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## Islam, Modernity, And Justice For Women And Role Of Women Leaders Of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.A.W) Era

**Muhammad Umar Riaz Abbasi**, Ph.D Scholar National University of Modern Languages Islamabad Pakistan.

Lecturer, Researcher, academic writer and Well-known Columnist, Author of Three Books

Email: [drumarabbasi101@gmail.com](mailto:drumarabbasi101@gmail.com)

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6977-9516>

Google Scholar Citations: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=ipYKgRAAAAAJ>

Research Gate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Muhammad-Umar-Abbasi>

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### Abstract

**Background:** The social role of women in the struggle between modernity and conservatism is an important question of the day. Islam is a religion that gives its followers a map of how to live. It also clearly states the rights and duties of its followers. Just as the Qur'an addresses men, it also gives instructions and demands to women.

**Aim:** The main aim of the study is to analyse Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era.

**Method:** A qualitative method has been chosen as it has allowed the researcher to draw conclusions by focusing on various interpretations of the given data on the topic. The researcher has opted for secondary data collection method. It allows the researcher to focus on secondary data that has been available in books, journals, research papers and research articles.

**Results:** The role of women during the era of Prophet SAW can be seen by the role played by Hazrat Khadija who was an inspiring figure, as were Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam, and Ayesha, his second wife. Islam has taken care that no injustice can be done to a woman on the basis of being just a woman. Her qualities should not be crushed and her personality should not be suppressed. Allah's Apostle tried to make men and women aware of the rights that Islam has given to human beings. Both get their rights and perform their duties within their jurisdiction.

**Keywords:**Islam, Justice, Role of Women, Prophet's SAW era, Justice for Women, Modernity

## 1. Introduction

Societies, on the one hand, are rapidly advancing towards modernity and development, but on the other hand, events which are a manifestation of the decline of human values and civilizations are occurring just as frequently<sup>1</sup>. The Prophet SAW emphasised the best treatment and treatment of the vulnerable, and the Prophet SAW himself treated women with kindness and He SAW emphasised the importance of goodness, kindness, good manners and good manners towards women<sup>2</sup>. In another narration, the Prophet SAW emphasized the importance of treating women well and said: "It is narrated that the Messenger of Allah SAW said: I advise you to be kind to women (Muslim: Kitab al-Ridaa ', Bab al-Wasiyat al-Nisa', hadeeth: 1)<sup>3</sup>. In one narration, the Holy Prophet SAW said that kindness and good behaviour towards women is a condition of perfection of faith (Al-Mustadrik: Kitab al-Iman: Hadith: 1)<sup>4</sup>. Should a woman be confined to domestic matters and play a role in the home and family, or should she go out and play a role in other matters of social life? This question has not been much debated in the tradition but is basically born from the cradle of modernity.

After a long period of society, women, under the influence of the dominant civilization, began to play a role in life outside the home, both at home and outside. And problems are bound to arise in them<sup>5</sup>. These are the problems of every civilization and are of a different nature to religion. Muslim societies are also dominated by the tendency for women to play a role in life outside the home. The equality of men and women that the things in which equality can be achieved and the extent to which equality could be established have been established by Islam<sup>6</sup>. But Islam does not believe in equality which is against the law of nature. As a human being, women have the same rights as men. But as the husband is active, the man has the personal virtue (not honour but dominance), which he has given to the man with full justice. "Ullrjalalyhn status" (Al-Baqarah, 228) is similar in men and women naturally concerned mzfz learned and recognized by the family following the rules of the organisation

The schools of thought of medieval Islamic law (jurisprudence) continued to operate with some success due to the realism of the early generations<sup>7</sup>. They obtained raw

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<sup>1</sup>Tipps, Dean C. "Modernization theory and the comparative study of societies: A critical perspective." *Comparative studies in society and history* 15, no. 2 (1973): 199-226.

<sup>2</sup>Tufail, Uzma, Muhammad Shakil Ahmad, T. Ramayah, Farzand Ali Jan, and Iqtidar Ali Shah. "Impact of Islamic work ethics on organisational citizenship behaviours among female academic staff: the mediating role of employee engagement." *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 12, no. 3 (2017): 693-717.

