance to the wife and the children staying with the mother.<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>687</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*, 12.

<sup>688</sup>Haider, "Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan and Family Law", 301 ; Fleschenberg, "Military Rule, Religious Fundamentalism, Women's Empowerment and Feminism in Pakistan." 171.

<sup>689</sup>Haider, "Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan and Family Law."301.

<sup>690</sup>Munir, Muḥammad, "Reforms in Triple Talaq in the Personal Laws of Muslim States and the Pakistani Legal System: Continuity versus Change," *International Review of Law* 2013, no. 1 (2013): 1–12, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5339/irl.2013.2.3>

<sup>691</sup>Abbasi, "Judicial Ijtihad as a Tool for Legal Reform: Extending Women's Right to Divorce under Islāmic Law in Pakistan." 397.

<sup>692</sup>Weiss, "Interpreting Islām and Women's Rights: Implementing CEDAW in Pakistan." 586.

<sup>693</sup>Abbasi, "Judicial Ijtihad as a Tool for Legal Reform: Extending Women's Right to Divorce under Islāmic Law in Pakistan." 397.

On June 20, 1956, report was published by the commission and the dissenting note of Moulana Ashraf ‘Alī Thanavi was published separately on August 30, 1956. Moulana Ihtisham-ul-Haq rejected outright the recommendations of the Commission. It became a contested issue for many Islāmic establishments.<sup>695</sup> In July 1958, APWA and other groups organized a Women’s Demand Day for the functioning of the recommendation approved by the commission and a reform of family law.<sup>696</sup> The Muslim family Law Ordinance of 1961 was finally enacted by Ayub Khan which was based on the commission’s report. Although the ordinance did not implement all the Report’s suggestions, it was considered un-Islāmic by a number of religious scholars.<sup>697</sup> As a consequence of APWA’s initiatives, the MFLO of 1961, which granted women several provisions was enacted.<sup>698</sup> Ra’ana Liaquat Ali did not hesitate to bring forward these demands to President Ayub Khan’s attention. He, in turn, did not hesitate to meet those said demands. The promulgation of family laws, in the face of nationwide opposition from religious leaders was the real case.<sup>699</sup>

In context of Sharī‘ah, from the very beginning, the nature of Muslim family Law Ordinance remained very controversial.<sup>700</sup> Each of the modernists, ‘Ulamā’ and traditionalists’ main groups held and remained stuck to their own view on legal understanding and implementation.<sup>701</sup> During the following year, APWA decided to conduct surveys on the efficacy of the Family Laws Ordinance and these pointed to the lacunae in the implementation of the ordinance. APWA put forward the recommendation for setting up of special family law courts and hence managed to secure the Family Law Courts Act in 1964.<sup>702</sup>

The MFLO gives economic and legal protection to women by regulating marriage and divorce and but at the same time it restraint the polygamy<sup>703</sup> which later on became a bone of contention between modernist and traditionalist. Another issue was the restriction on *talaq*

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<sup>694</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan’s Pioneering First Lady*, 235-36.

<sup>695</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan*. 23.

<sup>696</sup>Fleschenberg, “Military Rule, Religious Fundamentalism, Women’s Empowerment and Feminism in Pakistan.” 171.

<sup>697</sup>Abbasi, Muhammad Zubair, “Judicial Ijtihad as a Tool for Legal Reform: Extending Women’s Right to Divorce under Islāmic Law in Pakistan,” *Islāmic Law and Society* 24, no. 4 (2017): 384–411, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00244P04>. 397.

<sup>698</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study).” 11.

<sup>699</sup>Chipp, “Tradition vs. Change: The All Pakistan Women’s Association.” 71.

<sup>700</sup>Yilmaz, “Legal Instrumentalisation, Social Engineering and Islāmic Law in Turkey and Pakistan.” 4.

<sup>701</sup>Haider, “Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan and Family Law.” 301.

<sup>702</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan’s Pioneering First Lady*, 237.

<sup>703</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan*. 23

procedure. Later on, APWA's leader also took the step in lending their voices to protest all forms of gender injustices and discrimination according to them. They have given the full support to the setting up of the Women's Action Forum, a platform which lent a voice to women activists struggling against the Zia-ul-Haq government's legal changes. Ra'ana gave her blessings and full support to the creation of this first-ever platform of women feminists and activists in the country.<sup>704</sup>

During this time, Pakistani feminists and women activists, mostly expressed resistance on the streets rather than in academia.<sup>705</sup> Feminists of Pakistan, started to formulate methods for creating resistance and trying to raise awareness about the way women are treated. These include initiatives for literacy and awareness programs through media, international collaboration, research and writing, and involvement in national and international women's rights conferences to present papers about women's status in Pakistan.<sup>706</sup> Furthermore, at that time the struggle of the small group of feminist mobilized an activism in opposition to the military regime and promulgation of the Islāmization.

The intense resistance of the 1980s erupted in a form of political voices and some sort of opposition. Women and minorities are considered as special victims of that time. It is illustrated that many attempts were basically aimed at bringing back women to veil and home inside the four walls. They depicted that "*Chador aur Chaardiwari*" that stands for veil and the four walls of homestead overturn women's rights and restricted their freedom.<sup>707</sup> Many women from progressive political groups, left politics, skilled female's organizations, particularly labor workers and even development groups, were part of the urban women's movement. On the other side, those traditionalist women from right-wing engaged in demonstrations against the state on the issue of violence, but restricted themselves for campaigning against the Islāmization or Hudood Ordinance.<sup>708</sup> Different literature shows in the context of ordinance evaluation, that patriarchy and vested political objectives joined hands in Pakistan and used Islāmic ideology as a mean of strengthening and promoting each other.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>704</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 241, 282.

<sup>705</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan: Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 5.

<sup>706</sup>Imran, Rahat, "Legal Injustices: The Zina Hudood Ordinance of Pakistan and Its Implications for Women," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 78–100.

<sup>707</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements," 97.

<sup>708</sup>Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan," 32.

<sup>709</sup>Imran, *Legal Injustices: The Zina Hudood Ordinance of Pakistan and Its Implications for Women.*, 93.

In perspective of Testimony (*shahadah*) and Blood Money(*diyat*) related legislation, women's organizations including APWA tried their best for amendments and demanded equality for women. They strongly objected to section 10(b) of the proposed legislation, which excludes female's proof. According to them, there is mentioned no reason to exclude women's testimony for Hadd in the Holy Qur'an or Sunnah. APWA and eight other women's organizations have lobbied hard to change the four Hadood Ordinances in cases of Hadd penalty where female's testimony has been omitted.<sup>710</sup>

#### **4.1.1. Islāmic thought vs. Feminist approach**

In the Qur'an, which recognises certain traditions such as the entitlement to female possessions and inheritance rights, marriage permission, and widowers' right to remarriage, divorcees, and many other legal implications clearly show that the legal status of Muslim women is protected and well assured.<sup>711</sup> To talk of "women status in Islām", means that there is an unquestioned, common interpretation and application of Islām and that it equally influences all Islāmic women throughout the world.<sup>712</sup> Some Islāmic laws have been passed in Pakistan, but a full-fledged Islāmic State has not yet emerged either in Iran or Pakistan. The challenges confronting a fully Islāmic caliphate have been pushed into the foreground.<sup>713</sup> But nowhere else are the contradictions between modernists and traditionalists as clear as in the case of the ordinance on Family Laws. It was at a time when the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 created disputes and disagreements about the study and resulting ordinance between modernist and traditionalist and the effectiveness of the ordinance in the context of women's equality.<sup>714</sup>

##### **a. Polygamy, Iddah and Talaq**

The debate on polygamy is not a very recent one. The tradition of polygamy for the sake of its persistence demands a logical explanation throughout the changes in legal, social and political environment constantly. In Pakistan, polygamous marriage has been allowed, but

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<sup>710</sup>Zubair, "Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan."

<sup>711</sup>Weiss ,Anita M, Women ' s Position in Pakistan : Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization, vol. 25 (University of California, 1985), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644115>, 867.

<sup>712</sup>Jafar, Afshan, *Women 's NGOs in Pakistan* (Newyork: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230339316>, 59.

<sup>713</sup>Munir , Muḥammad, *From Jinnah to Zia* (Lahore,Pakistan: Vanguard Books Ltd., 1980),p.164.

<sup>714</sup>Haider, "Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan and Family Law.",298.

with certain restrictions,<sup>715</sup> although women's rights activists tried hard for decades to prohibit it completely.<sup>716</sup> However, polygamy in Pakistan during 1950 was not much prevalent. Instead, among South Asian Muslims, it has always been a restricted tradition, with only a limited number of weddings ever dropping into this group. Even so, polygamy had come under the attention of activists at the end of the nineteenth century, discussing the "inequality" towards Muslim women and the possible ways to restrict this tradition became major objective.<sup>717</sup> The written consent of the first wife became mandatory for the second marriage of a husband.<sup>718</sup> It was effectively an initiative to prohibit polygamy by these blocking means. The reason was, they were unable to restrict any allowed privilege through legislation without any evidence of valid Islāmic injunction.

On the issue of polygamy, the views were divided in different categories. Modernists argued, judging from the wording of the Qur'ānic verse, it would seem that up to four wives were allowed providing the husband could treat all on an equal basis. From this, to the modernists' way of thinking, is virtually impossible, it is obvious that the Qur'ān prefers a monogamous society.<sup>719</sup> The advocates claimed that polygamy was specifically forbidden by the Qur'ān. In this case, the agitators were using a principle of gradual development (*tadrij*), historically recognized by Islāmic jurists as a necessary principle for the study of Sharī'ah laws, or *fiqh*.<sup>720</sup> Dramatically, the Reformers argued that *Ijtihād* should be exercised by all, even secular Family Court judges could practice it. *Ijtihād* was no longer part of 'Ulamā', *mujtahideen*, or *qadī* strained under Islāmic rule.<sup>721</sup> Furthermore, the reformers claim that Islāmic principles should form the foundation of the legal framework rather than traditional Sharī'ah teachings.<sup>722</sup> The implication is that the approaches of liberation and reconciliation that sought to reveal, interpret and connect feminist ideology of West with national, cultural heritage were much more effective than modern champions for women's rights might have wished or are able to take credit for.<sup>723</sup> Nevertheless, women activists

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<sup>715</sup>Rehman, Javaid, "The Sharia, Islāmic Family Laws and International Human Rights Law: Examining the Theory and Practice of Polygamy and Talaq," *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 21, no. 1 (2007): 108–27, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1093/lawfam/ebi023,115-116>.

<sup>716</sup>Jafar, *Women's NGOs in Pakistan*, 25.

<sup>717</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1432.

<sup>718</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)." 11.

<sup>719</sup>Sylvia A. Chipp, "The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association" (Syracuse University, 1970), 40.

<sup>720</sup>Abbott, "Pakistan's New Marriage Law: A Reflection of Qur'ānic Interpretation." 27.

<sup>721</sup>Haider, "Islāmic Legal Reform: The Case of Pakistan and Family Law." 299.

<sup>722</sup>Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia*, 170.

<sup>723</sup>Shaheed, *The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan*, 33.

always tried eliminating the cultural and religious barriers that serve best to their desired ends. They are trying to change the natural and blessed state into unnatural and destructive way. Because saying no to polygamy is definitely another way of saying yes to other means of indulging into sins. Many of the Islāmic scholars, though described its natural worth. It was considered something permissible in all religions of the world well before the arrival of Islām that one man may have more than one woman. In India, Iran, Saudia, Egypt, Babylon, and among many other societies, the practice has prevailed. And to this day, its actual validity is not divisible. The Europeans of the modern period have tried to overthrow the tradition of their ancestors and have made polygamy undesirable. The multiplicity of girlfriends and concubines is a result of refraining from the legal relationship of the marriage.<sup>724</sup>

Noticeably, the Jama‘at-i-Islāmi expressed concerns that legal issues about polygamy ought to be in accordance with Islām, not in alignment with the Western ideology that has made it an offense.<sup>725</sup> Abu’l Ala Maududi<sup>726</sup> and the Jama‘at-i-Islāmi perhaps best represent the traditionalist view that the perfect system of government already exists in the Qur’ān and Sunnah and needs merely to be implemented. Maulana Maududi radically disagreed with the All Pakistan Women’s Association's support of the Marriage Commission’s legislative proposals to improve the status of the country’s women.<sup>727</sup>

The writings of Maulana Maududi indicate, he has acknowledged that while divine in nature, Islāmic laws could be changed if considered required, but such improvements had to take place within the sphere of the traditional legal system and this could be performed by only religious trained jurists.<sup>728</sup> They tried to walk a middle path, by doing a social interpretation of Islām. Polygamy was supported by this group, though under specific conditions. Islām, he further claimed, advocates a well-ordered social structure, and the issue of polygamy should be seen in context of the community as a whole rather than in terms of the supposedly distressed first wife. The Qur’ān does enjoin polygamy, but it does not give it

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<sup>724</sup> Shafī‘, *Ma‘āri’ful Qur’ān*, vol.2. 301.

<sup>725</sup> Wiess, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women’s Rights in Pakistan*. 54.

<sup>726</sup> The teachings of Maulana Maududi have a large following in the Islamic community and his works therefore inspired the growth of Islāmist movements in the Arab world and other Asian countries. See Feminist ‘Selves’ and Feminism’s ‘Others’: Feminist Representations of Jamaat-e-Islāmi Women in Pakistan.”

<sup>727</sup> Ansari, Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan, 1432.

<sup>728</sup> Haider, *Islāmic Legal Reform : The Case of Pakistan and Family Law*, 300.

a mandate.<sup>729</sup> Islām does not allow a man to marry another woman if he will not be fair in his treatment. Islām simply permits polygamy; it neither forces nor requires it.<sup>730</sup>

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسِطُوا فِي الْأَيْتِمَىٰ فَاتَّخِذُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِثْلَىٰ وَتِلْكَ وَرُبْعٌ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا-<sup>731</sup>

*“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hands possess [i.e., slaves]. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].”*

From here, we explicitly discovered that it is only appropriate to have more than one wife on condition that justice between all spouses will be upheld as demanded by the Sharī‘ah. If one does not able to fulfil the rights of his all wives, the rule is to keep the only one wife.<sup>732</sup> Polygamy can be required under certain circumstances, for the preservation of society and morality, but monogamy must under ordinary circumstances, will remain an established rule.<sup>733</sup> According to the interpretation of traditionalists, that restrictions on polygamy would increase extra-marital sexual relationships.<sup>734</sup> Another verse of Qur’ān says;

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ۚ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا-<sup>735</sup>

*“And you will never be able to be equal [in feeling] between wives, even if you should strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave another hanging. And if you amend [your affairs] and fear Allāh - then indeed, Allāh is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”*

The doubt of the people who argues that polygamy is actually restricted by Islām begins with the interpretation of this verse and more than one wife is actually not permitted. From the deeds and sayings of Holy Prophet(ﷺ) and the consistent practice of noble Companions, it is approved the fact that having more than one spouse in Islāmic tradition was certainly not banned. The first verse discusses the Justice in what a person can do by choice and the later one specifically point out the failure of man to manage, lack of equal treatment when it

<sup>729</sup> Abbott, Pakistan’s New Marriage Law : A Reflection of Qur’ānic Interpretation, 27.

<sup>730</sup> Langrial, Altaf Hussain and Syed Abrar Hussain Shah, “A Critical Review of Pakistani Muslim Family Law 1961,” *Gomal University Journal of Research* 30, no. 1 (2014): 98–110.

<sup>731</sup> Al-Qur’ān, An-Nisa 4:3.

<sup>732</sup> Shafi‘i, *Ma‘āri’ful Qur’ān*, vol,2, 310.

<sup>733</sup> Abbott, Pakistan’s New Marriage Law : A Reflection of Qur’ānic Interpretation, 27.

<sup>734</sup> Weiss, *The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association*,40.

<sup>735</sup> Al-Qur’ān, An-Nisa 4:129.

comes to affection, love and inclination. There is also no inconsistency, nor does it acknowledge that polygamy is completely banned.<sup>736</sup>

Another point that became an issue as well like polygamy was the generation of new laws on divorce in Muslim Family Law Ordinance. Under provisions of section (7), the time of *talaq* begins after the chairman receives the notice of *talaq* and the effectiveness of *talaq* is purely dependent on the notice to the chairman. The divorce, whether the marriage is consummated or not becomes effective only after the expiry of prescribed ninety days, following by the time when chairman receives its receipt of notice. Another provision is that in case of pregnancy at the time of pronouncement, the *talaq* will not be effective until the time of delivery or expiry of ninety days whichever be later.<sup>737</sup> The MFLO, 1961, eliminated triple *talaq*, as one or two pronouncements are largely applicable to the process set out in section (7).<sup>738</sup> The ‘Ulamā’ has considered this section as a violation of Islāmic law. The main criticism towards section 7 is as follows;

- As soon as the third divorced is pronounced by the husband, it becomes effective.<sup>739</sup>
- The time when divorce is pronounced, *Iddat* (waiting period) would be counted immediately from that time.
- There is no *Iddat* for divorced women whose marriage has not yet consummated
- The *Iddat* for pregnant women is end of delivery and the one who is not pregnant, her *Iddat* is three monthly periods<sup>740</sup>

Furthermore, it is indicated that in section (7), some of its sub sections are also in clear contradiction with Sharī‘ah.<sup>741</sup> In a comparison to the section (7) and Islāmic law the differences prevail in many parts. Firstly, notice of *talaq* is mandatory for its effectiveness, which is not prescribed by the Holy Qur’ān. The basic verse that deals with the issue of *talaq* says;

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<sup>736</sup> Shafī‘, *Ma‘āri‘ful Qur’ān*, vol,2, 313-314.

<sup>737</sup> Muḥammad Tahir Mansoori, *Family Law in Islām Theory and Application* (Islāmabad: Shariah Academy, 2009), 227.

<sup>738</sup> Munir, “Reforms in Triple Talaq in the Personal Laws of Muslim States and the Pakistani Legal System: Continuity versus Change.”6,12.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>740</sup> Mansoori, *Family Law in Islām Theory and Application*, 227.

<sup>741</sup> Munir, “Reforms in Triple Talaq in the Personal Laws of Muslim States and the Pakistani Legal System: Continuity versus Change.”6,12.



وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۚ وَلَا يَجِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
 الْآخِرِ ۚ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
 عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ-<sup>742</sup>

“Divorced women remain in waiting [i.e., do not remarry] for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs if they believe in Allāh and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.”

The section doesn't differentiate between different forms of divorces and prescribes duration of 'Iddah that is different for each individual depending on the nature of divorce. Again in Islāmic law, 'Iddah period starts soon after its pronouncement, but here the case is different and depends on the notice to the chairman.

**b. Hudood Ordinance in case of Adultery and Evidence**

The Pakistani constitution of 1962 and 1973 called for the appointment of a Council of Islāmic Ideology (CII) to bring existing laws in conformity with Islāmic teachings. In 1979, General Zia ul Haq, promulgated *Hudood* Ordinance as a first ever step in the history of Pakistan towards Islāmization.<sup>743</sup> When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed in 1979 by the government of General Zia-ul-Haq, Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan spearheaded a campaign against the military government. She, along with other women's groups, protested against the military regime's efforts to Islāmization of laws, as according to them, many of which went against women's legal and moral rights.<sup>744</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the public opposition against the politically driven Islāmization of Zia's regime was spearheaded by women's rights organizations. Many NGOs and activists developed coalitions to protest against government policies and legislative reforms aimed specifically at marginalizing

<sup>742</sup> Al-Qur'ān, Al- Baqara 2:228.

<sup>743</sup> Khan ,Shahnaz, *Zina, Transnational Feminism, and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women* (UBC Press, 2011), 7.