<sup>3</sup>Abdur Rahman, "Women in the Quran and the Sunnah". Online Available:

[https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/articles/woman\\_quran.html](https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/articles/woman_quran.html)

<sup>4</sup> KITAB AL-IMAN (THE BOOK OF FAITH). Translation of Sahih Muslim, Book : 1. Online Available at: [https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/hadith/muslim/001\\_smt.html](https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/hadith/muslim/001_smt.html)

<sup>5</sup>Matchar, Emily. *Homeward bound: Why women are embracing the new domesticity*. Simon and Schuster, 2013.

<sup>6</sup>Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. "Justice and Equality and Muslim Family Laws: New Ideas, New Prospects." In *Sharia and Justice*, pp. 73-104. De Gruyter, 2018

<sup>7</sup>Stowasser, Barbara Freyer. "The status of women in early Islam." In *Muslim women*, pp. 11-43. Routledge, 2020.

materials from the traditions and institutions of the conquered nations for the formulation of this law and, where necessary, changed it in the light of the Qur'an teachings, thus adapting them to these teachings. The conflict of religion and reason in the Western world is an important chapter in recent human history. This conflict has had far-reaching effects on the whole world<sup>8</sup>. The background of the conflict is that the religion known to the Western world was not revealed by God but was a perverted form of it. First of all, the religion revealed by Allah was based on "Tawhid" while in the distorted religion (Christianity) "Trinity" was adopted<sup>9</sup>. In the same way, according to the religion of God, every servant of God can worship Him directly, but in the deviant religion there was a group of priests between God and the servants, without whose "relationship" it is not possible to establish a relationship with God.

The strength of a building can be assessed by looking at a pillar whereas the greatness and pride of a nation can be easily assessed by looking at the status of women in society<sup>10</sup>. If this pillar of society is strong, then the roof of peace and well-being of the nation can be laid on it. Everyone is aware of the condition of a woman before the advent of Islam that her status was not even equal to that of a toe. Then came a bright time and Islam says do not make "woman" a commodity and do not distribute it after death as you distribute other things of inheritance.<sup>11</sup> If she is a mother, seek your paradise under her feet. If she is a daughter, you are given the glad tidings of paradise in exchange for her best yen. If she is a sister, then because of her you will get the reward of charity and jihad. According to Islam, there is no difference between men and women in matters of religion<sup>12</sup>. Women and men are equal in human dignity. Although they differ physically and in scope, they are equal as human beings. Islam not only made women aware of their rights but also made them aware of their responsibilities<sup>13</sup>.

The Prophet SAW allowed women to come to the mosque and pray and said: Do not stop Muslim women from coming to the mosque. Islam considers men and women as guardians of one another and helpers in good deeds, so Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): Believing men and believing women are friends and helpers of one another, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. He will say: Surely Allah is Mighty, Wise. Islam has brought a message of justice and peace for all humanity, especially the weaker sections<sup>14</sup>. This is the religion that has openly given orders for human life. In particular, orders have been given for the life of a woman so that she will not be treated

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<sup>8</sup>Brubaker, Rogers. "Language, religion and the politics of difference." *Nations and nationalism* 19, no. 1 (2013): 1-20.

<sup>9</sup>Stewart, Sarah D. "Yahweh and Allah--the Essential Differences: Why Christians and Muslims Do Not Worship the Same God and Why it Matters." (2017).

<sup>10</sup>Salem, Norma. "Islam and the Status of Women in Tunisia." In *Muslim Women*, pp. 141-168. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>11</sup>Siddiq, Aisha, and Ruby Ruby. "Status of Women in Islam and the Present Indian Scenario." *INSANCITA* 3, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>12</sup>Ahmad, Naveed, Hurmat Bashir, and Yousfi Karima. "Status of Women in Islam: A Perspective." *Lone, NA Bashir HS (2015)*. "Status of Women in Islam: A Perspective" *Global Islamic Economics Magazine* 43 (2015).

<sup>13</sup>Barlas, Asma. *Believing women in Islam: Unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an*. University of Texas Press, 2019.

<sup>14</sup>IbnTaimiya. *Enjoining Right and Forbidding Wrong*. Translation of Sahih Muslim, Book : 1. Online Available at: <https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/articles/alhisba.html>

unfairly and her status in the society will be elevated. She will be able to live a comfortable life in it.

The role of women during the era of Prophet SAW can be seen by the role played by Hazrat Khadija who was an inspiring figure, as were Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam, and Ayesha, his second wife<sup>15</sup>. These were women intellectuals who were politically active and who played a very important role in the promotion of Islam and the establishment of an Islamic. In human history, there are few women like Hazrat Khadija Al-Kubra Tahira who have made the path of action easier and brighter for women. His greatness is enviable because he is the first person to believe in the Holy Prophet SAW<sup>16</sup>. The history of Islam is incomplete without mentioning the sacrifices and services of women. Along with men, women also participated in the preaching of Islam. Be steadfast in the face of all trials and tribulations<sup>17</sup>. Troubles and oppression were inflicted on these women but they proved with their selflessness, piety and piety that women are not behind men in any way.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Research Method

Research method is regarded as an integral part of the study as it provides an overall framework for conducting the research in an effective manner.<sup>18</sup> The research methods include quantitative and qualitative and mixed method research. These methods have separate characteristics; for instance, a quantitative study is based on numeric and statistical data and analysis through which the research approves or rejects the hypothesis. The qualitative method is the one where the researcher opts for in-depth knowledge and analysis of the opinions, views, feelings, expressions and data in a comprehensive manner<sup>19</sup>. The mixed method is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods where the findings are based on both in-depth and statistical underpinnings<sup>20</sup>. For this study, a qualitative method has been chosen as it has allowed the researcher to draw conclusions by focusing on various interpretations of the given data on the topic of Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era. This has also been justified by considering the previous studies that have opted for qualitative method for conducting the research in the context of Islam, modernity and

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<sup>15</sup>Kishwer, Sana, and AayshaRafiq. "Women and Entrepreneurship: A Study in the Light of Islamic Teachings." *Ma'arif-E-Islami* 16, no. 2 (2017): 39-63.

<sup>16</sup>Peracha, Sarah. "Khadijah al-Kubra—The First Muslim Woman was actually a Business Woman." *Muslim Business Women* (2017).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid 6

<sup>18</sup>Mayoh, Joanne, and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. "Toward a conceptualization of mixed methods phenomenological research." *Journal of mixed methods research* 9, no. 1 (2015): 91-107.

<sup>19</sup>Guest, Greg, Emily E. Namey, and Marilyn L. Mitchell. "Qualitative research: Defining and designing." *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research* (2013): 1-40.

<sup>20</sup>Opoku, Alex, Vian Ahmed, and Julius Akotia. "Choosing an appropriate research methodology and method." *Research methodology in the built environment: A selection of case studies* 1 (2016): 30-43.

justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era<sup>212223</sup>. Moreover, the quantitative method was not suitable for this study as the topic does not have quantified variables which could be analysed by focusing on statistical analysis. In addition to this, the topic of Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era needs comprehensive analysis which should be based on the findings from previous studies as well as in accordance with the provisions provided by Quran and Hadith. Therefore, the researcher has chosen qualitative method for conducting the research in the area of Islamic Studies.

## 2.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is regarded as the way of comprehending knowledge under a specific belief<sup>24</sup>. The three most renowned research philosophies are positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism whereas each philosophy is associated with the specific research method. Positivism philosophy is associated with quantitative method as it involves testing of knowledge on the basis of hypothesis formulation and hypothesis testing<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, interpretivism is the philosophy that provides various all-inclusive interpretations of the given phenomenon and helps in opting for abstract knowledge through various means. Lastly, pragmatism is the mixed method philosophy because it combines the two philosophies and each research question is answered as per their nature; it can either be qualitative or quantitative nature<sup>26</sup>. Considering these features of each philosophy, the current research has opted for interpretivism philosophy. The rationale behind adopting this philosophy is the qualitative nature of research objectives which are meant to be accomplished by providing explanatory justification of each finding and interpretations on the basis of abstract knowledge. With the help of this philosophy, the researcher has also been able to focus on numerous studies and already existing material on the topic of the study as it has not confined the researcher to only the data based on statistics. However, there has not been any hypothesis involved contrasting to what is often included when positivism philosophy is being utilised. Nevertheless, interpretivism has been essential for dwell into the area of Islamic studies and to further opt for broad approach for including data and analysis in the findings of the study. Hence, interpretivism philosophy has been suitable for conducting the current research on Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era.