<sup>744</sup> Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, 270.

women's rights and liberties in order to advance the religious-political program of the establishment.<sup>745</sup>

A complaint contesting the Hudood Ordinances was registered by a coalition of organizations, along with the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) and Pakistan Women's Lawyers' Association (PWLA). It was rendered null after the 8th amendment to the constitution in 1985 gave cover to his earlier law.<sup>746</sup> Modernist argued that the *Hudood* Ordinance made rape and adultery indistinguishable. Along with the law of evidence, which reduced the worth of a woman's testimony to half that of a man. They demonstrated that it has further complicated the already inadequate mechanisms of assuring civil and criminal justice.<sup>747</sup> For the first time, this new law brought into purview 'offence' of adultery and fornication in Zia ul haq's regime. The punishment for extramarital sex or *zina* was 100 lashes for the unmarried and stoning to death for married persons.<sup>748</sup>

It was claimed that, particularly for females, the implemented *zina* section produced the greatest discrimination and injustice. Rape and other similar crimes and misconduct were confused with *zina*, and the authorities were permitted to determine the nature of the crime.<sup>749</sup> The law of *zina* rendered an offense against the state of all type sexual intercourse outside official marriage bond,<sup>750</sup> confused rape and abduction with *zina*, allowed everyone to file a complaint, and reversed the presumption of innocence, loading jail cells with females convicted by spiteful former husband, angered family members, and stranger people.<sup>751</sup> The women and human right "groups spilled out on to the streets to protest the imprisonment of thousands of rape victims under the *zina* law."<sup>752</sup> To prove the act of rape the testimony of four men was needed which in most cases was impossible. The uncorroborated testimonies of women were inadmissible in 'Hudood crimes'.

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<sup>745</sup>Imran , Rahat and Imran Munir, "Defying Marginalization: Emergence of Women's s and the Resistance Movement in Pakistan: A Historical Overview," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 19, no. 6 (2018): 132–56, <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol19/iss6/9>, 134.

<sup>746</sup>Khan, Malkani, and Yousuf, "Women Activists' Strategic Use of the Courts in Pakistan." 553.

<sup>747</sup>Joseph ,Suad, ed., "Encyclopedia of Women and Islāmic Culture: Family, Law and Politics," vol. 2 (Boston: Brill, 2005), <http://repositorio.unan.edu.ni/2986/1/5624.pdf>,729.

<sup>748</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,282-283.

<sup>749</sup>Shaheed, *Contested Identities: Gendered Politics, Gendered Religion in Pakistan.*" 856.

<sup>750</sup>Khan, *Transnational Feminism, and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women*, 11.

<sup>751</sup>Shaheed , Farida, "Maintaining Momentum in Changing Circumstances: Challenges of the Women'S Movement in Pakistan," *Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2 (2019): 159–72, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.601553282&site=eds-live>, 161.

<sup>752</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,282-283.

The basic argumentation by the modernist was that, it does not differentiate between adultery, committed with women's consent and rape, a coerced sex. It influences the directions in which judiciary act, by removing the testimony of women and ethnic minorities, and in case of Hadd punishment, just to be stoned to death and flagged, if proven.<sup>753</sup>

As a part of the conspiracy, the voices against these laws crossed the national borders and national NGOs and it became a kind of International issue. The Islāmization Policy became a major concern of foreign NGOs working for the human rights. The centre of attention of these international organizations was on two elements of the program: violence against woman and cruel punishments. With respect to the above, the justice system of Pakistan has been accused of enforcing inhuman sentences, namely stoning to death, whipping, and amputations. And so was the issue of women's rights, those allegations have also been much exaggerated. In Pakistan, no formally approved the stoning to death or amputation has ever been imposed. Nonetheless the harm to the international reputation of Pakistan has been considerable.<sup>754</sup> The matter of fact is, it has been founded in the international community for quite a while that Islāmīc law is discriminatory towards woman either on the grounds of mistaken beliefs or secular prejudice.<sup>755</sup>

On the other hand, they claimed that traditionalist activists also worked to introduce a right wing ideology that has been especially damaging to females. Even the legal provisions guaranteeing woman full freedom have been disputed and the legislation recommended to restrict woman to an unjust treatment and consign her to substandard status.<sup>756</sup> Another declaration is that whether or not the Islāmization policy is discriminatory against women's rights is another debate. But it is claimed that it is definitely the case that the execution of the Hudood ordinance targeted against the weaker and lower section of Pakistan in perspective of one's social and economic background.<sup>757</sup>

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<sup>753</sup>Mumtaz ,Khawar, "Advocacy for an End to Poverty , Inequality , and Insecurity : Feminist Social Movements in Pakistan," *Gender & Development* 13, no. 3 (2005): 63–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332298>, 64.

<sup>754</sup>Kennedy, Charles H., "Islāmīc Legal Reform and the Status of Women," *Journal of Islāmīc Studies* 2, no. 1 (1991): 45–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/2.1.45>, 53.

<sup>755</sup>Al-Hibri, Azizah , "Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women's Rights," *American University International Law Review* 12, no. 1 (1997): 1–44, <http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/auilr>, 3.

<sup>756</sup>Ali, Faiza, "Feminist Movement and Legal Framework in Pakistan : Implications for Equal Employment Opportunity," in *Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management International Conference (Central Queensland University, 2006)*, 1–16, 10.

<sup>757</sup>Haider, *Islāmīc Legal Reform and the Status of Women in Pakistan*. 53.

Another NGO, Women Action Forum, based on professional women’s group publicly demonstrated, protested and challenged the discrimination against women and these laws.<sup>758</sup> The recommendations of the National Commission on Status of Women encountered severe opposition from the religious parties in the parliament. By adding further Samia Raheel Qazi’s stance, “these laws are given in the Qur’ān, and Allāh does not give humans the right to change them”, it is illustrated that the *Hudood* laws are based on the Qur’ānic text, and thereby must be considered as divine sanction.<sup>759</sup> The basis of *zina* ordinance was the Qur’ānic verses:

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ  
وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ-<sup>760</sup>

*“The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion [i.e., law] of Allāh, if you should believe in Allāh and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment.”*

Further the argumentation was that the implementation of Zia’s Islāmization program had slightly undesirable effects on the rights of women and many of the allegations are nothing but a mere exaggeration of its scope, pace and intent of Zia’s legal reform.<sup>761</sup>

*c. Religious disagreement and arguments in the light of Islāmic thought*

The intensity in which female feminists started taking individual cases of victimization of women together under legislation, examined the violation of the law, and drawn attention to the increase of women’s number in jail after the implementation of the *Hudood* laws eventually prompted the Senate in 1997 to set up a “Commission of Inquiry” for Women.<sup>762</sup> Further to the increasing demand from the world organizations, from International communities and feminists for women's rights in Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf was compelled to set up the “National Commission on the Status of Women” to re-examine and

<sup>758</sup>Mumtaz, “Advocacy for an End to Poverty , Inequality , and Insecurity : Feminist Social Movements in Pakistan.”64.

<sup>759</sup>Imran, “Legal Injustices: The Zina Hudood Ordinance of Pakistan and Its Implications for Women.”97.

<sup>760</sup>Al-Qur’ān, An-Nur 24:2.

<sup>761</sup>Kennedy, “Islāmic Legal Reform and the Status of Women in Pakistan.” 53.

<sup>762</sup>Mumtaz, “Advocacy for an End to Poverty , Inequality , and Insecurity : Feminist Social Movements in Pakistan.” 64.

recommend modified legislation to the disputed *zina* ordinance.<sup>763</sup> Subsequently, the way women's rights activists proposed to repeal the *zina* ordinance was not acknowledged as it is, instead these laws were revised. For the first time in 25 years, right-wing women, who clearly rejected the initial *zina* ordinance of the 1980s, officially opposed the call to revoke or amend the statute. They had moved from their former scholarly stance that the law had been unfairly interpreted.<sup>764</sup> Later on, the *zina* ordinance reformed by the Women's Protection Act of 2006.<sup>765</sup>

It is noted that one of the aspects Gen. Musharraf will certainly be regarded as a progressive ruler is the advancement of female's interests during his nine-year period as President of Pakistan (1999-2008). The revision of the ordinance, against which the women's struggle had waged a long-term fight, was most significant and<sup>766</sup> a considerable amendment in the sight of women rights activists specifically. Although keeping in view, what Allāh swt has instructed in the Qur'ān al Karim, no one has right to amend it or change it. Allāh swt knows better what law is suitable for humanity. Al- Qur'ān, wants to establish a society that is pure from crimes, robberies, adulteries, rape and establishes the laws of Allāh perfectly in His created universe. Once these Hudood purely established while fulfilling the basic purpose of the punishments, that desired and blessed "*Khilafah*" would be established. Whenever any person either common people or feminists raised the voice to diminish the Islamic or Qur'ānic laws, their voices should be turned down. In contrast, their voices are acceptable if it does not contradict with Qur'ān, Sunnah of the last Prophet Hazrat Muḥammad(ﷺ).

#### **4.2. APWA's debate related to political issues**

Muslim women's political activities, although limiting in both time and scope, were inevitably facilitated within a mechanism specified by the prevailing principles and traditions. After mid-1930s women started taking part in to politics because of Quaid's support.<sup>767</sup>The suffrage history of the subcontinent in itself was a fairly recent phenomenon. After several years of struggle, the Government of India Act 1935 had provided special reserved seats for women. The demand had been for 10 per cent of the total seats but only 3 per cent allocation

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<sup>763</sup>Imran, "Legal Injustices: The Zina Hudood Ordinance of Pakistan and Its Implications for Women." 96.

<sup>764</sup>Zia ,Afiya Shehrbano, "Faith-Based Politics , Enlightened Moderation and the Pakistani Women's Movement" 11, no. 1 (2009): 225–45, 241.

<sup>765</sup>Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan."37.

<sup>766</sup>Zia, "Faith-Based Politics , Enlightened Moderation and the Pakistani Women's Movement", 225.

<sup>767</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 83,92.

had been granted and representation of women had been accepted in principle for the first time.<sup>768</sup> It is claimed that the existed inconsistency between the women's political participation in the "nationalist movement" and their presence in the autonomous "Pakistan legislature" was a result of the patriarchal mentality of Pakistan's political establishment, who did not see politics as a best forum for females to participate.<sup>769</sup>

So long as the facade of parliamentary government remained intact, APWA's other main contribution was to toe the government's line on most political issues.<sup>770</sup> Until this point the socio-political context favored a slow but steady inclusion of women in public life and progressive legal reforms to enhance their rights. In the aftermath of women's mobilization during the Pakistan Movement, the high visibility of elite women activists and politicians in the public sphere, including respected Fatima Jinnah( Sister of Muhammad 'Alī Jinnah), and Ra'ana Liaquat 'Alī Khan (First Lady 1947–51) contributed to the sense that possibilities for women were opening up in the new country.<sup>771</sup>

The practice of reserving seats for women in legislatures predates independence, so it has never been a particularly controversial subject.<sup>772</sup> After the creation of Pakistan, in February 1949, the Council of the All Pakistan Muslim League denied to elect a woman candidate for the post of "Joint Secretary" and gave no formal rebuke. The sudden strike action of women representatives by walking out, on the other hand, could not be treated without due consideration. The establishment had to find a satisfactory answer because the women's party was headed by Ra'ana Liaquat 'Alī Khan at that time.<sup>773</sup>

This was the time when Pakistan's first women's organization, All Pakistan Women's Association came into being under the supervision of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan with other influential women's group. Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan played a decisive role in securing fixed allocation of special women's seats in the Constituent Assembly in 1956.<sup>774</sup> As Prime Minister, Liaquat 'Alī Khan had already allotted women parliamentary seats, and it was now

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<sup>768</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*. 235.

<sup>769</sup>Bari, Farzana, "Women Parliamentarians Challenging the Frontiers of Politics in Pakistan," *Gender, Technology and Development* 14, no. 3 (2010): 363–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/097185241001400304>, 364.

<sup>770</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 83,92.

<sup>771</sup>Khan, Ayesha and Sana Naqvi, "Women in Politics : Gaining Ground for Progressive Outcomes in Pakistan," vol. 2018 (Brighton, UK, 2018), 7.

<sup>772</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements." 101.

<sup>773</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 89.

<sup>774</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*,234.

up to them to raise it further in perspective of their political rights. Begum Jahanara Shahanawaz (Western wing) and Begum Shaista Ikramullah (Eastern wing) were two<sup>775</sup> selected female members of the first Constituent Assembly of 1950<sup>776</sup> and they were belonging to a strong political background.<sup>777</sup>

As for the very first time in Pakistan's first constitution of 1956, a special provision of 10 reserved seats, 5 from each wing, was formally granted. This was the result of the struggle and untiring efforts of the members of the APWA. Later on, during the time period of Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, women became active in politics.<sup>778</sup> During the elections of 1970, APWA once again made a call for increasing the number of reserved seats for women and also stressed the need to encourage women to contest for open general seats. Today, women have managed to secure 17 per cent of the reserved representation in the lower house of the Parliament.<sup>779</sup> The allocation of 33 percent of women's seats in all three levels of local government and 17 percent of reserved seats for women in national and provincial assemblies under the Local Governance Ordinance (LGO) which was introduced by General Musharraf in 2001.<sup>780</sup> In the 2013 polls, turnout improved and noteworthy seats were granted to women.<sup>781</sup> In recent years, women's participation in politics is more viable and encouraging than ever before after independence. Women's are confidently now participating politics and serving on distinct posts without any discrimination and hurdles.

#### **4.2.1. Islāmic thought vs. Feminist approach**

Nothing prevents a woman from doing "social work" in her community or from exercising her political rights in voting. However, a controversy arises when discussing the woman's actual participation in the governing process.<sup>782</sup> Many studies have shown a different number

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<sup>775</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>776</sup>Saiyid, Dushka H., "Women in Politics - Problems of Participation: A Case Study of Pakistan," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islāmabad* 21, no. 3 (2001): 11–24.

<sup>777</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 85.

<sup>778</sup>Moghadam, Valentine M., "Patriarchy and the Politics of Gender in Modernising Societies: Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan," *International Sociology* 7, no. 1 (1992): 35–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026858092007001002>, 43.

<sup>779</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*. 235.

<sup>780</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan: Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 167.

<sup>781</sup>Syed and Dar, "Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment." 159.

<sup>782</sup>Chipp, "The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association." 66.

of factors that involved in women's less political involvement throughout the ages.<sup>783</sup> The debate on women's participation in politics is not a very recent one. These issues remained and still are in the quest to achieve much more in most of Muslims states around the world. It is quoted in a study that Zahra Naderi, the society's secretary in Iran states;

“for instance, while *hijāb* is emphasized by our religious scholars, the story of Bilqīs [the Queen of Sheba], which justifies women in leadership roles, is not.”<sup>784</sup>

She illustrates further, as a religious women, we seek to highlight the religious rulings which we feel, have been ignored, and raise public awareness about them, while lobbying political and religious elites. While most Islāmic scholars do not accept women's rule, leadership or being heads of state, but there have been some leading Islāmic scholars who accept women's leadership in certain circumstances. Among them one of the eminent scholar is Maulana ashraf 'Alī Thanvi(R), a leading scholar of the Islāmic world from India, who has given a 'Fatwa' in favor of Shahjahan Begum 'the Queen of Bhopal', Imam Malik( R) and Allama Syed SulaimanNadavi (R) were some other scholars.<sup>785</sup>

Those who are in favor of women's participation in politics, argues that the Qur'ān is silent on the specific issue of whether a woman should become the head of a Muslim state or not. The Qur'ān does not, however, explicitly refuse women the right of choosing a political career or leading a Muslim state. At the same time they assume verses of the Qur'ān those dealing with the Queen of Sheba as head of state with approval from the chiefs.<sup>786</sup> Although women's struggle to access political positions in different sectors has always been critically evaluated, but the entire focus remained until now on cultural and religious factors.

Literature put emphasis on women's interests that is generally said to be ignored in the Pakistani political field. In order to represent and protect women's interests, women's formal participation in politics is considered as crucial. The reason is, their active participation is not only necessary as symbolic reasons, but to secure and bring about significant differences in political arenas. In perspective of women's rights and their legislation, females are expected to be more eloquent, specific and well expressive to put

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<sup>783</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*; Saiyid, “Women in Politics - Problems of Participation: A Case Study of Pakistan”; Syed and Dar, “Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment.”

<sup>784</sup>Tajali, Mona, “Islāmic Women's Groups and the Quest for Political Representation in Turkey and Iran,” *Middle East Journal* 69, no. 4 (2015): 563–81, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mej.2015.0073>, 577.

<sup>785</sup>Elius, *Islāmic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis*, 203.

<sup>786</sup>Mohammad Ali Syed, *The Position of Women in Islām A Progressive View* (NewYork: State University of New York Press, 2004), 121-122.



focus on women's interest during policy making and legislation.<sup>787</sup> Keeping the women's issues on the political agenda during difficult nation-building years,<sup>788</sup> Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan continues her struggle for active participation of women in political, administrative fields.<sup>789</sup> Extending patronage to organizations like APWA was more in the form of a political calculation than a commitment to female emancipation.<sup>790</sup> APWA's members though, did not play a significant role in women's participation in politics due to their focus on social welfare, but most of its members were in favour of women participation in political activities. In 1970s a study showed the opinions of the members of APWA concerning women's involvement in government, and politics were collected. The study has shown more disagreement concerning the role of women in "politics." while seventeen (77 per cent) felt that the woman should be able to enter into politics, five (23 per cent) would prohibit such activity by women for a variety of reasons.<sup>791</sup> Nevertheless, they struggled for women's political rights and her equal participation in decision-making, specifically in women-related issues. The focus remained on to increase women, politician number in assembly and legislature arena by them.

In Pakistan women is actively participating in country politics, but here worth mentioning some views of Muslims scholars of Pakistan who basically argues on women's active participation in politics. In 1964 the late Miss Fatimah Jinnah, then 72 years old, ran for President of Pakistan against the incumbent Mohammed Ayub Khan. Her candidacy raised the question: "Can a woman serve as head of an Islāmic State?"<sup>792</sup> It was not only the Maulana Maududi, who firstly opposed, but surprisingly, Miss Fatima Jinnah was opposed by APWA and its members, including Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan and Begum Fida Hussain, who vigorously lobbied for President Ayub Khan. As Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan had taken a prominent role in the women's rights activism since the formation of Pakistan, her this opponent behaviour among all the roles she played for women's rights was much unfortunate in the perspective of her activism.<sup>793</sup> In general elections, during the campaign of Benazir Bhutto in 1988, the opposition again raised the question by using this

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<sup>787</sup>Bari, "Women Parliamentarians Challenging the Frontiers of Politics in Pakistan." 372.

<sup>788</sup>Ansari, Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1424.

<sup>789</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady, 241.

<sup>790</sup>Jalal, The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan., 90.

<sup>791</sup>Weiss, The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association, 251.

<sup>792</sup>Ibid.67.

<sup>793</sup>Shami, "Political Empowerment of Women in Pakistan." 144.

particular Ḥadīth of Abu Bakrah, as their biases to prevent her from becoming the prime minister or head of state in Pakistan.<sup>794</sup>

The rise in the number of women in the political establishment on behalf of certain religious political parties in different Muslim-majority states are a startling recent development that contradicts the overwhelming focus of existing literature on the religious/social barriers that hold women out of political decision-making.<sup>795</sup> It is asserted that a renowned scholar of Pakistan, Maulana Maududi, advocated that voting rights should be extended to educated females only and to all adult males. The study illustrated that where there is likely a chance of intermingling of women with men, the women must not allow to be a part of such public offices or posts. Pious and learned males could only hold important public offices, including the position of head of state. He recommended a separate assembly of women to advise legislators on issues relating to women.<sup>796</sup> On the basis of narrated which is mostly demonstrated by those who are against women's leadership. The Ḥadīth narrated by Abū Bakrah;

“Allāh protected me with something that I heard from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). When chosroes died, he said: ‘whom has they appointed as his successor? They said: ‘His daughter! He said: “No people will ever prosper who entrust their leadership to a woman.”<sup>797</sup>

The Jama‘at officially continued to stick with the views of Maulana Maududi. After 1980 onward, there emerged many dissenting voices from within the Jama‘at. During 1990, there grew a new outline of critical language that can be labelled as, “Islāmic feminism”.<sup>798</sup> Jamaat women, along with a vast number of university educated Pakistani women, tried to rewrite the purdah discourse at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as in many other Muslim communities, to read as a trend not from “Purdah to Parliament” but more mostly as “Purdah

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<sup>794</sup>Syed, *The Position of Women in Islām A Progressive View*, 123.

<sup>795</sup>Syed and Dar, *Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment*, 164.

<sup>796</sup>Hakim, Abdul and Aziz Azra, “Socio-Cultural, Religious, and Political Aspects of the Status of Women in Pakistan,” in *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 37 (Islāmabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 1998), 727–46, 734.

<sup>797</sup> An-Nasā’i, ImāmHāfiz Abū Abdur Rahmān Ahmad bin Shu‘aib bin ‘Ali, Sunan An-Nasā’i, (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007) Translated by, Nasiruddin al-Khattab, *The book of the etiquette of judges*, Chapter 8. Prohibition of appointing women for judgment, 6, Ḥadīth no, 5390, 200.

<sup>798</sup>Ahmad, Irfan, “Cracks in the ‘Mightiest Fortress’: Jamaat-e-Islāmi’s Changing Discourse on Women,” *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 2–3 (2008): 549–75, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X07003101>, 558-559.

in Parliament”, such as it is.<sup>799</sup> A significant number of private members’ bills dealing with female issues and challenges have been moved and backed by reserved-seat female MNAs; many of these bills have been passed into legislation. Furthermore, many measures to repeal certain unjust provisions have since been introduced.<sup>800</sup> In this phase, party membership has also experienced a required adjustment. The women’s role within the party has thus grown into more civic and political activism, with a focus on humanitarian, literacy improvement and political activism in the private sector.<sup>801</sup> Through this, political participation for both men and women in the contemporary age is not seen as additional to, but as a necessary feature of Islāmic identity.

Another concern most academics figured out that many Islāmic political parties have organized and politicized women to work mainly as supporters and grassroots leaders to help bringing in their party into power. <sup>802</sup> Today, because of the gender quota system, the high profile of women in political institutions formally has drawn the public’s attention towards broader national discussion and it certainly influenced the debate of women’s political representation in modern times.<sup>803</sup> It is significant to note that in Pakistani politics, women have played a significant role on many occasions and provided their leadership at certain places. Most of these females, indeed, belongs to a very affluent segment of the nation and have their constituency largely from their ancestral legacy. In addition, there is no prejudice at the mainstream level of nominating women leaders. In addition to Fatima Jinnah, there was Benazir Bhutto, who was elected as the first woman Prime Minister of the Islāmic Nations in 1988.<sup>804</sup> However, subsequently the Local Government Ordinance (LGO), seemed an observable opportunity for women to become directly absorbed and influential at all tiers of political decision-making in the country.<sup>805</sup>

In the current era the debate has changed from mere political participation to women politicians challenges that they face during political campaigns, in assemblies and in parliament. It is considered that due to the prevalent role “Ajaratdari” of the feudal rulers and

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<sup>799</sup>Jamal, Amina “Gendered Islām and Modernity in the Nation-Space: Women’s Modernism in the Jamaat-e-Islāmi of Pakistan,” *Feminist Review* 91, no. 1 (2009): 9–28, <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.43>, 22.

<sup>800</sup>Chowdhury, Nusrat Jahan, “Who Speaks for Women in Parliament? Patriarchy and Women MNAs in Pakistan,” in *Women in Governing Institutions in South Asia: Parliament, Civil Service and Local Government*, ed. Nizam Ahmed (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2018), 97–116, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-57475-2. 102.

<sup>801</sup>Jamal, Gendered Islām and Modernity in the Nation-Space: Women’s Modernism in the Jamaat-e-Islāmi of Pakistan, 23.

<sup>802</sup>Islāmic Women’s Groups and the Quest for Political Representation in Turkey and Iran. 564.

<sup>803</sup>Women Parliamentarians Challenging the Frontiers of Politics in Pakistan., 365.

<sup>804</sup>Women in Politics - Problems of Participation: A Case Study of Pakistan, 15.

<sup>805</sup>*Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 167.

religious groups in legislative bodies, the political environment of the state is viewed as restrictive enough to adapt female participants.<sup>806</sup> It is believed that male dominance is historically legitimized in politics in countries such as Pakistan, in a socio-cultural sense, which presents many challenges for woman politicians in general and women parliamentarians to work for women in parliament, party and constituency.<sup>807</sup> It is considered that the low representation of women resides with society's traditional values, manifested in the women's literacy rate that is too low and the lack of desire of successive governments to raise the participation number of women in the political process.<sup>808</sup>

In research, however, it is obvious that most of the women belonging to middle class or lower middle class do not want to partake in political system such as persuading, to convince public and engaging themselves in political campaigns seems hectic. Women are generally perceived as nervous and chatterboxes in election campaigns as participants.<sup>809</sup> Besides all opinions, many women refrain to participate in politics not because of these issues rather their detestation for this field. More issues concerning female rights have now identified the importance in legislative actions through following the patterns of recent years. In particular, in popularizing gender-related problems, MNAs (reserved-seat women) have played a positive role. They appear to be equally active in moving legislation and at promoting women's interests and raising other women-related issues.<sup>810</sup> It is worth mentioning at the same time, in the light of the different opinions that show women are kept far from political avenue due to religious and cultural barriers.

### **4.3. APWA and Economical outlook**

In Pakistan, although few adult unmarried women engage in any work beyond their household duties, the freedom of women to reach high posts in politics and government may be considerably greater than in many Western countries.<sup>811</sup> On the other hand, it is claimed that in the civil services, judicial process and democratic polices, women are disproportionately represented, are marginalized in the economy sector and have less

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<sup>806</sup>Women Political Participation in Pakistan: Steps towards Reshaping the Political Environment, 154.

<sup>807</sup>Chowdhury, "Who Speaks for Women in Parliament? Patriarchy and Women MNAs in Pakistan," 99.

<sup>808</sup>Women in Politics - Problems of Participation: A Case Study of Pakistan, 15.

<sup>809</sup>Ahmad , Akhlaq and Haq Nawaz Anwar, "Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan," The Pakistan Journal of Social Issues VIII (2017): 73–84, 79.

<sup>810</sup>Chowdhry, Who Speaks for Women in Parliament? Patriarchy and Women MNAs in Pakistan." 101.

<sup>811</sup>Chipp, The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association, 61.

leadership skills and little capability to fight as their interests are bartered.<sup>812</sup> Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan's personal involvement, along with her official position, enabled APWA in establishing a women's rights platform that is further recognized globally by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with category B consultative status. APWA has had a number of social welfare platforms with gradual and sustained progress.<sup>813</sup> As a result, the emphasis of APWA was on building educational, economical, social awareness by enhancing women's economic involvement through education in national growth. Urban residents took well-to-do courses and it became an effective platform for women's interests outside the home.<sup>814</sup>

APWA was and still is, mainly urban-oriented and involved in income generating activities and developing women's education and health care.<sup>815</sup> In the early years of the history of Pakistan, now that the political war was over, female citizen started to claim for their own rights. In 1948, the first effort was made during the budget discussion to obtain economic rights for women. When the Shari'at bill was excluded from the national assembly agenda, the female representatives became annoyed and took up this subject to the Women's Committee of the Muslim League. Hundreds of women marched to the Assembly chambers chanting slogans, led by Jahanara Shahnawaz and other female politicians, and Muslim Personal Rule (1948) eventually became successful in accepting the right of women to inherit property.<sup>816</sup> The first piece of law may have only been for property classes, but being females, they made a stance for their own rights against their male counterparts in the assembly.<sup>817</sup>

As early as 1948, Begum Ra'ana had also begun to envisage and plan the creation of the first-ever handicrafts and cottage industry. She understood how important economic empowerment was for ensuring a better standard of living for women and their families, thanks to her academic grounding in economics and her own financial independence as a

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<sup>812</sup>Shaheed , Farida, "Contested Identities: Gendered Politics, Gendered Religion in Pakistan," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 851–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2010.502710>, 855-56.

<sup>813</sup> Naz et al., *A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)*, 22.

<sup>814</sup> Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 10.

<sup>815</sup>Jafar, *Women's NGOs in Pakistan*, p. 25.

<sup>816</sup>In reality, British law disadvantaged females of their right to inheritance, even recognized in biblical rules. Nevertheless, because of an agreement reached between the landholders in the Punjab and the British government, the Muslim Personal Law of 1937 recognized the right of Muslim women to inherit lands, except for agricultural production. See, Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."3.

<sup>817</sup>*Ibid.*8.

young woman.<sup>818</sup> APWA schools and colleges, health centres and industrial homes for girls and offered sewing and associated income-generating expertise. Much of its operations were centralized in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar in other areas of the region, with district and divisional headquarters in Pakistan.<sup>819</sup> Begum Ra'ana believed that the revival of local arts and crafts, which also included imparting training, would ensure gainful employment for millions of women in villages and displaced and unemployed refugee men and women in cities.<sup>820</sup> Ra'ana Liaquat Ali launched several other organizations, and the time seems to be prosperous in given the enormous range of female's organizations that have been created. In 1954, to bring working women together on a forum, the Karachi Business and Professional Women's Club was formed and later developed branches in Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. The Federation of University Women, established in 1956 for women who did not prefer to join workplace after earning degrees from universities.<sup>821</sup>

It is a woman who can do the most to make or break a nation. Based on this belief the All Pakistan Women's Association was founded after the partition of sub-continent. In Pakistan women is enjoying equal status in all legal matters. There are some restrictions on women in public participation. The formation of this organization was an attempt to bring the women of Pakistan out of their symbolic shells.<sup>822</sup> Few other organizations came into existence, including APWA, in which the Federation of University Women (1956) sought to offer job opportunities to those who have their bachelor's or master's degrees under Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan's monitoring and instruction<sup>823</sup>

The Bhutto era in the history of Pakistan was one of the best steps towards structured NGOs for women. The established ones flourished and there developed some new one. In the 1970s, APWA's focus experienced a shift. It is noted that this transition has been characterized by the representation of women into the development process, the drive for a

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<sup>818</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, p.212.

<sup>819</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 10.

<sup>820</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, p.212.

<sup>821</sup>Saigol, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)*, 10.

<sup>822</sup>Chipp, Sylvia A., "The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society," in *Asian Women in Transition*, ed. Sylvia A. Chipp and Justin J. Green (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1980), 204–26, 204.

<sup>823</sup>Naz et al., "A Paradigm Shift in Women's Movement and Gender Reforms in Pakistan (A Historical Overview)."22.

permanent commission on the status of women and the particular attention provided to working among rural women.<sup>824</sup>

Usually, only more influential wealthy women have the free time to take part in the types of programs that certain organizations plan, which supposedly support disadvantaged women, but in reality, it serves only elites. APWA has also introduced such initiatives in Pakistan without maintaining sufficient local mass-marketing networks, setting up income-generating activities such as tablecloth-making, cooking, and rug-weaving. Alternatively, the items are normally oriented towards the inadequate and unreliable tourists and foreign specialty markets.<sup>825</sup> Ra'ana and her group soon realized that the need of the hour was a bigger through which underprivileged women and the thousands of destitute and unemployed refugees could earn regular incomes. With the help of her friends and other volunteers, a large and professional center was established. It was named Gul-i-Ra'ana Industrial Home and was set up in a densely populated area of Karachi.<sup>826</sup> It was with setting up of this industrial home that women were for the first time given the opportunity to earn full-time wages. Although APWA remained active in building schools and spearheading their activities to more national less developed area areas but it remained until now limited.

Currently, as the prime location for high quality homemade items, APWA art shop was re-launched on May 4th, 2018. Many participants attended the launching program, and enjoyed the broad range of crafts offered by APWA. The concept behind the re-launch to inspire women, demonstrate their abilities and demonstrate a modern and contemporary approach to the past of APWA's Crafts.<sup>827</sup> APWA has also supported and promoted the development of indigenous crafts and products, especially by women in their homes. APWA supported product development and its marketing through cottage industry shops that sells these products in all the four provinces, providing opportunity for women to earn an income independently. APWA runs vocational training for women through more than 49 centers all over the Pakistan. These centers teach skills such as, stitching, embroidery, computer training, etc. APWA has always believed in economic independence as a critical part of their empowerment in society.

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<sup>824</sup>Mumtaaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p. 63.

<sup>825</sup>Weiss, *Women's Position in Pakistan: Sociocultural Effects of Islamization*, 879.

<sup>826</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, p.214.

<sup>827</sup>Pind, Lene, "Reports for the IAW Board Meeting," 2018, <https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/19200344/Annual-Reports-2018-ed.pdf>, 66.

#### 4.3.1. Islāmic thought vs. Feminist approach

Modern western approaches towards women's employments remain traditionally dominated by narratives and public policy relating to equal opportunities and gender supervision. Many countries have developed regulations to promote gender equality at work to prove that women do not encounter with some form of sexual harassment or abuse.<sup>828</sup> Besides this, in the Western countries, other cultural influences were also beneficial in paving the way for the Industrial Revolution. Economic situations compelled each family member to become an earning member. All groups of women, married, single, divorced and widows, eventually had to come out to earn their livelihood, and natural effects started to follow with the growth in the prospects for free intermingling of the sexes. Although, society felt its effect and it was quite disturbing.<sup>829</sup>

In Islāmic culture, the male assumes all economic responsibilities in every family. Especially even if his wife is wealthy, considering the fact that she is economically independent, still it is his responsibility to serve his family entirely. There is no need for a woman in traditional Islāmic culture to think about making a living. The wider family system still remains in which she can find a space and take shelter from social and economic stresses, even though she does not have a husband or having him in both situations.<sup>830</sup> In general, Islām protects women from economical obligation within the home, an alternative that is left to the personal choice and conditions. However the free option of women to engage in economic activities or focus on their household duties is in striking comparison to the status of men in Islām. For men, economic practices are moral liabilities ordained by religion, not a matter of option.<sup>831</sup>

For the reason the Qur'ānic reference to "possessions," as well as its charge to men to maintain women should make it obvious that "bounties" are financial resources. Indeed, since a man gets twice a woman's share in inheritance in many cases, it is reasonable to assume that these are the resources to which the *āyah* is referring; and this may also explain why men

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<sup>828</sup>Syed, Jawad and Harry J. Van Buren, "Global Business Norms and Islāmic Views of Women's Employment," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2014): 251–76, <https://doi.org/10.5840/beq201452910>. 253.

<sup>829</sup>Abul A'la Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, ed. Al-Ashari (Lahore: Islāmic Publications Limited, 1972), 37-38.

<sup>830</sup>Jameelah, Maryam, *Islām and Western Society A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, Third (Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1990), pp.109-110.

<sup>831</sup>Syed, Jawad and Harry J. Van Buren, "Global Business Norms and Islāmic Views of Women's Employment," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2014): 251–76, <https://doi.org/10.5840/beq201452910>, 261.



in certain capacities (sons, brothers) are allowed to inherit twice a woman's share.<sup>832</sup> Despite the fact, In Islām, there is no judgement that prevents a female from pursuing an appropriate job. In addition, there are no restrictions on benefiting from the exceptional ability of women in any profession. The considered impediments are cultural and social environment and not the religion. The first wife of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), Khadījah (R.A), was an independent businesswoman.<sup>833</sup> Ra'ana Liaquat 'Alī Khan depicted in one of her interviews that "Islām, from the very beginning thought well of women. What about Hazrat Khadījah (R.A)? This goes back to Prophet's(ﷺ) time so I don't know with what face they can come up with all this now and how our people are demoralized."<sup>834</sup>

It is illustrated that these different traditions are quoted to build a limiting image of women's modesty, such as those documented in the Imam Tirmidhī's (209-279) compilation of the Ḥadīth. In Islāmic principles, although the reliability and background of these narratives remain a subject of contention.<sup>835</sup> One of the most cited Ḥadīth female seclusion is;

“(Abū ‘Eīsā said:) The Ḥadīth of ‘Uqbah bin ‘Āmir is a Ḥasan Saḥīḥ Ḥadīth. Regarding “entering upon women” what is disliked is similar to what has been related from the Prophet: "A man and a woman are not secluded together except that the third of them is the Shaitān.”<sup>836</sup>

But the basic argument between modernists and traditionalists starts from the exegesis of the *ayāh* that has been mentioned below;

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ<sup>837</sup>

“Men are in charge of women.”

according to Maulana Maududi's interpretation, man's position is that of a provider and as an in charge of the family. Being a head of the family and responsible for its affairs and

<sup>832</sup>Barlas ,Asma, *Believing Women in Islām Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, Revised Ed (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/doi:10.7560/315910>, 214.

<sup>833</sup>Khan ,Aslam and Khan Waseem, “Islāmic Shariah and the Status of Women in South Asia,” *Peshawar Islāmicus* 7, no. 2 (2016): 17–21, 20.

<sup>834</sup>Zubair, "Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan."

<sup>835</sup>Syed , Jawad, “An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment,” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 29, no. 2 (2010): 150–66, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151011024475>, 154.

<sup>836</sup>Tirmidhī, *Jāmi' al Tirmidhī*, The Chapter on Suckling, Chapter 16: What Has Been Related About It Being Disliked To Enter Upon Women Whose Husband's Are Absent, 2, Ḥadīth no, 1171, 538.

<sup>837</sup> Al-Qur'an, An-Nisa 4:34.

conduct, male is qualified, and female should live under his care and protection.<sup>838</sup> It is mandatory for his wife and kids to follow him, given that the disobedience of Allāh and His Prophet does not involve them. He is responsible for making a living for the family and supporting them with the essentials of life.<sup>839</sup> His exegesis on the word *qawwāmūn*, has become the sight of criticism by many feminists. Barlas says;

“This exegesis, which establishes the husband as a ruler over his wife or, at the very least, as the head of the household, ignores that the Qur’ān appoints women and men each other’s *awlīya*? , or mutual protectors, which it could not do if men were in fact superior to women and their “managers.” More to the point, such an exegesis reads into the *āyah* claims about sexual inequality and male privilege.”<sup>840</sup>

Keeping in view different views, it is argued that in regards to women's career matters, liberalism and its principles conflict with certain perceptions of Islām. In fact, Muslim women themselves, in some instances, seem to resist modern culture in favour of a distinctive Islāmīc perception of their position.<sup>841</sup> On the international front, President of APWA Syeda Ayesha Javeri attended CSW61 in New York 13-24 March 2017 and the World Muslim NGOs Meet (WNM) in Malaysia in 23-25 September 2016. With the help of understanding, knowledge and patience, she argued about the need to practice belief. She stressed that Pakistan is a nation that has borne a heavy burden, as extremists have seized our religion and laden it with ancient, oppressive values, . In interpreting Islām and the proper translation of terms in the Qur’ān, there is a critical need for explanation. Out of many different translations of the words in terms of its meaning, the most patriarchal is very frequently picked as a method to keep women marginalized. In the forward movement for Muslim women, this is a major problem which must be tackled.<sup>842</sup>

It is observed that while considering the cultural differences that differentiate from Asian Muslim countries to Arabian territories and all across Africa, a traditional view of Islām is practised in most of these cultures, with differing degrees of constraints on women's independence ,jobs and concerning their mobility.<sup>843</sup> However the urge is articulated by an increasing number of Muslim countries and in some cases (Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan),

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<sup>838</sup> Maududi, *Tafhīmal-Qur’ān: An Understanding of Qur’ān*, vol, II, 35.

<sup>839</sup> Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.144.

<sup>840</sup> Barlas, *Believing Women in Islām Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur’ān*, 214.

<sup>841</sup> Syed and Van Buren, “Global Business Norms and Islāmīc Views of Women’s Employment.” 255.

<sup>842</sup> Pind, Lene, “Reports for Congress 2017” (Nicosia, Cyprus, 2017), <https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/19193509/Reports-2017.pdf>, 60.

<sup>843</sup> Syed and Van Buren, “Global Business Norms and Islāmīc Views of Women’s Employment.”, 262.

significant steps are taken to switch to Sharī‘ah law and doctrines to structure their way of life, particularly in economic matters.<sup>844</sup> On the subject of economical independence, Riffat Hasan a feminist illustrated that even after several advancements in the area of human rights have been introduced, it is deeply saddening that many Islāmic women are not only denied to physical and economic rights, but also to ethical, spiritual and academic deprivation by misrepresenting the fundamental message of Islām.<sup>845</sup>

The economic growth of man is the primary aspect that gives him a place in society and he is capable of retaining that role by it. The financial condition of a female has been undermined by all regulations, except the law of Islām. Europe tried to improve her situation, but the result was that she acquired a hand like the man that contributed to an even greater evil.<sup>846</sup> It is observed that woman’s less participation in country income generating labor or economy market is due to the social and cultural factors that determines her role. She is a woman, and her primary duty is to make her home. This inherent bias in the society makes her economical choices limited.<sup>847</sup> In addition to these arguments, the situation a working woman in society is quite different. It is not necessary that she is working woman by choice, sometimes factors led her to be a working woman for herself or her family’s survival. At another time, there are certain profession like teaching, medical, etc. where females are needed all the time. Islām, never creates hurdles in a way of her follower instead it presents more comfortable zones according to the need and suitability of the time. The need of the hour is to reconcile to the Muslim’s very own teaching to make a livelihood more secure and uncomplicated.