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<sup>21</sup>Nawab, Suraiya. "The contribution of women to Muslim society: A study of selected autobiographical and bibliographical literature." PhD diss., University of Johannesburg, 1997.

<sup>22</sup>Offenhauer, Priscilla, and Alice R. Buchalter. "Women in Islamic societies: A selected review of social scientific literature." Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2005.

<sup>23</sup>Keddie, Nikki R. "The past and present of women in the Muslim world." *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 77-108.

<sup>24</sup>Creswell, John W. *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications, 2014.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid 18

<sup>26</sup>Ibid 18

## 2.3 Data Collection Method

Data collection method is the tactic the researchers use for collecting information suitable for providing analysis in the study. The two types of data collection method are primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data is the one where data is collected by directly approaching the respondents whereas secondary data is the existing data which is in the form of journals, articles, newspapers, books or any other data that already exists. For this study, the researcher has opted for secondary data collection method. It allows the researcher to focus on secondary data that has been available in books, journals, research papers and research articles. The researches chosen for this study have been based on the topic of the study. However, not all the aspects of the topic could be found in each research, therefore, the researcher has broken down the topic in various themes in order to search for appropriate studies. For instance, key words such as Islam and Justice, Islam and status of women, Islam and modernity, role of Women in Islam and role of women in Prophet's SAW era have been used for finding the suitable researches. Also, the researcher has incorporated various Quranic verses and Hadiths in order to further emphasise on the topic and to give the findings more authentic outlook. Hence, a comprehensive approach has been opted where various previously conducted studies have been chosen for conducting analysis.

## 2.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique is based on the chosen data collection method. For primary data such as interviews and surveys, there are SPSS, thematic analysis and other analysis techniques which the researchers use. As this study has collected information by using secondary data, the researcher has used content analysis for conducting the research. The researcher has found similar themes within the previous literature and analysed the different opinions and views provided in these studies related with Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era. This data analysis technique has also allowed in comparing and contrasting the findings of previous researches and to draw conclusions on the basis of these findings. With each theme, the researcher has also supported the findings by providing the evidence from Quran and Hadith. This has allowed the researcher to offer more wide-ranging analysis backed by various connotations from Quran and Hadith which ultimately enhanced the overall authenticity of the research findings.

## 3. Area and Objectives of the research problem

The area of the research is Islamic studies within which the research has conducted the research with the main aim of analysing Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era. With respect to this, the following objectives have been devised:

- To comprehend the literature on Islam, modernity and justice for women and the role of women leaders of Prophet Muhammad SAW era

- To assess how Islam has promoted justice for women in the light of Quran and Hadith
- To identify the relationship between modernity and Islam by focusing on the previously conducted researches
- To analyse the role of women played during the era of Prophet Muhammad SAW

#### 4. Themes

##### 4.1 Theme 1: Nexus of Islam and Modernity on women's rights and justice

In the modern era, guided by the principles of neo-liberalism and individualism, a prevalent societal question emerges in social discussion: does Islam provide women rights or deprive them of it? From analysis of the Holy Quran, it is revealed that equality among human beings and justice for all is one of the fundamental ethos of the Quran, and thus, this theme is repeated several times from various perspectives and cases<sup>27</sup>. Rights for women are regarded as a sub-set of this overarching theme of the Quran, in which men (and society in general) is enforced to comply with all the rights for women as ordained by Allah. **"And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women." (2: 228)**