#### **4.4. APWA and Social Representation**

Muslim women participated in many spheres of life and enjoyed much freedom in the early period of Islāmic history. This allowed women to develop their hidden abilities confidently. Social institutions and the community have made it possible for them to make good use of

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<sup>844</sup>Metwally, M. M., “Economic Consequences of Applying Islāmic Principles in Muslim Societies,” *International Journal of Social Economics* 24, no. 7–9 (1997): 941–57, <https://doi.org/10.1108/03068299710178955>, 941.

<sup>845</sup>Hassan ,Riffat, “Islām and Human Rights in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of the Positions of Three Contemporary Women,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 10, no. 1 (2002): 131–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2002.9673311>, 135.

<sup>846</sup>Maududi, Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām, 150.

<sup>847</sup>Ali , Faiza, “A Multi-Level Perspective on Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in Pakistan,” *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management* 24, no. 5 (2013): 289–309, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-12-2012-0110>, 294.

their potential. This is the factor why women in the field have excelled.<sup>848</sup> The sets of legislation that prevail in every culture promote particular type of social relationships.<sup>849</sup> A variety of ethnic groups and languages are home to Pakistan and cannot be described as having a unitary community. Women's cultural attitudes vary considerably depending on social status, regional membership, and urban/ rural divisions.<sup>850</sup>

Woman's movement studies has indicated that women are not only organized as females, but also as wives, mothers, teachers, farmers and citizens.<sup>851</sup> The President of APWA, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, reached so far as to claim that social welfare was the foundation stone on which the whole framework of our national life can be constructed. This was perhaps the one area where the best accomplishment could be made by women collectively.<sup>852</sup> For this cause, women around the social groups and cultures of Pakistan find their morality represented in their subservience to the interests of their communities. Their consciousness as "good women" allows them to partake in repetitious "self-sacrifice activities" and to prioritise those in their families.<sup>853</sup>

Almost all female's organizations established during the initial phase of the establishment of Pakistan were concerned with motherhood and child-rearing concerns or with priorities as basic as the extension of APWA to make them completely marginal or at best.<sup>854</sup> At the first meeting of APWA, the resolutions which approved, called for free and compulsory primary education for women; a women's department to gather information on women in the workplace; maternal and child welfare centres; a nursing college; and a ban on begging children. More broadly, the meeting declared that Pakistani women are supposed by APWA to "fight till the end" in their various ways to protect the interests of Pakistan.<sup>855</sup> In a report the cause is mentioned that hundreds of girls in less privileged areas are studying in APWA's schools. The goal of basic primary schools is to close the divide between students enrolled in higher and all those unable to attend primary school low socioeconomic status,

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<sup>848</sup>Elius, *Islāmic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis*, 197.

<sup>849</sup>Weiss, *Women's Position in Pakistan: Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization*, 876.

<sup>850</sup>Zaman, Meryem F., "The Problem of the Rebellious Religious Women: Pakistan, Gender, and the Islāmic Revival," *Social Politics* 27, no. 2 (2019): 212–33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxz001>, 4.

<sup>851</sup>Ray, R. and A. C. Korteweg, "WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE THIRD WORLD: Identity, Mobilization, and Autonomy," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25, no. 1 (1999): 47–71, doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.25.1.47.

<sup>852</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 92.

<sup>853</sup>Zaman, "The Problem of the Rebellious Religious Women: Pakistan, Gender, and the Islāmic Revival." 9.

<sup>854</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan." 92.

<sup>855</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1438.

lack of funding, nutrition or some other challenge. APWA offers a standard program for providing equal, standard education in APWA primary schools.<sup>856</sup>

It is claimed that, whenever a social activists in Pakistan aim to provide resources and campaign for social reform, they confront massive impediments.<sup>857</sup> Despite the fact that APWA has been known to be consisting of “begums”, its activist stance against the proposed ordinances has increased its capacity as a facilitator of real progressive transformation for that moment.<sup>858</sup> At the same time, in the very first decade, APWA programs and activities expanded by leaps and bounds. It has set up a school for girls, an adult literacy centre and the Quetta Industrial Home in Baluchistan, one of the most under-developed provinces. By 1956 APWA also launched a large-scale adult literacy program which focused mainly on rural women and smaller towns. By the end of this decade, nearly twenty industrial homes were established in all major cities. There were over sixty-five primary and secondary schools spread throughout the country, including ten in East Pakistan. These were all looked after by dedicated volunteers who also ran Mother and Child Health (MCH) centers and primary healthcare centers.<sup>859</sup>

Currently, APWA’s first technical college is in the process of being licensed. This program would assist more less privileged women and girls to enter the workforce and help women gain a respectable income. In its work to reduce gender inequalities in education and promote fair access for disadvantaged people, including individuals with disabilities, local people and children in vulnerable circumstances, at all levels of schooling and technical program.<sup>860</sup> The potential of organizations made up of women of the working class, however distant and remote, was sufficient to convince the state to fund the social welfare and educational activities of APWA.<sup>861</sup>

APWA runs numerous services at the level of local populations to link with Improved Health care, Medical Camps and Lab Research programs, launch of family planning resources, Constructive and Compassionate parenting, Hepatitis A, B, C & E, HIV / AIDS

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<sup>856</sup>Knight, Christina, “Reports for the IAW International Meeting 2019,” 2019, [https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19194416/IAW\\_Annual-Reports-2019\\_final\\_B.pdf](https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19194416/IAW_Annual-Reports-2019_final_B.pdf), 84.

<sup>857</sup>Critelli, “Women’s Rights = Human Rights : Pakistani Women against Gender Violence.”146.

<sup>858</sup>Weiss, Women ’ s Position in Pakistan : Sociocultural Effects of Islāmization, 876.

<sup>859</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan’s Pioneering First Lady*. P.239.

<sup>860</sup>Knight, “Reports for the IAW International Meeting 2019.”, 84.

<sup>861</sup>Jalal, “The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan.” 85.

are an important part of annual efforts to fight infectious diseases.<sup>862</sup> APWA's representatives also took a statement on the issue of women's related other social issues outside education and health services. APWA's leaders also took stance on women's veil, dress culture and separation of women in separate universities. In a Herald interview with Afsheen Zubair, APWA chief Ra'ana Liaquat Ali explained her vision of the imposed veil:

“We are ruled with injunctions and ordinances as to what we should do, how we should dress, how we must relate to each other. The army is dictating political and constitutional changes which it has no right to do. So where is ideology on which Pakistan was founded? Would the Quaid have permitted chopping of limbs and flogging of citizens, and that too of women? Would he have enforced the covering of heads, the shrouding of women in ungainly *chaddars*, the segregation of women in separate universities?”<sup>863</sup>

Despite the fact that, it is argued that at no times did the APWA directly attacked the observation of *purdah*(veil) or attempt to ban the wearing of *burqa* (long dress for covering).<sup>864</sup> On the issue of women rights and status it is pointed out that to view APWA exclusively in terms of a social welfare with its main focus on women's education, development of skills and income generation would be somewhat unfair.<sup>865</sup> While it is true that APWA's most visible activities consist of the schools and colleges, industrial homes, *meena bazaars*(fairs) for fund raising, but it has also put efforts for the women's rights. Beyond these, APWA had campaigned against violence, harassment and other sexual crimes towards women. APWA recently has an active campaign on violence against women. The theme of the campaign was “Zero Tolerance -End violence against women and girls.” In order to eradicate violence and promote education, numerous events, programs, educational conferences, training courses, workshops and social gatherings have been arranged. Speeches and lectures were presented on women's legal protections. A demonstration to protest ill-treatment against women and girls ended the program.<sup>866</sup> The current focus of APWA is mostly on seminars, workshops and practical women's development in certain areas.

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<sup>862</sup>Knight, “Reports for the IAW International Meeting 2019.” 85.

<sup>863</sup>Zubair, “Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan.”

<sup>864</sup>Chipp, “The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society.”225.

<sup>865</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p.64.

<sup>866</sup>Pind, Lene, “Reports for the IAW Board Meeting,” 2018, <https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/19200344/Annual-Reports-2018-ed.pdf>, 65.

#### 4.4.1. Islāmic thought vs. Feminist approach

Around the world, At the start of the 21st century, almost every culture and human customs underwent significant transitions. Old traditions and social norms are being substituted by new insights and practices on the name of modernity.<sup>867</sup> Women are now enthusiastically conflicting over the issues of a veil, marriage and family system to bring a wider transformation in the social and cultural system of Pakistani society. Their struggle for social change is though not a recent one because its roots go back to the creation of this country. Literature shows that, since Muslims are reconsidering and renegotiating the outlines of traditional culture, namely women's role in the greater social structure, modern Muslim communities are experiencing an unprecedented change in society.<sup>868</sup>

A variety of innovative structures were developed by Islāmic modernism, including educational institutions that fused Islāmic education with secular subjects and curriculum; magazines and newspapers that carried modern Islāmic ideas across the globe; and social welfare organizations that took power of the state into many more sectors of social life.<sup>869</sup> In Muslim nations, certain features of the lives of Muslims, including their opinions on education for women and their family traditions, are primarily based on mediaeval Islāmic jurisprudence. Scholars based these legal principles on two elements, mainly culture and religion. Any basic cultural observations gave birth to the socio-political concepts. These concepts have now become an integral and indistinguishable feature of Islāmic jurisprudence.<sup>870</sup> In family growth, motherhood, the sexual and reproductive distinctions between males and females establish interdependence and complementary roles.<sup>871</sup> Despite of the fact, Islām has presented a well setup for the betterment of family and society by focusing on the gender roles. But the issues began when these complementary roles in family formation took devastating turn. The point is that both men and women have perfectly contributing to change their gender roles and, its basic purpose.

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<sup>867</sup>Esposito, John L., John O. Voll, and Osman Bakar, eds., *Asian Islām in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 261.

<sup>868</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*, 4.

<sup>869</sup>Parray, Tauseef Ahmad "Islāmic Modernist and Reformist Thought: A Study of the Contribution of Sir Sayyid and Muḥammad Iqbal," *World Journal of Islāmic History and Civilization* 1, no. 2 (2011): 79–93, 79.

<sup>870</sup>Pakeeza, "Reforming Muslim Women's Rights: Transforming Modernism, Identifying Secularism and Re-Defining Islām," 21.

<sup>871</sup>Hirschman, Charles, "Gender, the Status of Women, and Family Structure in Malaysia," *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies* 53, no. 1 (2016): 33–50.

a. *Extended Family System*

The evident developments in Arab society and culture were made by the Prophet Muḥammad's (ﷺ) novel system i.e. Islām. His social structure was surrounded by all aspects of society, including the framework of the family.<sup>872</sup> It is the miracle of religion that by mitigating their animality and making them into selfless human beings, all men and women are encouraged to make sacrifices for humanity and culture. Only the Prophets grasped the true object of existence and conceived marriage as the right for physical and social purposes of the partnership between man and woman.<sup>873</sup> Thus, the Arab society after the advent of Islām was the direct result of the Islāmic social order, based on the true teachings of Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Hazrat Muḥammad (ﷺ). In addition, the tremendous change was introduced into the status of women. They were given many rights together with legal status equivalent to men on the basis of instructions given by the Hazrat Muḥammad (ﷺ).<sup>874</sup> By determining the accurate essence of the relationship between man and woman is the key element to build the pure community life. This means the declaration, solely according to the ideals of justice and fairness, of their rights and obligations, their position and responsibilities in the family community.<sup>875</sup> Family basically leads women and men towards pure life this is what required by our religion too;

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ-<sup>876</sup>

*“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.”*

It is a promise from Allāh to those children of Ādam, who do righteous deeds either male or female. Those deeds must be in accordance with the book of Allāh and with the Sunnah of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) while believing that these deeds are ordained by Allāh. The good life includes feeling the tranquillity in all aspects of life.<sup>877</sup> The basis of the society revolves around the family and its customs and traditions. It affects the whole community in one or another way. Professor Watt clearly mentioned the new social order ordained by the Holy

<sup>872</sup>Khan and Waseem, “Islāmic Shariah and the Status of Women in South Asia.” 18.

<sup>873</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p. 92.

<sup>874</sup>Khan and Waseem, “Islāmic Shariah and the Status of Women in South Asia.” 18.

<sup>875</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p. 111.

<sup>876</sup>Al-Qur'ān , An-Nah116:97.

<sup>877</sup> Ibn e Kathīr , *Tafsīr Ibn e Kathīr*, vol. v, 523.



Prophet (ﷺ) for their people and how it worked. In the sphere of marriage and family relations Muḥammad (ﷺ) affected and far-reaching of the structure of the society. The customs of the communal stage of the society had suffered shipwreck; Muḥammad (ﷺ) salvaged what was valuable for them, and carried it over to the new individualistic society.<sup>878</sup>

The basis of argument is that in order to uphold “traditional” duties to its seniors and offspring, the household and the family depends heavily on the unpaid and under-recognized work of women.<sup>879</sup> In its perfect shape, the household comprises a married couple, their sons, daughters in laws, grandchildren, and daughters. Daughters live till marriage with their parents; it is expected that sons will live with their parents, their entire lives in the joint family system.<sup>880</sup> The picture that is shown by modernists shows that the extended family system in Pakistan is male-oriented. Authority rests with the male. The couple lives with the husband's parents, the wife is under the control of the ranking woman of the household. Until she has borne her first son, she is not actually fully accepted into the family, for her participation in the family is through her children.<sup>881</sup> Generally speaking, these customs if still prevailing in some parts can never attributed to Islāmic traditions or its rulings. These are cultural and social practices that have nothing to do with Islāmic teachings.

Many historians tried to clarify the rise of the nineteenth-century women's emancipation movements as a product of the decline in household activities and viewed various modifications in family structure in the time of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>882</sup> Most western societies appreciate the idea that the seat of moral authority resides in the individual and that individuals can and need to be entrusted to make decisions and choices about their lives.<sup>883</sup> Patriarchy was not a common feature of human society, it was stated, and mothers did not necessarily live a life of utter dependency. They were independent once before. Feminists clicked on this notion, as if the father-headed family was not a natural order, but only a constitutional structure that might change as well.<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>878</sup>Montgomery W. Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p.289.

<sup>879</sup>Zaman, “The Problem of the Rebellious Religious Women: Pakistan, Gender, and the Islāmic Revival.” 4.

<sup>880</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*, 56.

<sup>881</sup>Chipp, “The Role of Women Elites in Modernizing Country: The All Pakistan Women Association.” 37.

<sup>882</sup>Evans, Richard J., *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920*. (Routledge, 2012), 23.

<sup>883</sup>Gray, *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa*, p.73.

<sup>884</sup>Allen, Ann, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890–1970: The Maternal Dilemma* (Springer, 2005), 19.

In comparison to the current scenario, the moral and cultural shift in family structure is totally changed. Women's entry into public area made her and family life more complicated. Women's entry into public arena was depicted by Maulana Maududi. He thinks that these groups also altered the old moral values for the current models to meet the goals of the new era, much as Europeans did. He further added that they claim the role of women in national life certainly consists of doing social work, holding meetings, engaging in conferences, devoting her time and talent in solving political, legal and social problems. In brief, she is allowed to do everything or anything outside the home and be less concerned with whatever is inside the home.<sup>885</sup> On commenting over Maulana Maududi's perceptions, Asma Barlas a Muslim feminist calls it a biological tragedy which makes women unfit for any work or outside activity. She further pointed out ;

“Such misogynistic readings of Islām derive not from the Qur’ānic teachings, however, but from attempts by Muslim exegetes and Qur’ān commentators.”<sup>886</sup>

On the other side, by taking into consideration, household work is the responsibility of women. Women who work outside the home and those particularly married women with family simply perform two jobs; their participation outside home is only allowed in terms if they are able to fulfil their family work and responsibilities. It turns into a double work-load and makes life more difficult.<sup>887</sup> The family structure that was established by Islāmic regulation was beyond comparison. The responsibilities were well divided in accordance with the capabilities. It has beaten all the cultures and traditions that even westerners scholars admitted that his incredible way of bringing transformation. He explains that Hazrat Muḥammad developed a family system that has proven desirable and satisfying in many ways for communities evolving from the communal stage and moving it towards idealistic ones. Both by “European Christian standards and by those of Islām”, most of the ancient traditions were morally degraded and Muḥammad's (ﷺ) the modifications were therefore a moral advance. It is to Muḥammad's (ﷺ) credit that he produced a viable substitute.<sup>888</sup>

This shows that the moral advancement was brought by Islām to the whole world. The fact is Islāmic traditions might not look logical or evident advantageous apparently, but these are

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<sup>885</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.74-75.

<sup>886</sup>Barlas, *Believing Women in Islām Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur’ān*, 7-8.

<sup>887</sup>Benston, Margaret, “The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation,” *Monthly Review* 21, no. 4 (1969): 13–27, doi:10.14452/mr-021-04-1969-08\_2.

<sup>888</sup>Watt , Montgomery W., *Muḥammad at Medina* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956),p. 289.

always for the betterment of whole society. Instead of focusing on worldly benefits, Islām makes us remind not to forget the eternal paybacks.

*b. Education*

It is supremely accepted to pursue mandatory knowledge about one's individual and social context. Among Islāmīc scholars, there is general consensus that educating women is a responsibility, not just a choice or a privilege. This view is based upon the Qur'ānic statements on education mentioned above as well clearly found in the words of the Prophet (ﷺ).<sup>889</sup> It is narrated by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī:

“Some women requested the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to fix a day for them as the men were taking all his time. On that he (ﷺ) promised the one day for religious lessons and commandments. Once during such a lesson the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “A woman whose three children die will be shielded by them from Hell-fire.” On that a woman asked, “if only two die?” He replied. “Even two [will shield her from Hell-fire].”<sup>890</sup>

This clearly shows that acquiring knowledge was always appreciated by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He never restricted women to get knowledge. In many Muslim countries well female scholars can be seen. In case of Pakistan, the number of female students, the education they are now obtaining is one of the most important developments that have arisen in Pakistani perspectives on women's education.<sup>891</sup> ‘Aishah (R.A), the wife of the Prophet, almost became a significant religious figure in the inspiring environment of building a new and equitable system. She became a noteworthy source of Ḥadīth after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). Many women at the time had a strong interest in seeking an education.<sup>892</sup>

History makes it clear that in early Islām, the religious education of women went hand in hand with that of men. Women's education was always encouraged. It was made compulsory for men and women without any prejudice to acquire knowledge. These Islāmīc traditions show that it is not Islām which restricts women from getting an education instead cultural and traditional perceptions that are enriched in society makes women less privileged.

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<sup>889</sup>Al-Hibri, “Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women's Rights.” 38,41.

<sup>890</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, The Book of Knowledge, Chapter: Should a day be fixed for women in order to teach them religion (apart from men)? ,vol., I, Ḥadīth no: 101, 115-116.

<sup>891</sup>Weiss, *Interpreting Islām, Modernity, and Women's Rights in Pakistan*, 66.