As an initial stance in an otherwise highly patriarchal society of pre-Islamic Arab, Islam introduced and thoroughly enforced right to divorce and right of property inheritance to women, which were revolutionary<sup>28</sup>. During that period, women were largely regarded as property of men, and men had the ultimate right to direct the lives of women under their possession. However, since then, Islam has evolved significantly, from a religion based on fundamental principles of subservient to God and welfare to men, into a socioeconomic and political fabric which permeates almost every field of life of a Muslim<sup>29</sup>. In such a case, Muslims all around the world prefer to use rely on Islam (and the Holy Book in principle) for guidance in their day-to-day lives and even in life's challenges and dilemmas. However, evolution of Islam into a socioeconomic and political fabric entailed emergence of various complexities on the part of people practicing it. Through the centuries, Islamic scholars (particularly the Sunni scholars) have acquired and evolved divergent views on how to interpret the Holy book and Prophets' Hadees, which culminated in the emergence of four divergent school of thoughts among the Sunnis<sup>30</sup>.

In principle, the very roots of Islam are based on equality, peace, and justice. The word "Islam" is a metamorphosis of a three-letter root word (tsulatsi), which is expanded as "salima-yaslamu-salaaman"; meaning safe and peaceful<sup>31</sup>. From these roots, Islam establishes a social framework whose pillars are based on peace and justice. It is important

<sup>27</sup>"Islam, Modernity And Women's Rights | The Express Tribune". 2021. The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/684372/islam-modernity-and-womens-rights>.

<sup>28</sup>Patoari, Manjur Hossain. 2019. "The Rights Of Women In Islam And Some Misconceptions: An Analysis From Bangladesh Perspective". *Beijing Law Review* 10 (05): 1211-1224. doi:10.4236/blr.2019.105065.

<sup>29</sup>Aziz, Nahid. 2012. "Counseling Muslims". *Intervention* 10 (2): 205-207. doi:10.1097/wtf.0b013e328355ee71.

<sup>30</sup>Khurshed Alam, Mohammed. 2021. "Islam And Democracy In South Asia: The Case Of Bangladesh". *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 1-3. doi:10.1080/21567689.2021.1928933.

<sup>31</sup>"Justice, Equality & Feminism: The Quranic View". 2021. The Humble I. <https://thehumblei.com/2016/12/03/quranic-meditations-on-justice-equality-feminism/>.

to be mentioned that the reason why Islam uses the word “peace” and “justice” in conjunction is because prevalent and sustainable peace, be it within home or society as a whole, cannot be achieved without implementing justice on equality basis<sup>32</sup>. Ideally, these values have to be absorbed and internalised by every Muslim. This internalisation of peace, justice, and equality is a prerequisite for transcending these same principles on a societal level, in which other Muslims could also come into contact with these principles and internalise them. The mechanism of Islamic form of justice and peace is a mix of top-down and bottom-up approach<sup>33</sup>. Islam endorses men to apply justice among themselves for the sake of Allah, because regardless of what other people mean to a person, Allah should be more valuable from any man.

**“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.” [Quran, 4:135]**

From this notion of justice originating from the idea of Allah being the supreme supervisor, Islam promulgates justice for women as well. The Holy Quran has admonished those men who mistreat women and/or act unjustly towards them:

**“O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them - except when they have become guilty of open lewdness. On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity” (4:19).**

However, the world has changed exponentially in the past forty years. Consequently, the once-upper hand of Islam with regards to women right has been overcome by modern principles of equality among human beings<sup>34</sup>. These principles originate from the conception of man as a solemn and sovereign individual, who possesses all the rights and duties within oneself the moment he/she is born into this world. The ideology of individualism dictates that an individual person has to be regarded as the utmost valuable entity in the society, from whom the superstructure of the society originates, not the other way around. Hence, providing all the rights and responsibilities to all individual on equity basis has to be a function of the society<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, individuals’ decisions pertaining to themselves and their choice of lifestyle should be respected as long as it is not in contradiction or harmful to the good of the overall society<sup>36</sup>. This is comprehensively described by John Locke as, when he described that mankind is inherently equal and

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<sup>32</sup>ibid

<sup>33</sup>Jalal, B., 2018. Islamic Spiritual Programmed: Evidence from Malaysia. *Journal of Economic & Management Perspectives*, 12(1), pp.814-817.

<sup>34</sup>Bishin, Benjamin G., and Feryal M. Cherif. "Women, Property Rights, and Islam." *Comparative Politics* 49, no. 4 (2017): 501-520.

<sup>35</sup>ibid

<sup>36</sup>Hendry, Joy. "Individualism and individuality: entry into a social world." In *An Anthropological lifetime in Japan*, pp. 201-215. Brill, 2017.



independent, and that no one has the power to harm someone else's property, health, or liberty<sup>37</sup>.

#### **4.2 Theme 2: Orthodox and progressivist interpretations of women's role and rights in Islamic society**

The discourse on sex and gender roles between men and women is a complex subject even within the Islamic superstructure. It is to be noted at this junction that the discourse on women's role in the society originates from their role in relationship with a man, both, in emotional affairs and in sexual affairs<sup>38</sup>. In the orthodox religious discourse, it is asserted that the relationship between men and women are of complementary nature. By the virtue of their superior physical strength, men are providers for the family and support for their women<sup>39</sup>. In exchange, women are to be subservient and obedient to their husbands. They have to provide emotional and moral support to their husband, as well as protect their virginity and sexuality from other men until they come in legal relationship with their husband through marriage<sup>40</sup>.

Although in orthodox discourse, women are not described as lacking in sexual passion, however, it is perceived as less intense compared to a man. Conversely, desires of men are deemed as aggressive and capricious. However, Islam only allows to gratify them through legal context of nikah, otherwise, it will be regarded as illicit act of "Zina"<sup>41</sup>. Due to this, Orthodox Islam obliges women to be subservient to sexual gratification of their husbands, and forbids them from denying providing conjugal duties. In this manner, orthodox Islam asserts that only those women who are subservient, pleasing, and nurturing to their husbands are capable of ensuring a sustained and successful marriage and pleasant relationship with their husbands. However, women's powerlessness can be inverted by their ability to seduce other men<sup>42</sup>. In orthodox Islam, this danger is openly recognised, which is why scholars assert that the Quran forbids man to have extreme attachment to women.

#### **"Emotional attachment divides man's heart, and Allah hath not created man with two hearts within his body" (Quran Surah II: 165)**

Verifiably in the orthodox conventions, women are dreaded for their problematic sexual possibilities. Women are fit for making fitnah; confusion incited by sexual turmoil (Mernissi 1975: 4). As indicated by the understood orthodoxy, both genders have a functioning sexual nature and female longings ought to be satisfied too. On the off chance that women are not physically fulfilled they make fitnah by captivating different men than

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<sup>37</sup>Stanton, Tim. "John Locke and the fable of liberalism." *Historical Journal* (2018): 597-622.

<sup>38</sup>El-Solh, CamilliaFawzi, and Judy Mabro. "Introduction: Islam and Muslim Women." In *Muslim women's Choices*, pp. 1-32. Routledge, 2020.

<sup>39</sup>"Islam And Gender". 2021. Umbc.Edu. [https://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number3/nieuwkerk/karin\\_4.htm](https://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number3/nieuwkerk/karin_4.htm).

<sup>40</sup>ibid

<sup>41</sup>"Islam And Gender". 2021. Umbc.Edu. [https://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number3/nieuwkerk/karin\\_4.htm](https://www.umbc.edu/MA/index/number3/nieuwkerk/karin_4.htm).

<sup>42</sup>"Muhammad: Legacy Of A Prophet . Muhammad And Women | PBS". 2021. Pbs.Org.

[https://www.pbs.org/muhammad/ma\\_women.shtml](https://www.pbs.org/muhammad/ma_women.shtml).

their spouses<sup>43</sup>. Muslim culture has an underlying philosophical reductionist approach to the economic dimension of women, who are conventionally seen, considered and characterised as only sexual items. The female body has customarily been the object of a huge suggestive venture, which has blurred (if not completely covered up) women's economic value<sup>44</sup>.