<sup>892</sup>Al-Hibri, “Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women's Rights.”4.

c. *Purdah*

The critique of the women's rights movement on the other hand, in Pakistan, has centered on the urban, middle-class identity of feminists, and on perceptions that these women are westernized, fail to respect customs and traditions, and lead younger women astray.<sup>893</sup> Under the regime of Zia ul Haq, it was declared mandatory for all women to cover their heads in public spaces such as schools, colleges, offices and state television. These newly imposed social and legal compulsions were strongly criticized by Ra'ana for she had spent her lifetime leading a crusade to win women their freedom and equality.<sup>894</sup> The view of modernists is much like that while females of the upper class or those who have educational opportunities and jobs in Pakistan experience a lot more rights and freedom, but they are typically subject to wear *hijāb*. *Hijāb* from Islāmic perspective, is actually to secure woman from any immoral or sex assault because of their unique genetic makeup, but it is interpreted as a "sign of segregation" of females by the male partners of the society.<sup>895</sup>

It is argued, in order to enhance the position as per their perception by opposing the *hijāb* and urging on Muslim women's sufferings, Western culture has been an enthusiastic advocate of freeing them. Yet in the name of emancipation, this progressive Western interest turned woman into a product and a statue of sexuality. It was not hard to see that this trend was destabilizing family relations and Muslim communities entirely.<sup>896</sup> As Western intellectuals and scholars raised their voices in defence of the rights of the human against society in the 18th century and started to sound the trumpet of liberation, they simply challenged the anti-social structure of morality and living system.<sup>897</sup>

During the Western women's liberation movement of the 1960's and 1970's, the word "liberated" lost much of its authentic meaning. It ended up meaning morally free. Women mistakenly thought being liberated meant freedom from traditional moral guidelines and virtuous lifestyles.<sup>898</sup> The lessons, Muslim were easy to learn from such observations were

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<sup>893</sup>Mumtaz, "Advocacy for an End to Poverty , Inequality , and Insecurity : Feminist Social Movements in Pakistan." 67.

<sup>894</sup>Agarwal and Ayub, *The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's Pioneering First Lady*, pp.282-283.

<sup>895</sup>Khan and Waseem, "Islāmic Shariah and the Status of Women in South Asia." 19.

<sup>896</sup>Pakeeza, "Reforming Muslim Women's Rights: Transforming Modernism, Identifying Secularism and Re-Defining Islām." 20.

<sup>897</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.11.

<sup>898</sup>Rukaiyah Hill Abdulsalam, *Women's Ideal Libeation Islāmic Versus Western Understanding* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Abdul Qasim Publishing House, 1998), 102.

that the so-called freedom fighters were following a well-studied strategy to destabilize and break apart their family structures in Muslim communities.<sup>899</sup> During this deep crisis, Western dresses, culture, ways of living, etiquettes, conducts were imitated and all-out attempts were made to mould the Western patterns of Muslim culture.<sup>900</sup> This existing criticism has focused on the history of women’s groups and activists in the upper class and the cultural identity of NGOs that inspired it’s members to remain more focused on driving donations and charity instead of being indigenous or independent in perspective of their collective interests.<sup>901</sup> Most of the time the criticism evolves around the women activists’ identities and their adopted western outlook which creates a cultural barrier to make their cause acceptable among the general public.

If we come to the Islāmic point of view related to the *purdah*, it will make things more clear. In several verses of the Holy Qur’ān, the dress code for females is clearly specified. Despite the fact, this traditional head covering norm is dating back to ancient civilizations. This shows that *hijāb* is not specifically endorsed or recommended by the Holy Qur’ān only.<sup>902</sup> This ayāh from the Holy Qur’ān is regarded as the basis of foundation of *hijāb*.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَظِيرِينَ إِنَّهُ وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَسِينِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ<sup>903</sup> ؕ

“And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts. And it is not [conceivable of lawful] for you to harm the Messenger of Allāh or to marry his wives after him, ever. Indeed, that would be in the sight of Allāh an enormity.”

This is *ayāh* of *hijāb* which includes several injunctions, points of etiquette and legislative rulings. The believers were prohibited on entering upon Prophet’s (ﷺ) house without his permission. Because they were used to do such things during the time of ignorance and at the time of begging of Islām.<sup>904</sup> This clearly shows the limits for Muslim women and men in the case of observing *purdah*. Majority people across the globe have this misconception that

<sup>899</sup> Al-Hibri, “Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women’s Rights.”39.

<sup>900</sup> Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, 19.

<sup>901</sup> Zia, “The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan.”35.

<sup>902</sup> Pakeeza, “Reforming Muslim Women’s Rights: Transforming Modernism, Identifying Secularism and Re-Defining Islām.” 23.

<sup>903</sup> Al-Qur’ān: Al-Ahzab 33:53.

<sup>904</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol.8, 23-26.

Islām is only concerned with the women’s modesty, and the concept of *hijāb* is only applicable to Muslim women. It is narrated by Hazrat Anas (R.A):

When the Prophet(ﷺ) married Zainab, the people came [to greet] and were offered a meal, and then they sat down[after finishing their meals] and started chatting. The Prophet(ﷺ) showed as if he wanted to get up, but they did not get up. When he noticed that, he got up, and some of the people also got up and went away, while some others kept on sitting, but then they got up and left. So I told the Prophet(ﷺ) of their departure and he came and went in. I intended to go in but the prophet put a screen between me and him, for Allāh revealed this ayāh.”<sup>905</sup>

Where Allāh Almighty has commanded a Muslim woman to make a *hijāb*, He has also ordered a Muslim man to protect his gaze. Islām has advised Muslim men to guard their private parts and to lower their gaze before ordaining an advice to Muslim women. As Allāh says in Qur’ān in Sūrah Nūr;

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ-<sup>906</sup>

*“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allāh is acquainted with what they do.”*

After advising men, Almighty Allāh ordained guidelines for Muslim women, not to make her life difficult instead to make her more modest and for her own safety;

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ<sup>907</sup>

*“Tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment....”*

It clearly says that *hijāb* is the Muslim identity and identity gives a sense of belonging to the person. This is why Allāh has ordered both men and women to keep the *hijāb* as this is an identity of a Muslim to maintain modesty. On the diverse opinion regarding veil, Riffat Hasan illustrated on while putting a question for those who dispute on it. She has asked, that

<sup>905</sup>Al-Bukhari , *Al-Jami Al-Shāhīh*, The Book of Asking Permission, Chapter: The Divine Verse of Al- Hijāb (veiling of women), vol. 8, Hadīth no: 6239, 145.

<sup>906</sup>Al-Qur’ān: An-Nur 24:30.

<sup>907</sup>Al-Qur’ān: An-Nur 24:31.

if the Qur'ānic injunctions required a woman to wear complete *hijāb* then why it demanded man to lower his gaze?<sup>908</sup> Bizarrely, in contrast the verse is not allowing women to come in shorts or wear nothing because men here are obliged to lower their gaze. The very next verse show that both are obliged to lower their gaze. It shows respect to both of genders. Significantly, it is very clear that, Islāmic commandments are not meant for one specific gender. Whenever it prescribed rulings concerning any issue, it made clear that, both males and females are the subject to its commandments without any bias.

Maulana Maududi is one of the Islāmic traditional scholar who has argued more than any Islāmic scholars in modern cultural transformation related issues and put emphasis on family structures to build any society. He has illustrated that the conditioned freedom given by Islām to women in matters other than home sciences is used as a justification to encourage Muslim women to leave the home life and their duties as European women and make their lives miserable by standing shoulder to shoulder with men following political, physical, cultural and other activities.<sup>909</sup>

The modern and traditional structures of any society have ability to create a distinct gender notion. These cultures vary and so the notion of gender inequality. The above topic indicates that the true problem lies in how perceptions and traditions of ideologies could be modified in bringing about social equality in terms of gender representation in Islām. Factors as diverse as religious understanding and the role of local ethnic or cultural forces in different discourses and traditions of Islām will also confuse the issue of what is necessarily Islāmic or unIslāmic.<sup>910</sup> Further, the call is to differentiate the cultural, social barriers instead mingling it with religion. Basically, the need is to look deep into the purpose and the reason of the commandment instead of exploring something suitable or comfortable while interpreting text either by modernist or traditionalists. Making essential things unnecessary and the specific context in general is not the true answer. In general, opposing each other views and making them unacceptable is not the right approach.

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<sup>908</sup>Hassan, "Islām and Human Rights in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of the Positions of Three Contemporary Women." 148.

<sup>909</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.22.

<sup>910</sup>Syed , Jawad, "An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 29, no. 2 (2010): 150–66, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151011024475>, 163.

## Conclusion

In the current debate, it has made clear that most of their activities related to the educational and employment reforms were not criticized unless it is demanded in a way that goes against Islāmic teachings. From the analytical perspective, when the senior's affiliates of APWA with other alliances went for the rights of equal opportunities in political and legal arena, the controversial debate begun. Although, their involvement in these issues except in some legal issues was not much centred and did not attain any spotlight. APWA's most of the demands concerning, legal, political and social avenue was almost in resemblances to the demands of those Muslim feminists who always wanted to merge Islāmic values with modern values at some extent.

Except in some cases, like MFLO (1961), political representation debate and in some sphere making women independent by taking her out of the home was critically evaluated by scholars. Yet the policies that are endorsed by modernist certainly do not reflect whole country's values, they are challenged on the basis of certain developed sets of laws. The reason is, the demanded policies and amendments can only be appreciated or applicable if it is mutually analyzed, accepted and are not only meant to benefit a certain group instead beneficial for the whole community inclusively. Although, APWA did not center much on critical issues or involved actively apparently against country's social and moral norms. On the other hand, their activities concerning, *meena bazaars*, education, activism for to discrimination against women was appreciated by many people, though it is also not too much productive and for all classes and their issues.

To create a difference and making our voices heard through activism nationally or internationally need to make changes in the policies of either group traditionalists or modernists. These changes are essential while making policies that affects individual or collective lives and creates imbalances in society.



## Chapter 5

### Islām, APWA and Feminists Approach (An Analytical Review)

#### 5. Introduction

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Modernism, a trend to integrate Islāmic religion with secular ideals such as independence, justice, democracy, logic, technology, freedom and development, arose as a reaction to European colonialism, which took the Muslim world into chaos.<sup>911</sup> Islām has a diverse and dynamic presence in regional and global politics in Asia in the 21st century. Its multidimensional relevance is only now starting to be understood in all aspects of life and culture.<sup>912</sup> From feminist's perspective, although it is demonstrated that a theoretical framework of the religious concepts behind the oppressive beliefs and gender discrimination that are prevalent from a liberal or non-patriarchal viewpoint in Muslim culture is necessary in order to achieve women empowerment or equality between women and men, which is a basic requirement for progress and harmony both in the Muslim community and in the universe.<sup>913</sup>

As Western culture synchronizes with non-Western cultures in a complicated manner, the impact of modernism has been globalized. Most notably, it has risen to the level of colonization by the political dominance of Europe over indigenous communities and the economic dominance of less developed nations by developed countries through capitalism.<sup>914</sup> These foreigners ruled over many Muslims and Arab nations for centuries around the world. They have impacted not only at the economical sector, but brought many changes in the social and cultural sphere through their dominance and tricks. Kandiyoti considered outsider's ruling over public matters and local men's ruling in private family matters as a "patriarchal bargain."<sup>915</sup> This trick has directed the way to women's lack of control in all spheres inside and outside.

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<sup>911</sup>Parray, "Islāmic Modernist and Reformist Thought: A Study of the Contribution of Sir Sayyid and Muḥammad Iqbal," 79.

<sup>912</sup>Esposito, Voll and Bakr, *Asian Islām in the 21st Century*, 3.

<sup>913</sup>Hassan, Riffat, "Feminist Theology: The Challenges for Muslim Women," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 9 (1996): 53–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10669929608720092>, 55.

<sup>914</sup>Flynn, *Feminism beyond Modernism*, 45.

<sup>915</sup> Kandiyoti, Deniz, "Bargaining with patriarchy," *Gender & society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274-290, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004>, 281-82.

In the context of Pakistani society, the unavailability of any equivalent word to describe feminism in any of country's local languages despite its practice at certain level has raised an additional challenge.<sup>916</sup> Most of the Pakistani women's rights activists or feminists are still uncertain on whether any theoretical and financially independent feminist movement can be traceable in Pakistan or not. Even the immense challenge is to figure out those underlined features that develops a significant feminist movement just because of unavailability of equivalent term of feminism in Pakistan.<sup>917</sup> Noticeably, historical evidences clearly indicate that it is not only the case of Pakistani feminists, but a global issue, because feminist identity does not settles on one specific philosophy or fact. Feminism can only be viewed in relation to women's rights activism.<sup>918</sup>

Apart from this, in the contemporary consciousness in Pakistan, the belief that feminist activism is a Western-derived radical discourse, and the portrayal of the Western-based Pakistani feminist still dominates.<sup>919</sup> Outside, the entire struggle, in Pakistan, such movements or Rallies always considered as western reproduction. It is being argued that the biggest challenge that NGOs and activists face is being called as "Westernized or Western agents."<sup>920</sup> It is worth mentioning that the appearance of these distinctive individuals cannot entirely attribute to any foreign influence or external agenda. Instantly, it also cannot represent as an absolute result of globalization or imperialism.<sup>921</sup> However, except a small group or a set of individuals belong to a certain class, massive Pakistani community does not support such activism that is somehow at any edge contradictory with Islāmic teachings, state laws and public customs or traditions that are highly regarded in the sight of people.

### **5.1. APWA's activities effects on Pakistani society**

Mostly women NGOs in Pakistan remained least effective in terms of their activities because of their limited approach and specifically designed activities. Despite the fact, they have a bigger amount of raised funds and resources; they do not focus to make their activities and programs more dynamic and productive. The scope of APWA's activities also remained

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<sup>916</sup>Shaheed, "The Women's Movement in Pakistan: Challenges and Achievements." 94.

<sup>917</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."36-37

<sup>918</sup>Rupp and Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement : A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism."363.

<sup>919</sup>Charania, "Feminism, Sexuality and the Rhetoric of Westernization in Pakistan." 318

<sup>920</sup>Jafar, "Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women's NGOs in Pakistan."263.

<sup>921</sup>Zia, "The Reinvention of Feminism in Pakistan."30.

marginal. Initially, from the very beginning, this NGO achieved a triumphant place in society by working in social and welfare issues in a very difficult hour of a nation building. They were appreciated by the community and support from government. It led many women to learn from them becoming a confident and active member of a nation equally.

By Observing the APWA's activities at this instant, Much of its projects, however, were limited to urban areas, these include regional districts and divisional offices, in addition to the major cities of Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, etc. Rural agricultural women, on the whole, remained outside the domain of the programs of APWA.<sup>922</sup> Our eighty percent of population is still living in villages that signify the larger part of our country. Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan in her an interview herself admits that their struggle remained least effective in rural areas. She explores the constraints that;

Well, we've not succeeded at all in doing the village work and that is obvious because without roads, without electricity, without transport, what can *we* do? And there's been no government help to work in the villages either. It's very sad. I would like APWA to focus its attention now on the village; on the importance of the woman in the economic sector both in the home and in the village as a bread-earner.<sup>923</sup>

APWA mostly sought to address women's strategic interests and not just their practical needs.<sup>924</sup> The campaign of APWA to strengthen the position and role of woman in both legal and socio-political perspectives has remained less evident than its social welfare programs. It has a women's rights and legal department, which beyond carrying out research and giving recommendation to the government on legal issues, also provides free legal advice to needy women.<sup>925</sup> The marginality of these initiatives in a sense where literally billions expected a helping hand should not be overemphasized, though taking nothing away from the contributions made by APWA and other women's NGOs to the social advancement of some women.<sup>926</sup> The transition was shifted from solely social services to the inclusion of women in developmental work. APWA was actively sponsored and organized by the government in the broad spectrum of events for the International Women's Year (IWY) which was especially emphasized by APWA.<sup>927</sup> In the current times, the side effects of IWY can be noticed in the form of 'Aurat march in Pakistan. The purpose of celebration of this day was to remind the

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<sup>922</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, 53.

<sup>923</sup>Zubair, "Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan."

<sup>924</sup>Jafar, *Women's NGOs in Pakistan*, 27.

<sup>925</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p.54.

<sup>926</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subsistence: Women and the State of Pakistan." 92.

<sup>927</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p.64.

nation about the hard work and struggles of women that turned down and presents us another kind of new story. Many of APWA's activities and its involvement in legal and political issues shows APWA's alliance with government was enough stronger than its fruitful effect on the general public to change common woman status and life.

Their efforts in educational and economic sector is worth appreciate able though this was also not up to the mark and dynamic. In the context of the Pakistani community, it would be right saying that it is actually divided into three diverse generations in regard of their approaches. One generation belongs to modernists, second generation to traditionalists and there is in between a third generation whose aspirations are a mixture of modernists and traditionalists and, this last one consists of to the largest group of people in contrast of other two generations. The NGOs might influence modernist well because their approaches are almost similar, many of traditionalist thinks NGOs are working for a specific cause, so they remain for from them and those running middle-of-the-road support what they think is best in alignment and quit what they think is doubtful and non-productive. While taking into the consideration, in most part of Pakistan, less privileged section mostly lives in villages. Many of people from this area are unaware of NGOs activities unless any NGO approaches a specific area for certain projects.

The activities of APWA and their hard work to change the family laws of the country related women rights can be noticed in major proxies. Some of the clauses went wrong in context of women's rights. For example, their hard work to ban or restrict the polygamy was not the right stance. It apparently opens the illegal relationships and many other means that can easily destroy the whole structure of society. Secondly registration of divorce and marriage made a woman's life in context of her *nikah* and *talaq* event more difficult, if it is not registered due to some reasons. Later on, if her divorce is not registered and she gets married to another man, the results are terrible. Same is the case with her *nikah*. Further in waiting period, laws concerning *Haddood* and evidences, on the issues of veil and portrayals of women and country image at international level were also showing disparity. It demonstrate that they tried emerging something new into old patrons.

Probably, many people intentionally not joined the feminist cause in their lives, nor do apparently they support or have a strong opinion on these matters. But the lifestyle of many women is a direct result of feminism's influence. That is the insidious nature of the feminist revolution, and it is the reason why it's considered the most significant social

movement of our time. Justly, the feminist approaches, programs and practices have been adopted and accepted by millions of people who even refuse to identify themselves as “feminists.”<sup>928</sup> This is the case of APWA too; many people in Pakistan are unaware of APWA’s activities and their vision though it is the oldest women’s rights NGO in Pakistan. But the fact is, the part of the country where APWA is carrying out their projects, for educational and, economic development is effective for them and those people. In Pakistan, although, public response to such NGOs has always shown a diverse picture, but still this fact is undeniable that it is affecting the new generation’s attitude, approach and mindset unintentionally.

## **5.2. Current position of APWA’s activities in Pakistan**

APWA is administered by female volunteers with branches around the country and abroad. It serves as a “sisterhood of Women”, in Pakistan, committed to women’s economic and social empowerment through programs in education and health care, technical programs and campaigning.<sup>929</sup> While APWA was and still is, predominantly urban-oriented and engaged in income-generating activities and developing women’s rights and gender awareness campaigns. It is also involved in political activities. APWA has always shown strong concern, when it aimed to resolve the political concerns of women and not just their specific needs.

As these several programmes continue, the mentioned goal of APWA has been to raise and establish new programs. In specific, the Jail project in Karachi was highlighted in 2017 because of the fruit it bore. This initiative aims, through economic equality, to lift the confidence of female prisoners, many of whom are the victims of patriarchal oppression. They are taught by the APWA’s teachers a craft and a means of livelihood. Recently, the forgotten prisoners themselves, have contacted APWA’s associates to train them and encourage them to pass statistics tests. From 25 November to December 10, 2017, APWA held the 16 Days of the promotion campaign on “Violence against Women” and its purpose was to spread awareness among people on these prevailing issues.<sup>930</sup>

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<sup>928</sup>Lerner, “The Meaning of Seneca Falls: 1848-1998”, 40.

<sup>929</sup>Jafar, Women’s NGOs in Pakistan, pp.25-26.

<sup>930</sup>Pind, Lene, “Reports for Congress 2017” (Nicosia, Cyprus, 2017), <https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/19193509/Reports-2017.pdf>, 59.

A regional tour to Sialkot was conducted on March 15th, 2018. The object of the visiting was the distribution of 6 sewing machines and 1 motor at the Bihar Colony Skills Center and the overall assessment of the centres. In its districts, APWA guarantees the provision of appliances and other services. On July 27th, 2018, the summer cooking course at APWA began. It was planned to help young women learn cooking skills in order to satisfy their interest and inspire themselves to be more productive. This is a licensed course taken by a professional teacher for one month. On March 19 and 27, 2018, APWA coordinated an awareness activity session. A quiz was conducted at the conclusion of this knowledge session and prizes were distributed among the participants. On August 1, 2018, APWA arranged another One-Day Fun Day Workshop for children aged 8-15. The workshop featured a baking lessons in which children were taught how to make donuts and molten lava. An Arts and Crafts activity for the children preceded this. The aim of One-Fun Day was to provide children with a positive day where they could develop new abilities in a day.<sup>931</sup>

In a report of the International Alliance of Women (IAW), it is represented by APWA that more than eight million people are engaged in domestic work and need protection from all kinds of harassment and assault. Female employees do not earn the same salary as men doing the same job. One out of three women nationwide faces domestic abuse. This condition also contributes, without any support system, to an increased financial and psychological pressure on domestic workers. Domestic workers are still unacknowledged and underrated, considering their enormous contribution to National economy. APWA organized a demonstration march in conjunction with the Pakistan Workers' Federation (PWF) to demand basic protections for domestic workers. In partnership with the ILO and the Department of Women's Development, APWA has also launched the first skills development program for domestic workers in the last few years.<sup>932</sup>

Furthermore, in another report of congress (IAW, 2020) APWA has presented the current activities schedule. The IM/Board meeting was due to take place in Lahore Pakistan in October 2020. It was prepared by Ruhi Sayid and APWA Punjab, who had worked for it. However, participation was limited, mainly due to advice from family, friends and various governments/consulates globally cautioning against non-essential travel to that part of the

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<sup>931</sup>Pind, Lene, "Reports for the IAW Board Meeting," 2018, <https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/19200344/Annual-Reports-2018-ed.pdf>, 66.

<sup>932</sup>Knight, Christina, "Reports for the IAW International Meeting 2019," 2019, [https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19194416/IAW\\_Annual-Reports-2019\\_final.\\_B.pdf](https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19194416/IAW_Annual-Reports-2019_final._B.pdf), 83.

world. They finally decided to hold the meeting in Geneva.<sup>933</sup> While going through to APWA's current activities, it becomes obvious to note that, during the last decades, APWA's activities are getting more limited, and their focus is entirely on seminars, conferences and awareness marches or rallies. Although, they are trying to raise voice for economic advancement and are involved in some developmental activities, but reports show that their effort is not up to the level of an international organization. As a pioneer women NGO in Pakistan, the productivity is contrary to the expectations. Despite the fact, they worked for bringing change in women's position and at some extent, they did it, but the need is to develop a productive and advantageous approach of national level at least.

### 5.3. Critique and impediments faced by APWA

Literature shows that labelling human rights activists 'Western agents' and 'NGOs promoting a foreign-funded agenda', is not something new for NGOs in Pakistan. APWA has also been critically evaluated as an organization elite class and subsequently constrained in recognition of its scope and services.<sup>934</sup> Initially, Women's National Guard and Pakistan Women's Navy set up by Ra'ana Liaquat Ali received a lot of criticism by '*Ulamā*' of the time, and added *dopatta* (to cover head) further to their uniforms. However, there were many eyebrows raised by the preparation of women for reasons that strayed from social and cultural expectations, and their representation in what was considered to be male activities.<sup>935</sup> Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan in her words stated the reason and complications she has faced during these steps. She explains the opposition from religious scholars, when women started coming out of their homes;

"They attacked what I was doing because I immediately formed the Pakistan Women's National Guard. That was because our women were useless at defending themselves, or at helping their neighbors. I also started the Women's Naval Reserve for the same reason, to activate the women and especially if they were going to the hospital to work, to teach them the value of time; they didn't know what time was, they didn't know what discipline was."<sup>936</sup>

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<sup>933</sup>Hayles, Cheryl, "Reports for Congress 2020 Brochure Du Congrès 2020," 2020, [https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/04093831/Congress-Booklet-2020-Oct.-3\\_20.pdf](https://international-alliance-of-women.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/04093831/Congress-Booklet-2020-Oct.-3_20.pdf), 5.

<sup>934</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan," 1424.

<sup>935</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."10.

<sup>936</sup>Zubair, "Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan."

The breach of the public/private and masculine/feminine division was confronted with condemnation and these two women's guards and naval branches ended abruptly after Ra'ana Liaquat Ali left the country to further serve as an ambassador to the Netherlands.<sup>937</sup> Actually, they were criticized for allowing women to march with their heads uncovered<sup>938</sup> and, it brought women into contact with unrelated men. Beyond all the criticism and disapproval, Ayesha Jalal observed that they ignored all the critical evaluation and were just committed to their demands. She continued evaluating that, although these women's organizations and APWA in particular can claim to have justified their presence by their regularly fierce resistance to the Islāmic world-view propagated by religious figures, whether the low-lying *mullahs* or the high-flying '*Ulamā*'.<sup>939</sup> The basic dilemma that lies in between the disagreement by modernists and traditionalist is that, their midpoint is to make condemnation of other party's viewpoint instead focusing on a better suitable approach that interconnects each other and ceases further from spreading chaos.

On the other hand, though APWA worked a lot for women's political, social and economic independence, but the on the other side, they forgot that this country's cultural and social construction is stronger than anything else. Women of Pakistan might like and support economic independence, but they prefer a balancing life between family and career. They did not focus on social relationship within communities neither were they the undisputed advocates of change. APWA, in this particular (anonymous) correspondent's view, was not up to the task. The reason that is mentioned by the respondent was, this organization has not drawn the attention of ordinary middle-class woman and student, firstly because women in these groups have no spare time for APWA events, and secondly, most insightful women are interested in entering an organization that will stir up to enhance their general circumstances and raise voice for their rights violation.<sup>940</sup> The reason is, the protection of what rights they have and demanding more what they need is something that attracts many of the sufferers. One that will be able to transform their activities towards the productive end would definitely be encouraged. The general public avoids involving in these activities that ends up after photo sessions and remains fruitful in reports only.

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<sup>937</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)." 10.

<sup>938</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1437.

<sup>939</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan."

<sup>940</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1461.



Further in case of MFLO(1961), it has been argued that if it had not been for the campaign initiated by women's groups such as APWA, it may well have been hard for the government of General Ayub to save the ordinance from the sharpening jaws of the religious opposition.<sup>941</sup> The polygamous marriage of the Prime Minister suggests the need to re-evaluate the involvement of APWA in the restructuring of Muslim personal law in Pakistan, because in addition to the strong coordination that marked the dialogue between APWA and the Pakistani authorities, there is evidence of opposition and conflict, not only between women reformers and the state, but also between males and females, and among many women themselves.<sup>942</sup> Because it was not a social matter only, religious teachings were also there to support its validity and major concerns. This was the reason, it became an indecisive matter at that time to present any verdict for its complete prohibition or fully acceptance was enough complicated.

Increasingly, the literature states very clearly that the legislation was comparatively weak, cautious and moderate in comparison to standards, but the 'Ulamā' who opposed and condemned it as tampering with the Qur'ānic injunctions and strongly rejected it. Women retaliated by starting a protest in favor of the Family Laws Ordinance, and Nasim Jahan led a march in Lahore, against religious figures, ending up with the burning of Maulana Abbas 'Alī Khan's dummy, who was an active opponent, in front of the Punjab Assembly.<sup>943</sup> It is said that the picture is arguably more complicated than the one portrayed in the latest secondary academic sources. Although, it remained a clear fact that APWA's members has been lobbied for the revision of marriage laws from the mid-1950s.<sup>944</sup>

Feminist campaigns were often challenged in Muslim cultures in the 1980s as a Western interference and for their secular liberal purpose (understood as anti-religion or la deeniyut).<sup>945</sup> Feminists' literature depicts that Zia's regime worked much to undermined the women's movement during the long years of the his regime by marginalizing it as a movement of English-educated, Westernized, upper-class women whose brains were packed with foreign influences, imported ideas, and who had no roots amongst traditional Pakistani

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<sup>941</sup>Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan."92

<sup>942</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1425.

<sup>943</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."11.

<sup>944</sup>Ansari, "Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan." 1425.

<sup>945</sup>Zia, *Faith and Feminism in Pakistan : Religious Agency or Secular Autonomy?*, 115.

women.<sup>946</sup> Mumtaaz and Shaheed illustrated that these women activists were considered by the Majlis-c-Ahrar (right-wing party) as “prostitutes” because they did not wear *hijāb*. Since, APWA was seen as a platform encouraging women’s *Āzaadi*, which in its literal sense means “freedom” but it signifies a sense of “waywardness” in its common usage. They were also viewed with disapproval by other right-wing Islāmīc groups, such as the Jamaat-e-Islāmi and Jamiat-e-‘Ulamā’-e-Islām.<sup>947</sup>

It is considered, in spite of a predominantly non-political and welfare approach, APWA was not approved by religious clerics who chastised Ra’ana Liaquat and others.<sup>948</sup> Although, the critic was not limited to just ‘Ulamā’ and other scholars, even they have faced much critical assessment from other women’s right’s affiliates. One of the founding members of Women’s action Forum Anis Haroon admired the position of Begum Ra’ana Liaquat ‘Alī Khan and the efforts of APWA in perspective of upholding the Family Law Ordinance and protecting Islāmīc legislation concerning women’s matters. But she considers it more or less service-oriented. Throughout her life, she has worked actively as a political activist. APWA did a great deal of good work, but she wasn’t drawn to it practically. Because of its more bureaucratic structure in which the commissioner’s wife would be appointed the head/director of APWA in any tiny town.<sup>949</sup>

APWA’s close links to governments and state affected its organizational framework which developed into what was almost parallel bureaucratic structure of officers and organs.<sup>950</sup> The basis that why APWA (often run by the wives of bureaucrats) has not been attracted to all class women subsequently lies in its vision and structure. It has represented a narrow class interest. Basically, there setup, limited approach and certain focused group members from upper class were dominant root causes of the public’s lack of concentration and interest.

#### **5.4. Islāmīc thought, APWA and feminist’s Approach (A Critical Analysis)**

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<sup>946</sup>Alavi, Hamza, “Pakistani Women in a Changing Society,” in *Economy and Culture in Pakistan*, 1991, 124–42, 134.

<sup>947</sup>Mumtaaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, 54.

<sup>948</sup>Saigol, “Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)” 10; Ansari, “Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan.” 1440.

<sup>949</sup>Khan, “Women’s Action Forum (WAF) Women’s Activism and Politics in Pakistan,” 6.

<sup>950</sup>Ansari, “Polygamy, Purdah and Political Representation: Engendering Citizenship in 1950s Pakistan.” 1439.

Our minds don't reflect reality directly, instead we perceive the world only through the grid of conventions, schemata and stereotypes. Given this situation, our understanding of the conflicts is enhanced by a presentation of opposite viewpoints, rather than making an attempt to articulate a consensus.<sup>951</sup> Until today, for Muslim communities, feminism has been remained a contested debate. Muslim women's struggle to gain equality and women's rights achievement is intermingle with Islāmic traditions, western thoughts and feminism in different contexts. The Qur'ān contains principles of gender equality and wider issues of social justice are stressed by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) through practical examples.

Most of the literature from the feminist context shows that in the subsequent centuries, the safety measures for women were turned into bigotry, leading to systems of female confinement and gender discrimination. By means of the exegesis of the Qur'ān and the traditions of prophet Muḥammad(ﷺ), the reforms were introduced into Islāmic culture. These secondary sources made it possible for Muslim women to textualize an extremely right wing definition of modesty.<sup>952</sup> On the other hand, many of those accepting the dignity and worth that have been given to women in Islām has no comparison. It is opined that making women the *subjects* of Divine Discourse, the Qur'ān is rare among religious scriptures in addressing women directly. How this came about, is definitely significant for women's dignity and respect.<sup>953</sup> The Holy Qur'ān exemplifies the importance of woman through many *Sūrahs*. *Sūrah Nisa*, *Sūrah Maryam* and *Sūrah Nūr* are enriched with injunctions concerning women's rights. The only religion which grants *Jannah* on taking care of daughters and sisters;

Abū Sa'eed Al-Khudrī narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: "Whoever has three daughters, or three sisters, or daughters, or two sisters and he keeps good company with them and fears Allāh regarding them then Paradise is for him."<sup>954</sup>

An interesting observation instead declares that history reveals feminism as an invention of both Eastern countries and Western people, of Muslims and of other faiths, of people of various races and nationalities, of colonizers and non-colonizers. Many who argue that feminism is 'product of westerns' do not understand their past and promote the wave of

<sup>951</sup>Burke, "New Perspectives on Historical Writing."

<sup>952</sup>Syed, "An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment." 161.

<sup>953</sup>Barlas, Asma, "Muslim Women and Sexual Oppression: Reading Liberation from the Qur'ān," *Macalester International* 10, no. 1 (2001): 117–46, 134.

<sup>954</sup>Tirmidhī, *Jāmi' al Tirmidhī*, Chapters on Righteousness and Maintaining Good Relations with Relatives from the Messenger Of Allāh (ﷺ), Chapter 13. What Has Been Related About Spending on Daughters and Sisters, 4, *Hadīth* no: 1916, 33.

misconceptions.<sup>955</sup> A third option has been followed by contemporary western civilization. This is the way of justice between women and men, of their equal and similar roles, of competing in the same disciplines, of obtaining one's own livelihood and of achieving self-sufficiency in all other aspects.<sup>956</sup>

The modernists or those who think that the interpretation of Qur'ān is not in accordance with the Islāmic traditions instead it restricts many grounds for a woman. It is argued that through in depth engagement with the sources and history of Islām, the need is to understand Islāmic modesty and female employment like issues from "within, not through a western gaze". It is opined further that there are some specific rules in the major origins of Islām, which were supposed to provide additional support for women in Islāmic societies in the 7th century. The historically egalitarian text, however, was reinterpreted and modified after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) under patriarchal ideologies.<sup>957</sup>

For Muslims, however, these are Divinely obligations and not the international community or any person who has granted women, their rights, and a devoted Muslim must endeavor to attain Islām's values, including the "Notion of Equality."<sup>958</sup> No one should avoid the truth that women and men, as human beings, are equivalent and worthy. Together, these constitute the human race and civilization. In developing collective life, developing and bringing in civilization and thereby benefiting mankind, all are equally active participants.<sup>959</sup>

The ideal order consists of independence, justness, inclusivity of women in a public domain, economic equality, prosperity, solidarity and the triumph near Muslim feminists and to those of the modernists. At the same time, its social system becomes patriarchal and oppressive in their viewpoint if its women are veiled and separated from the public realm.<sup>960</sup> They further think that these judgements are based on a literal and selective reading of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, providing females with restricted equal rights and constitutional support. It encourages traditional gender roles strengthened by religious belief. So in this

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<sup>955</sup>Badran, Margot, "Engaging Islāmic Feminism," in *Islāmic Feminism: Current Perspectives*, ed. Anitta Kynsilehto (Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 2008), 25–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108095857>, 27.

<sup>956</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.112.

<sup>957</sup> Syed , Jawad, "An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 29, no. 2 (2010): 150–66, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151011024475>, 161.

<sup>958</sup>Al-Hibri, "Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women's Rights," 43.

<sup>959</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*,p. 112.

<sup>960</sup>Freyer, Barbara, "Liberated Equal or Protected Dependent? Contemporary Religious Paradigms on Women's Status in Islām," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1987): 260–83, 262.

case, the only moderate women are the perfect role models, such as mother, daughter, wife and a sister.<sup>961</sup>

The natural roles are unavoidable. They cannot be portrayed as restricted, confined or mutilated one. Even a western scholar well clarified that there is no justification for making women exactly like a man, as she can never be because the principles of physiology are as inevitable as those of the universe of side realism. It is not possible to replace them with human choices. Just as they are, we are compelled to follow them. In compliance with their own gender, woman can improve her abilities without seeking to replicate man. Their position in society's development is greater than that of man. They must not disregard their respective roles.<sup>962</sup>

Muslim women on the other hand, committed more to their beliefs and were not especially fascinated with the concept of emancipation, either through dictatorial regimes or through the use of a liberal approach or through foreign NGOs struggle. The only way for a woman to settle on a progressive position is to establish a solid jurisprudential basis, on the basis of which they believe that Islām stands for the defence of gender equality and does not deprive them of their doctrinal rights.<sup>963</sup> With the effects of globalization and the revolution of communication, the spread of thoughts and people in the Islāmic population has grown significantly.<sup>964</sup> While Islāmic feminists have not consistently succeeded in shaping legislation or judicial interpretation, they have led to progressive reforms in Islāmic law that have extended the formal rights of women and aimed to strengthen their capacity to exercise these rights in countries as diverse as Morocco, Malaysia, and Iran.<sup>965</sup>

The level of expectation of support from the community, society, or the state also differs in the West and in Muslim-majority countries (MMC).<sup>966</sup> There is a varied response of Muslim women to issues of modesty, seclusion and gender segregation.<sup>967</sup> Each Muslim country practice different social and cultural directives in contrast to another Muslim country. The practices of South-Asian countries are different from those of Arab and Middle East

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<sup>961</sup>Syed, "An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment." 161.

<sup>962</sup>Carrel, and John Rodker, Man, the unknown, 90.

<sup>963</sup>Pakeeza, "Reforming Muslim Women's Rights: Transforming Modernism, Identifying Secularism and Re-Defining Islām," 19.

<sup>964</sup>Esposito, Voll, and Bakar, Asian Islām in the 21st Century, 4.

<sup>965</sup>Choudhry, Nusrat, "Constrained Spaces for Islāmic Feminism : Women's Rights and the 2004 Constitution Of," *Yale Human Rights & Development Law Journal* 19 (2007): 155–99. 162.

<sup>966</sup>Gray, *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa*, 73

<sup>967</sup>Syed, "An Historical Perspective on Islāmic Modesty and Its Implications for Female Employment." 160.

countries. Many others Muslim countries through the reading of original texts and reinterpretation of traditional laws, Islāmic nations have argued that Islāmic law requires women to act as judges and heads of state, provides males and females with equal opportunities to initiate separation, and strictly limits or even prohibitions on polygamous marriages.<sup>968</sup> In Pakistan, for the promotion of these rights, APWA was one of the NGOs at the frontline. APWA campaigned for the Commission on Family laws, which eventually produced a draft of the Family Laws Ordinance(1961). It has been perceived as first step in shielding women from polygamous marriage, separation and other marital rights.<sup>969</sup>This was the time; when APWA's efforts specifically in legal arena were evaluated by different Islāmic scholars.

While using a secular approach enforced from the outside by foreign bodies, the majority of Muslim women who are stuck to their religion would not be freed. Building a strong Muslim feminist doctrinal foundation is the best way to overcome these feminist's disputes and to eradicate their fear of leading productive and fruitful lives, which clearly demonstrates that Islām does not deprive them of their freedom, but probably requires certain privileges for them.<sup>970</sup> Especially at a time when the West's preoccupation with the Muslim world revolves to a great extent around women's rights issues, Muslims have to re-appropriate the debate, make it their own, and make it relevant to their specific religious and cultural contexts.<sup>971</sup> No doubt, many activists and scholars are truly indulged to challenge cultural and social evils. Although, in Muslim world women are facing many issues regarding their basic rights, but it does not signify that the religion of Islām has not prescribed those essential rights for them. Instead of spreading, hatred, chaos and misunderstandings among people to what choose and what not, scholars must come to the intermediary solution for the betterment of the whole community.

### **5.5. An analysis of Scholars Views (Interview Analysis)**

Whether modern Islāmic writings on female rights aimed at modernizing the status of women or even if they wish to restore or retain a "old" or "original" challenged order, the literature

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<sup>968</sup>Choudhry, "Constrained Spaces for Islāmic Feminism : Women ' s Rights and the 2004 Constitution Of.", 162.

<sup>969</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p.64.

<sup>970</sup>Al-Hibri, "Islām , Law and Custom: Redefining Muslim Women's Rights."3.

<sup>971</sup>Gray, *BEYOND FEMINISM AND ISLĀMISM Gender and Equality in North Africa*.

shows a diverse picture .<sup>972</sup> Compared to the towering Islāmic scholars, the reputations of the Islāmic feminists are far less. Furthermore, a gender difference exists between the Islāmic scholars and the Islāmic feminists due to an on-going direct Islāmic critique by Muslim women scholars on Islāmic feminism which requires time to come to the fore. <sup>973</sup>

In the last century, Asia has produced some of the most prominent and influential intellectuals in the Muslim world from South Asian region were Muḥammad Iqbal and Abul A'la Al-Maududi.<sup>974</sup> The modern thought revivalists of South-Asia also includes, Shāh Walīy Allāh and Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān, who gracefully did combine Western and Islāmic thought. For Iqbal, Islām was a dynamic religion, he describes his vision of Islāmic history as a dynamic, creative and adaptive tradition - and it was Islām's dynamism that had made it a potent force. All of the pioneers of modernity were filled with the ideas and insights after exposure to the West and more eager to introduce the best of them into their own societies.<sup>975</sup>

The present qualitative study is also strengthened through 12 interviews of different scholars. In fact, this is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research.<sup>976</sup> Detailed interviews are conducted with 4 Islāmic scholars studied from universities and serving in universities or in any Islāmic research centres, 4 of those social scientist serving at social welfare sector or in any educational centre and remaining 4 from those Islāmic scholars studied from *Madaras (Aalim or Muftiyaan)* serving in any *Madrassa* or in any Islāmic centre (*Masjid*). These three categories are meant to take important insights from different angles.

Most of the individuals hesitate to give any clear opinion regarding feminism, NGOs or Women's rights in Islām. A purposive sampling technique was used due to practical challenges in accessing volunteers for the research. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a respondent due to the obvious characteristics the respondents possess. It is a tool that does not require underlying assumptions or a fixed number of respondents. The researcher simply determines what needs to be identified and aims at locating individuals who by merit of expertise, knowledge and

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<sup>972</sup>Freyer, "Liberated Equal or Protected Dependent? Contemporary Religious Paradigms on Women's Status in Islām." 262.

<sup>973</sup>Kausar, "Islāmic Feminism Fully Exposed: Amina Wadud And Margot Badran Vis-à-Vis 'Allama Yūsuf Al-Qaraḏāwī And Jamāl Badawī On Women's Issues," 3.

<sup>974</sup>Esposito, Voll, and Bakar, *Asian Islām in the 21st Century*, 3.

<sup>975</sup>Parray, "Islāmic Modernist and Reformist Thought: A Study of the Contribution of Sir Sayyid and Muḥammad Iqbal." 81.

<sup>976</sup>Jamshed, "Qualitative Research Method-Interviewing and Observation, 87.

professional experience can and are willing to provide the data.<sup>977</sup> The participants were informed about the study in detailed and its objectives and they were also asked about their willingness to participate. For the pilot study, there was conducted an interview randomly and the required modifications are made in the questionnaire.

The medium of language while conducting interviews was Urdu, which is the national language of Pakistan, and all respondents were more familiar and quite comfortable with it. The hand written and audio recorded interviews are then transcribed accurately with much care and translated into English with the suggestion and help of those having a good quality command of Urdu and English. Care is taken in translating particular Urdu terms, such as *āzaadi* (freedom) *izzat* (respect) or *ghairat* (honor), while retaining the original meaning of the verbal expressions as closely as possible. The qualitative methods of analytical induction was carried out during the data analysis process. It is one of the way of a detailed examination of the similarity of opinions in order to identify unique and emergent themes. After several readings of the interview transcription and the ideas discussed in thesis, common themes are identified, such as Religious and Socio-cultural intrusion in women's matters etc. After codifications of themes, a total of five themes are finally selected, it will be discussed here in detail.

### 5.5.1. Concept of Equality

The phenomenon of the subordination of women is definitely can be noticed around the world in different forms however with many similarities.<sup>978</sup> One of the respondents from the category of Islāmic scholars studied from modern universities, while commenting on the issue of equality revealed;

“While coming across to the Islāmic traditions, women are given these rights and much more importance and equal status in Islām more than any religion in the whole world. Hazrat Khadijah (R.A), the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) was a business woman, another wife Hazrat ‘Aishah (R.A) was the renowned female scholar of the time 1400 years ago. This clearly shows that Islāmic modes are not restrictive or discriminatory.”

The subject of the equality of males and females is from the Islāmic point of view, is irrelevant. It's like debating the equality between a jasmine and a rose. Each has a

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<sup>977</sup>Etikan, Ilker, “Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling,” *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11.2>.

<sup>978</sup>Nurmila, “The Influence of Global Muslim Feminism on Indonesian Muslim Feminist Discourse.” 36.



distinct scent, unique color, form and elegance of its own kind. Women and men are not alike. Everyone has unique characteristics and functions. Women are not male equivalents and neither males are equal to females. Islām sees their positions not as competitive, but as complementary in society.<sup>979</sup> One of the respondents from category of scholars studied from *madrassa* has pointed out further from the perspective of Sharī‘ah, he added, Islām is not supporter of feminism instead supports women rights and equality. Almighty Allāh has prescribed many rules to take care of her all responsibilities beginning from her birth to deathbed through his caring father, protective brother and then after marriage through responsible husband and loving son. Islāmic rights of woman are so equitable and natural according to the well-being of whole society. In contrast to the western women rights, they are so unnatural and leading towards moral and social destruction.

Both man and woman are blessed with the strength of hearts, minds and thought, and both have emotions, wishes, and as well as other natural desires. All are in need of social and academic education and preparation so that they can participate properly in the community’s well-being and prosperity. In line with this approach, the argument for equality is completely justified, and every decent society is obligated to provide its women with the opportunity to improve these natural talents along with other members of the society.<sup>980</sup> Islām basically supports women’s rights and there is no other option in it. While taking into the consideration, woman in Islām have played a major role in advancing their nations. If the western concept of feminism denotes to equality of both male and female, then there is no comparison of Islām in this matter being a just religion of the world.

### **5.5.2. Religious and Socio-cultural intrusion in women’s matters**

Some of the social, cultural and some self-created religious barriers are contributing towards different approaches. Out of 12 respondents, 11 were of the view that it is not Islām that is against women’s rights and their equality, but social and cultural practices are leading towards these evils. On the other hand, one of the respondents from the category of social scientists argued vice versa that Islāmic teachings do not cohere with the idea of female and male equality. A respondent from the category of *madrassa* scholars elaborates on the question of a woman’s independence in our societies;

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<sup>979</sup>Jameelah, Maryam, *Islām and Western Society A Refutation of the Modern Way of Life*, Third (Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1990),109.

<sup>980</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.112.

I think, a woman is independent just like a man in our society. The dependence about which west and their followers talks about is not related to religious concepts but a social construction. In current times, the independence is totally meaningless in its practical sense. If you consider the demands of Aurat March in Pakistan, ‘Men can smoke, why can’t I?’ and many others. I totally disagree with such useless demands. It explicitly alerts, that these are not rights instead it’s a moral and huge destruction of norms and morals of any society.

While asking about women independence in social, economic and religious matters, out of 12 respondents, 6 said woman is independent but with certain limitations, 2 of them said, women are more independent than men without any severe responsibilities and 2 out of the 12 respondents argued that she is not independent at all because of patriarchal manifestations;

Of course not, patriarchy had decades and centuries which made women’s position subservient and dependent on men. They do not have the economic means of independence. Thus, in relation the material basis, all other rights have naturally been denied.

Another interviewee thinks that Pakistani community is divided into classes by working and upper class and other is lower and non-working class. Working class women are more independent in education, money and mobility matters and non-working might not be independent in mobility and education, but they are more independent than men in household and decision making. One interviewee out of 12 opined that both men and women are independently dependent on each other and this is because of their genetic makeup. This dependency is not keeping them deprived of some rights rather it is necessary for their best survival. The thing is, limitations are different for both male and female. Naturally, if we see them, then both are created independent e.g., if we talk about an attribute like modesty, it is both for men and women.

### **5.5.3. Islāmic ideology and vision /activities of APWA**

APWA has originated as a commitment to supporting the wider financial wellbeing of Pakistan’s children and women and has set up multi-project centres across Pakistan with educational centers, maternal health services centres, medical centers, birth control facilities, orphanages, craft centres, manufacturing homes, and urban and rural revenue generation projects in all regions of Pakistan. Under the formal framework of the Government of Pakistan, which has consultative status, and also globally, APWA has also formed an aid

effectiveness. It also interacts with the United Nations and other global collaborators in close cooperation.

A theme based on the views of participant was APWA's activities and its vision. While answering to the question of contradiction between Islāmic ideologies and APWA's vision, out of 12, 8 respondents said that by observing the activities regarding their educational and monetary programs, apparently there looks no contradiction with Islāmic prescribed values. On the other hand, one of the respondents from the category of social scientists clarified that not really, to a great extent, APWA has tried to accommodate a new version of feminism, Islāmic feminism, to its demands. Its insistence of moral teachings and upbringing of the right kind of women in the hugely problematic era is appreciable. It adheres to an essential view of a traditional society where women will only be accorded some limited freedom but not beyond that.

One of them also observed that the work they have done in between sixties was considered as contradictory to the religious injunctions to some extent. But if we look into the current situation, they are more or less active in organizing awareness programs and events or such like activities. On this question, 2 respondents remained indecisive and pointed out that, 'they don't know much about this NGO. But generally talking, those NGOs or movements following western patterns can never be in alignment with Islāmic teachings.

On the question regarding satisfaction with an APWA's contribution for women's rights, 9 respondents have shown unsatisfactory remarks and 2 of them were satisfied with their contribution. One of the respondents excused giving any remark on APWA related questions. He said, 'I don't know about this and commenting onto it is meaningless. The reason of APWA's activities less identification in Pakistani community is defined by another Islāmic scholar;

If you interested to know about APWA's work for lower class, then take a survey in some of these deprived areas and ask them, what is APWA ? you will definitely get the right answer that would be much closer to this; we have no knowledge about APWA."

Generally observation shows, mostly NGOs are not working for all classes and their issues. While discussing regarding APWA's work field, issues and class sector, out of 12 respondents, 9 replied, they are not working for all classes and their issues. One of them said they are working for all classes and two respondents did not comment on it. Those with

majority think that they are specific in their approaches and activities and this makes their NGO least affective for the entire community and their problems. One of the Islāmic scholars from majority stated that initially, when APWA came into being in Pakistan was a big victory for women and their development, but later they failed in making the Pakistan first women's rights as productive and successful for all classes and their issues. Even they remained ineffective in making women realize to their social status.

For either the social and economic system or the institutional structure, they didn't find something inherently unfair. The reform initiatives were thus not put out in consideration of "women's self-realization", but rather in terms of changing their circumstances.<sup>981</sup> Most of the respondents clarified that they are just working for specific class and most of their affiliates belong to that upper class circle. The reason behind it is, these upper class women are free to provide their services in such activities. Women belong to lower class don't have a spare time like them to come out for their basic rights because they are busy in worrying about tomorrow's food.

On the question of APWA's legal, political, social and economic reforms, 4 out of 12 responded that to some extent they are supporting APWA's reforms. Among them, 4 respondents said that they appreciate their struggle for the reforms in all spheres. 2 out of 12 said, they are not supporting APWA's reforms because APWA hardly raised a voice on key issues faced by women across different segments of the society. One of the social scientists said;

The scope of APWA has remained marginal having hardly any impact on bringing awareness to key issues that plague the society.

Among them, 2 respondents did not respond because they thought their knowledge about APWA's reform is not much valid enough to comment. While exploring their legal reform, indulgence in the family law, ordinance is one of their prominent reforms. One of the respondents for the category of Islāmic Scholars studied from modern universities has shown dissatisfaction with their reforms specifically arguing their some legal reform in the matter of polygamy. The participant has characterized her view;

Definitely, no in some of their concepts as in a lot of things they are just following western ideas. Some reforms are good, but not all. Western concepts are good for western women not for all cultures, e.g., nowadays extra marital relations are

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<sup>981</sup>Rouse, "Women's Movements in Contemporary Pakistan: Results and Prospects.", 7.

acceptable at some extent, but not the second marriage that is legally and Islāmically acceptable.

Some respondents said that not all but some of their social and economical welfare activities were at the outset good. The reason to support APWA's activities is, our society cannot develop until our women treated same as men in all spheres of life. When it is asked from them about the effects of western feminism on APWA, out of 12, 5 said APWA is very much affected by western feminism, 5 answered that it is fairly affected and two of them stayed neutral.

#### **5.5.4. Islāmīc traditions, NGOs Role and Feminism**

Several other topics are brought to light by analyzing the practices, goals and objectives of women's NGOs in their cultural, socio-economic, political, legal and religious contexts. Non-governmental organizations have expanded dramatically, particularly over the last few decades in developing countries. The consistent classification and identification are avoided by the notion of NGOs. It is always hard to place an NGO into a single category.<sup>982</sup> It is believed that the absence of a feminist or women's movement meant that the conservative lobby could overwhelm the government overtaken measures for women.<sup>983</sup>

On the matter, Islām supports feminist approaches or not? Out of 12 contestants 9 opined that Islām does not support feminist approaches on entire feminist movement. These are contradictory to each other. They further said that Islām is not supportive of feminism instead supports women rights and equality. A participant from those studies from *madaras* expresses that these feminist movements and marches looks up to standard of the western countries where women were less privileged and deprived of many basic rights. These issues are highlighted and demanded by them because they were living an unequal and unjust life a century ago;

Islām never wanted her women to be humiliated on roads for demanding basic rights. He has blessed them with appropriate equitable rights at their homes without any demand. Currently we are observing feminist movements and marches in many Muslim countries. It is nothing but mere following of western culture blindly. The reason is, we are getting far away from prescribed Qur'ānic injunctions and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

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<sup>982</sup>Jafar, Women's NGOs in Pakistan, p.2.

<sup>983</sup>Saigol, "Feminism and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: Actors, Debates and Strategies (Country Study)."10.

Another social scientist stated the reason; these movements are not appreciated in Islāmic spheres. If we generally talk about some of approaches of western feminism, it does not signify to be anti-men. But in practical approach, feminism looks much different in many countries; all they wanted is to transfer a woman into ‘Super Woman’. They are moving a way forward from equality to superiority over men; for once they fought for, when they were victims. For Muslim women, there is much more than equality, the need is of implementation. In continuity, another respondent from the category of social scientist argued:

In my opinion, feminism and theological teachings are mutually exclusive. They do not support each other. Religion validates patriarchy and the hegemony based on gender differentiation and resource distribution.

Among them, 1 participant out of 12 from the category of Islāmic scholars said that one cannot suppose the relationship between Islām and the newly generated term feminism. Because he thinks that the feminism that is begun in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and came into the knowledge of many communities have nothing to do with any religion. It came after thousand years of Hazrat ‘Eīsa (ﷺ) although it is prevalent in Christian and western communities enormously;

It is a new term, the way we cannot assume which Sahaba (Companion of Prophet (ﷺ)) has manufactured the car because it is a product of recent times, same is for the feminism. Women’s rights are new to western countries. Until late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century there women were deprived of many basic rights. These women came out to demand right to vote, inheritance right and even the right to live.

Islām supports feminism was answered by 2 of the participants. One of the respondents disclosed that Islām supports feminism. The right of the woman should be taken care of but not to the extent to make her just like men. She is a different creation with different attributes and so she possesses different rights and responsibilities. It is clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān that;

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ<sup>984</sup>

*“Men are in charge of women.”*

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<sup>984</sup>Al-Qur’ān, An-Nisa 4:34.

He says further that, according interpretation of this verse, Islām supports the supremacy of men over women and at the same time Islām also protects the rights of women. This prevailing thought is actually based on some exegesis. One of them is the interpretation done by Maulana Maududi in which he says that the position of a man in his family is that of a provider, an in charge and a protector. He the one who basically is responsible for its affairs and conduct.<sup>985</sup> This is one of the most crucial debates on which most of the modernist and feminists raised objections in recent times.

Subsequently, it is considered by most of the modernists, for the protection of women's rights, NGOs existence is necessary because they work for the desired purpose. It is claimed that the emergence of nationalist movements and/or fundamentalism, often attempting to limit the freedom of women and other minorities and redefine their rights, several organizations, especially women's rights organizations have emerged in their response.<sup>986</sup> On the question, 'Muslim women are in need of any kind of feminists' movements or Women Rights NGO's? Out of 12 respondents, 9 said women are in need of such movements and struggle but with logical approaches and through educational reforms; one of respondents from the category of Islāmic scholar;

Of course, they must participate in such movements and marches because they are still deprived of many rights. But the problem begins when these organizers of the march or certain movement use the wrong approach for the right demands. The example of, '*mera jism meri marzi*' (My Body My Choice), is one of them which can rightly demand through the right approach by quoting 'stop forced marriages' or 'stop rape' etc. Later on, it turned into a debate and many came out to give different explanations. It gives the wrong impression, inadequate visions and makes the whole struggle ineffective in many circles.

The founder of APWA begum Ra'ana was not in favor of marches herself and never wanted her women to come out. Nevertheless, she always appreciated women NGOs hard work, has additionally explained that the establishment of different organizations, not petty ones, is a positive idea. Indeed, she was the one who launched WAF, and by publishing, having the viewpoint of women and becoming a pressure group, she really has believed, they can do a lot. Yet she was not supportive of marching and protesting on the streets very much. She never believed on it, nor did the Quaid-e-Azam.<sup>987</sup> One of the social

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<sup>985</sup>Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islām*, p.144.

<sup>986</sup>Jafar, *Women's NGOs in Pakistan*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>987</sup>Zubair, "Corruption within the Ranks Was There Even When Jinnah Was Alive: Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan."

scientists said certainly we have not even reached the second wave of feminism. We are in need to create awareness regarding women's rights among men and women both;

We should stop demonizing women's movements as western propaganda. We have taken the best from the west, the technology, the media and so on we can learn more. Women ought to be protected whether single, married, widowed or divorced through law. It is the responsibility of the state finishing, expunging, and demining laws as Hadood laws should also be part of women's movements.

We can learn from the west, but cannot follow them. We have different ideology based on Islāmic teaching. Allama Mohammad Iqbal, considered the Father of the Country, elaborated what is known as the "Two Nations" theory: that there existed two distinct nations based on religion (Muslim and Hindu) in the Indian subcontinent. They had different historical backgrounds, traditions, cultures, and social orders.<sup>988</sup> So still is the case that western values are not adoptable by Muslims communities due to huge differences. Sir Syed Ahmad Khān set about proving that there was no contradiction between Islām and the selective adoption of Western ways in order to "modernize". Sir Syed's reform movement aimed at bringing Muslims into the mainstream of Indian political and social life.<sup>989</sup> Out of 12 respondents 3 said, we do not need any NGO or feminist movement or marches for the purpose of demanding women's rights. Two among these three respondents ironically stated that males are in need of these kinds of movements more than women. Their upbringing is at stake.

They further illustrated that we need more focus on women's education instead women movements. Definitely, this will create a family environment where no discrimination will be seeing. The real influence is from the outer environment that is stressing women more. If the women are educated well then we will see a balanced society as the mothers are the only teacher that can change their children's psyche. Yes, then these NGOs further can be established through educated mothers. One of the Islāmic scholar from them elaborates that the western countries used to adopt many traditions from Muslims traditions. He further illustrates that in many spheres their women took the idea of equality from Muslim's culture;

In comparison to the recent times women's rights movements or feminism, these are not rights, a kind of something impossible and impractical. In the west, if a man gives divorce to her wife, his half or in some states full property goes to her wife. This is

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<sup>988</sup>Weiss, Anita M., "A Provincial Islāmist Victory in Pakistan: The Social Reform Agenda of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal," in *Asian Islām in the 21st Century*, ed. John L. Esposito, John O. Voll, and Bakar Osman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 145–73, 149.

<sup>989</sup>Mumtaz and Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*, p.7.



unnatural and a true injustice. This led them to live without getting married as a boy and girl friend. The women's status in Islām has no comparison with any newly generated unnatural rights or feminism.

By taking these observations into the consideration, Westerns adopted Muslims' good moral values and tradition to elevate woman status in their society and to treat her equally. Definitely, cultural and moral adaptation is not bad if it is for the sake of betterment or moral and social up gradation, but it is not essential to adopt at this instant their unnatural, unjust women's rights which are considered destruction of moral and social norms. An Islāmic Scholar, studied from *madaras* argues that if we take notice, after arrival of Islām, women became much more confident and respectful to ask for their rights. Even the *Khilafas* (rulers of the time) were questioned by the women if they change any prescribed rule. The example of Hazrat 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was one of them. They used to disagree with them on certain matters and it was acceptable at that time. The fact is, women of that time were considered equal in all terms. Now those movements which are developing in many Muslim countries can better change the Muslim woman's status, but the need is not to combine our traditions with foreign culture.

While asking, 'how these NGOs can better change the status of women in Pakistan by working within the boundary of Islāmic teachings? Out of 12 respondents 9 said that NGOs can change women status, but the need is they should not let their demands and objectives go beyond the domain of Islām thereby maintaining their own recognition & identity. One of the respondents from the category of Islāmic scholar.

They can change society, but their approach is not compelling. By making our women psyche negative and anti-men is not the solution. These NGOs are not giving them identity rather they are stuffing their minds with negativity against their natural relations. We need to change women discriminatory status not her mind. So, we need to create a balanced society by implementing the true essence of our religious and cultural values.

One of the respondents from the category of social scientist said that NGOs set up and vision must remain secular without aliening it to Islāmic teachings;

I believe women's struggle should be more secular, it is a struggle for the betterment of whole humanity. It does not need an alliance with Islāmic teachings; there are better examples of how women have come together as a force to bring change and to raise their voice against oppression.

Paradoxically, 2 respondents out of 12 from the category of Islāmic scholars studied from *madaras* opined that Westernized NGOs how can better change the Muslim woman's status? The reason they have mentioned is the existed differences among cultures and traditions.

NGOs can never change women's status in Pakistan. Woman's role in this arena is not hidden from any common person. On the other hand *tabligh* will work more this in spreading awareness among people regarding women's status. Yes, one thing they can better stress out is to pressurize governmental justice institutions to implement laws and those that are against women right, replace them in accordance with Islāmic teachings. They can do such jobs more good and efficiently.

The need many of them felt is to train NGOs first within the sphere of Islāmic and cultural basis. Most of them are having anti-Islāmic approach with secular mind setup. They can never make our women's status better and for their welfare. They also triggered out that the need is to establish our own kind of home based Pakistani NGO instead of following western Pakistani chapters. We need to strengthen our own home based NGOs in accordance to Islāmic teachings

### **5.5.5. Issues faced by women in Pakistan**

A prolonged and intense controversy comprising of the establishment, traditionalists, and women's rights NGOs has been the subject matter of the role of women in Pakistani society. The status of women in Pakistan (and in other countries) can and should be evaluated as such, the result of specific historical, cultural forces and political factors. This is not to suggest that the situations of women who live in Islāmic and non-Islāmic nations around the world do not have any similarities. Surely there are and will be. However, these parallels do not emerge on the basis of scientific theory; they are produced actively.<sup>990</sup> Pakistan is facing many issues relating to discriminating women like child marriage, inheritance, divorce and the right to education. While discussing the query on women discrimination in Pakistan 12 out of 12 respondents stated that women in Pakistan are facing many kinds of discrimination in all sectors. While talking about the factors behinds the women discrimination, one of the respondents from Social scientist category opined;

Yes, discrimination exists, and we can't say it that it's all just because of males only. In actual these are the societal practices by both men and women that are generating discrimination against women. In some parts men are also facing such issues. But in comparison to other countries, women are not facing any discrimination on the basis

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<sup>990</sup>Jafar, Women's NGOs in Pakistan, pp.1, 46.

of gender, pay scale, jobs and multi professions, etc. In Pakistan even she can be a prime minister if she has a potential.

One of the respondents from the category of Islāmic scholar studied from *madrassa* further shed light on many issues that are prevailing in Pakistani society, e.g., *nikāh* with Qur'ān to save property, forced marriages, heavy dowry demands. These are distasteful, unnatural and unacceptable and have no link with Islāmic traditions. While commenting on its basic factors, he said, another thing I want to clarify, in Pakistan woman is an enemy of another woman not a man. Did you ever hear that the father-in-law got jealous with daughter in law? Or a father in law planned to kill her daughter in law through a the stove explosion or gas leakage in the kitchen? No you never heard about it. But you have heard thousands of stories how mother-in-law and sister in law destroyed many happy homes just because of jealousy or for nothing.

You also have heard many times that her gender disparity begins from home from the time of her birth. It is the mother's responsibility to bring up a girl and boy equivalently. Why they made to believe their sons that they have some kind of superiority over their sisters. Women can play better role beginning from the home in ending much discrimination than men. Further, these respondents' remark concludes that all kinds of discriminations a woman has to bear if we say the least. While capitalism has forced women to come out and get educated and prepared them for blue collar jobs, they have been further burdened at home and the job requirements. At home they face bias as daughters, daughters in law, sisters, wives, in opposition to men as brothers, husbands, sons in law and outside of this sphere they bear the brunt of issues as harassment, ill treatment and denial of basic employment rights and equal wages.

The present analysis shows that today women need a significant change in terms of the Islāmic, social and cultural guidelines, principles and values. Islām, basically supports women's rights and there is no other option in it. While taking into the consideration, on the other hand, woman in Islām has played a major role in advancing their nations and always contributed, sacrificed and presented themselves in time of need with determination and stability by putting gender standards aside. If the western concept of feminism denotes to equality of both male and female, then there is no comparison of Islām in this matter being a just religion of the world. There is huge a difference in the psychology of both male and female. If in some cases women are dependent on men in Islāmic societies, it goes for the safe side for her, a privilege and a protection for her in many senses. If we really want some to be changed, it must be the societal practices that harm her more.

Unfortunately, women have totally ignored the teaching of Islām that why we see a gradual but paced shift of Islāmic women's rights to western feminism. In Pakistan, the requirement is to work for women's rights in my parts of life e.g., inheritance, Islamically she has the right but socially she is deprived of it. NGOs must publicize these issues. Women of Pakistan also need some educational reforms, to highlight rural issues, etc. Secondly focusing on the issues specifically relating to Pakistan must be addressed like child labour, inheritance, divorce, the right to education, child abuse and rape cases, etc. Although, the large numbers of women are discriminated on daily basis, but the educational discrimination is considered as the major unfairness towards them. It leads them to more inequalities. They are told by their senior members to follow many cultural and social norms that are not divine in nature and at the same time harmful for them. But because of ignorance, they follow these advices blindly e.g., staying silent when brutally beaten by husbands, not to ask for inheritance rights if they want to continue their good relations with brothers etc. This is the area where such NGOs need to focus that they should not let their demands and objectives go beyond the domain of Islām thereby maintaining their own recognition and identity.

In the context of APWA, it is illustrated that their efforts are appreciable like educational endeavor; highlighting the women's health related issues and creation of some employment resources for women. But their steps and contribution to country women remained marginal in many aspects. Like, trying to make every woman modernized does not mean equality. As if they are modern like other western women so they are acquiring equal rights. These NGOs need to change their conceptual framework according to local necessities. This is why, it is suggested by scholars that Pakistan is in need to make local funded NGOs based of trusts and charity that can help women of living those areas where they are facing serious or any kind of issue. They can but while living in prescribed Islāmic limits. The priority must be to not harm the religious, social and traditional values.

They can better change the status of women, but first they need to make a valid approach or agenda that support women's rights instead making her life more tough and rough by just claiming vague issues. Another noticed thing was that a lot of people from the community don't know much about APWA and their activities. But generally, they suppose that all NGO's or modern women's movements following western patterns and they can never be in alignment with Islāmic teachings. Their work is not well defined and most of it, is not dealing with all issues. Basically, this NGO is not active now in all parts of Pakistan or dynamic in its approach. Most of the people are not even aware of their work. So if they are

actively struggling for the rights of women it must be known to everyone at least to most of the people in Pakistan. This is also envisioned that they have a specific vision for one class. A class of their own choice. They have tried for women's rights and betterment of society, but their efforts remained unnoticed in most part of the country. The need of the time is more productive efforts that can easily be noticed by common deprived groups collectively.

The present research concludes on the basis of above-mentioned analysis that Pakistani community is not a perfect society where no discrimination or violation of women's right exist. It exists in every part of our community at a distinct level. The cultural and religious values are intermingled together and at many places they are so deep rooted in the mindsets of people that many of cultural practices are accepted as divinely prescribed. These organizations with the help of eminent country's Islāmic scholars can redefine their strategies and vision. The reconciliation between the social scientists or those social workers and Islāmic scholars will bring a different and unique change not only in women's lives, but it will work for the advancement of whole society.

## Conclusion

A small number of women's rights groups or NGOs as well as independent and single feminists in the Muslim world cannot be counted as a feminist wave or revolution as it happens in their counterparts in the West. If we try to figure out any consistent and well-known feminist movement or some current wave in Pakistan, it's insignificant. By the reason, some NGOs are also trying to challenge social, religious and cultural system of Pakistani society that are some fixed kinds of norms and traditions for men and women. Along with these NGOs there are some individuals, autonomous activists who are in some way working for the rights of woman, but no passionate engagement can be seen. Because of their specific work for a particular class and gender, they are not much appreciated by the general mass. The real shortcoming of the women's movement or NGOs is, that still they are not been able to reach out the rural women's genuine issues whose constituting the most exploited segment of the Pakistani society. They are unaware of their basic rights and responsibilities. Many social, cultural and self-created religious myths are prevailing in Pakistan. The relationship of these evils and myths has nothing to do with religion and its values. A group of some people, with same class or background without the mutual conformity of those belong more to sufferer groups at a higher level does not produce any ability to profound transformation. If these bodies individually or collectively concerned truly to the social change and want to elevate the status of women, they must first identify the public aspirations generally. Certainly, it is public support that always generates a revolutionary transformation in societies.

Taking into the reflection, the role of APWA in promotion of feminist approach is concerned with many restrains some of the major findings can be portrayed here

- First of all, on those issues APWA faced critical evaluation was not just an Islāmic scholar's stance. During analysis, came out that they were not much appreciated by common people not much even by some of women's rights activists. The reason that could be structured is that these affiliates of APWA failed in budding long lasting affective activities. Although, in beginning it was a revolutionary step for a woman to change their status in society, but it remained less effective until now.
- The study indicated, either to blame APWA or Government for the promotion of any such taken steps that are inconsistent with religious teachings or against culture? The reason is, basically, these NGOs are working under restrictions of state policies, and

under the Voluntary Social Welfare Organization Control Ordinance of 1961. It has set minimum standard and regulations for NGOs for its functionality. So their activities are mutually affirmed in terms of its applicability. Anyways, research shows that the work of APWA mainly focused on welfare activities and less towards controversial issues and to those issues that are inconsistent with Islamic teachings. So the confrontation towards this NGO and their work was minimal in comparison to other NGOs and Women marches that are developed after 1980s.

- It is commonly attributed that the Pakistani women's movement and NGOs are engaged in feminist work for numerous social, economic, legal and political transformations from the founding of the All Pakistani Women's Association (APWA) in 1949, a pioneer women's organization in Pakistan, to the creation of the Women's Action Forum (WAF) in 1981. It is observed that the APWA has been criticized in terms of its vision and legal, economic and social activities and termed as Western women rights patrons.
- The analysis of the study shows, there found a consistency in APWA's demands and Islamic teachings related educational projects, vocational and handicrafts, jail projects, health facilities, cooking courses, learning campaigns against harassment, and other abuses.
- On the other hand, there also found some inconsistencies in APWA's demands related to banning or restricting polygamy, laws concerning divorce and its registration, waiting period, registration of marriage, laws concerning *Hadood* and evidences, on the issues of veil and portrayals of women and country image at international level.
- APWA emerged in those days when the second wave of feminism was developed in neighbouring countries. It is very ordinary that people get affected by these movements or marches intentionally or unintentionally so do APWA got affected. The analysis of the research shows that they have tried playing a role in promotion of feminists' approach but remained least affective except in some cases. The true concern is, that it was not easy for them to implement entirely all western thoughts into a Muslim country. They have chosen a middle path to combine Islāmic and modern traditions and became a kind of Muslim feminist.
- Mostly women NGOs in Pakistan remained least effective in terms of their activities because of their limited approach and specifically designed activities. Despite the fact, APWA is working for the rights of women is a myth for many women in Pakistan. The reason is not that they are not at all working or active in some parts of Pakistan;

instead, they are not much focused on sufferer group. They are just focused on making some reports to submit their international alliance for the purpose of appreciation. The reason of this critical evaluation is that being a pioneer woman NGO in Pakistan they can and are able to do much more than this in terms of their moral recognition and for the welfare of women in Pakistan.

The concern is, it is still not working for rural class and the most deprived section of our society. The constraints might be different, due to difficulties to reach out these areas, but again the thing the need of the time is to focus on these areas and this will create a difference. While focusing on making a good image in the sight of foreigners through specific work and reports, NGOs are in dire need of making their own image good and acceptable in the sight of their own country people through vibrant and productive efforts. At some positive, concluding remark, it is worth considerable that they are trying to bring a lot of educational reforms and developing employment opportunities to those needy women, but the need is to focus on it in a productive way. There are a numeral flaw existing in cultural and social practices which leads towards social evils; the need is to remodel them through awareness programs specifically in villages and remote areas. It is a basic need to highlight current policies and laws for women protection in contrast to the factual social and cultural evils currently prevailing against women in Pakistan.



## **Recommendations**

Here are some recommendations for future work:

- The foremost suggestion is for social scientists, Islāmic scholars and women's rights promulgators preferably for APWA, that they should reconcile with Islamic scholars on women related issues for the sake of women's rights protection and development at a single forum.
- In Pakistan, though women suffer a lot, but as a woman's rights ambassadors and NGOs like APWA needs to reveal a positive picture of Pakistani women at international level instead portraying her as a 'victim' every time. They are the one who are representing all women of Pakistan.
- APWA and alike NGOs need to more specific while gathering funds from foreign organizations. This led them to work and project work of their choices and restrict them to some specific plans. It would be better to have stronger confidence of country's people and their help in any kind of country projection.
- The state's policies and its influence on women's marches, NGOs and women's rights movements in context of their growth and failure can be further explored.
- There is a need to explore the generational gap and the concept of modernization that is prevailing in Pakistan and to explore the reasons of new generation's interest in foreign culture instead of holding responsible foreign culture being the reason of our generation's transformation in the context of cultural and religious values.
- Further research can also be done on the role of electronic and social media's coverage and assistance to women's marches, rallies in Pakistan and their constructive and pessimistic effects on the Pakistani younger generation.
- Similarly, there is a need to differentiate between women's rights in the context of western feminism and the limitation of women's emancipation in the Islāmic context.

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Narrated ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘Āṣ: Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said, “O ‘Abdullāh! Have I not been informed that you fast all the day and stand in <i>Salat</i> (prayer) all night?" I said, “Yes, O Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ)!”	Al-Bukhari, Muḥammad Abdullah, <i>Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> , The Book of An- Nikāḥ(Wedlock), Chapter: Your wife has a right over you ,7, Ḥadīth no: 5199	<b>28</b>
“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “The woman is like a rib; if you try to straighten her, you will break her.	Al-Bukhari , <i>Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> , The Book of An- Nikāḥ (Wedlock), Chapter: To be polite and kind to the women, 7 Ḥadīth no. No. 5184, 80.	<b>29</b>
“O Messenger of God, who among the people is the most worthy of my good company? The Prophet (ﷺ) said, Your mother.	Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, The book of Al-Birr, Nurturing ties and manners, Chapter 1. Being dutiful to one's parents, and which of them is more entitled to it, 6, Ḥadīth. No. 6501, 413.	<b>32</b>
“I enjoin each one to honor his mother, I enjoin each one to honor his mother, I enjoin each one to honor his mother (three times),.....	Al-Qazwinī, Imam Muḥammad Bin Yazeed Ibn Mājah, Sunun Ibn Mājah, Chapters On Etiquette, , Chapter: Honouring one’s Parents, 5, Ḥadīth. No. 3657, 11.	<b>32</b>
“Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action).....”	Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Muslim</i> , The Book of Faith, Chap: Clarifying That Forbidding Evil Is Part Of Faith; Faith Increases And Decreases; Enjoining What Is Good And Forbidding What Is Evil Are Obligatory), Ḥadīth no. 177, 143.	<b>40</b>
“Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Messenger of Allāh(ﷺ) used to go to battle with Umm Sulaim, and other women with her, from the Anṣār, who would give water and tend to the wounded.”	Tirmidhī, al Tirmidhī, The Chapters on military expeditions from the Messenger Of Allāh (ﷺ), Chapter 22. What has been related about women going out for war, 3 , Ḥadīth no, 1575, 346.	<b>43</b>
“All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian, and the man is a guardian of his family...”	Al Bukhari, <i>Al-Jami Al-Sahih</i> , The Book of An- Nikāḥ (Wedlock), CHAPTER: The woman is a guardian in her husband’s house, 7, Ḥadīth no: 5200, 93-94.	<b>48</b>
“Allāh protected me with something that I heard from the Messenger of Allāh(ﷺ). When	An- Nasā’i, Imām Hāfīz Abū Abdur Rahmān Ahmad bin Shu‘aib bin ‘Alī, Sunan An-Nasā’i, The book of the etiquette of judges,	<b>165</b>

Chosroes died, he said: ‘Whom have they appointed as his successor? They said: ‘His daughter!’”	Chapter 8. Prohibition of appointing women for judgment, 6, Ḥadīth no, 5390, 200.	
“A man and a woman are not secluded together except that the third of them is the <u>Shaiṭān</u> .”	Tirmdhī, Jāmi‘ al Tirmdhī, The Chapter on Suckling, Chapter 16: What Has Been Related About It Being Disliked To Enter Upon Women Whose Husband’s Are Absent, 2, Ḥadīth no, 1171, 538.	<b>172</b>
“A woman whose three children die will be shielded by them from the Hell-fire.” On that a woman asked, “If only two die?” He replied, “Even two (will shield her from the Hell-fire).”	Al-Bukhari, <i>Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> , The Book of Knowledge, Chapter: Should a day be fixed for women in order to teach them religion (apart from men)? , I, Ḥadīth no: 101, 115-116.	<b>182</b>
When the Prophet(ﷺ) married Zainab, the people came (to greet) and were offered a meal, and then they sat down (after finishing their meals) and started chatting	Al-Bukhari , <i>Al-Jami Al-Ṣaḥīḥ</i> , The Book of Asking Permission, Chapter: The Divine Verse of Al- Hijāb (veiling of women), vol. 8, Ḥadīth no: 6239, 145.	<b>185</b>



### National Executive Committee Members (APWA August,2021)

S/N	Committee Members	Positions
1	Charmaine Hidayatullah	President
2	Yasmin Dastur	Senior Vice President
3	Dr. Tanvir Kamal	Executive Vice President
4	Sajida Soomro	Chairperson Resource
5	Rukhsana saleem	Vice President Education
6	Najma Swaleh	Chairperson Administration
7	Masudah Ahmed	Advisor to the President(Media)
8	Rashda badat	Advisor to the President
9	Farah Mehboob	Chairperson IT
10	Kiran adil	Chairperson Youth

Figure 1National Executive Committee Members, Source: apwapakistan.com

### Structure Governing Body (APWA)

Branches National	Units International
Baluchistan Branch ( Quetta HQ)	Canada Overseas Unit
Islamabad Branch	UK Overseas Unit
KPK Branch, Peshawar HQ and 1 District branch	NY/UN overseas Unit
Punjab Branch, Lahore HQ and 13 District branches	-
Sind Branch, Hyderabad HQ and 4 District branches	-

Figure 2Structure Governing Body, Source: apwapakistan.com

### APWA International Affiliates

s/n	International Affiliates
1	ICW: International Council of Women
2	ACWW: Associated Country Women of the World
3	IAW: International Alliance of Women
4	GFWC: General Federation of Women's Club, U.S.
5	PPSEAWA: Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association
6	NCW: National Council of Women

Figure 3 APWA International Affiliates, Source: apwapakistan.com

### APWA National Affiliates

s/n	National Affiliates
1	Ra'na Liaquat Craftsmen Colony
2	Gul-e-Ra'ana Nusrat Industrial Home
3	Gul-e-Ra'ana Nusrat Community Centre

Figure 4 APWA National Affiliates, Source: apwapakistan.com

### List of Developmental Projects

s/n	Project Type
1	Education Projects
2	APWA JAIL Projects
3	Health Projects
4	APWA Ration Projects

<b>5</b>	<b>APWA Zakat Projects</b>
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Figure 5 List of Developmental Projects, Source: apwapakistan.com

**APWA's Current Active Projects:**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Active Projects</b>	<b>Total no</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Primary and Secondary Schools for Girls</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Colleges</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Health Facilities Centres</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Vocational /Handicrafts Training Centres</b>	<b>49</b>

Figure 6 Active Projects, Source apwapakistan.com

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