On the other end of the spectrum, a more progressive interpretation of Islam, mainly originating from modern-day scholars, propounds a role of women, that is equal in status and important in the society<sup>45</sup>. This importance is expounded from origins of Quranic and Hadees teachings, and then are expanded towards familial, social, economic, and political dimensions. Explanations regarding this contend that expanding female education and workforce interest raises women's status. By encouraging agency and the capacity to mobilise politically, women rights' workers in progressivist Islam, secure other rights of women as well (e.g., those relating to citizenship and inheritance)<sup>46</sup>. Centre rights engage women to challenge circumscriptions of different rights by improving their status, assets, and social capital. While financial clarifications basically centre around singular strengthening, the centre rights system underscores that advanced education furthermore, workforce support likewise empower expanded political portrayal by prodding the development of ladies' privileges voting public<sup>47</sup>.

The progressivist view of women in Islam asserts that firstly, women's subservient to their husbands (or father, before marriage) is not absolute. Secondly, this subservience is subject to their societal and economic dependency on men. The story of the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) regarding his daughter's Fatima's (R.A.) marriage to Ali (R.A.), is often highlighted as an evidence in this dimension. When Ali (R.A.) came to the Prophet S.A.W. with marriage proposal for his daughter, instead of giving a solemn decision on his own, the Prophet (S.A.W.) explicitly told that only Fatima's (R.A.) own consent will be considered for the approval of the proposal<sup>48</sup>. Progressive scholars also point towards one of Prophet's (S.A.W.) last messages at the time of last pilgrimage that:

**“The best of you is the one who is best to his wife” (SunanTirmidhi, Hadith: 1162)**

### **4.3 Theme 3: Role of Women Leaders During Prophet's (S.A.W.) Era**

In Islam, women are though deemed as physically weaker than men, however, their capabilities personal/mental capabilities are recognised on an equity basis. Ayesha (R.A.), one of Prophet's (SAW) wife, acquired a prominent position in Arab society of that era, to the point that many Sahaba and Tabeyeen used to seek her guidance in matters of Islamic

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<sup>43</sup>Atkinson, Jane Monnig. "Gender and Islam in Southeast Asia: Women's Rights Movements, Religious Resurgence, and Local Traditions ed. by Susanne Schröter." Indonesia 108, no. 1 (2019): 121-126.

<sup>44</sup>Mumtaz, Khawar. Identity politics and women:" fundamentalism" and women in Pakistan. Routledge, 2019.

<sup>45</sup>Tabahi, Suhad. "The construction and reconstruction of sexuality in the Arab world: An examination of sexual discourse, women's writing and reproductive justice." Sexuality & Culture (2020): 1-18.

<sup>46</sup>ibid

<sup>47</sup>ibid

<sup>48</sup>Fatima, Shadab. "HaqBakhshish (Marriage to Quran): A Custom Confused With Religion: A Case Study of QaisraSharaz'sProtogonist 'ZariBano'From the Novel Holy Woman." Al Tafseer-Biannual Journal 35 (2020).

law, theology, conducts of society, and Hadees.<sup>4950</sup> Furthermore, women have also participated in various battles during that period. UmmeAtyqah is regarded as one of the bravest women in Prophet's (SAW) era, who accompanied him in seven battles<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, Wairyh, Muawia's (R.A.) sister, led a contingent comprised of women soldiers and medics in the battle of Yarmuk<sup>52</sup>. Similarly, one of the most coveted women in the early period of Islam was Mohammad's (SAW) first wife Khadija bint Khuwaylid (R.A.). Not only she was financially one of the most successful people in the Arab society, but she is also regarded as the first converts to Islam<sup>53</sup>. Her role in providing support and help to the Prophet (SAW) during revelations, and her initiative towards Islam, evidences that Islam recognises women's socioeconomic clout and leadership characteristics.

## 5. Findings and Recommendations

This study was based on literature review of contemporary research literature and also involved in-depth contextual analysis of relevant Quranic and Hadith references to discuss the subject of role of women and nexus of Islam and modernity. Through review of the literature, it was revealed that the primary area of focus of Islam during early era of its emergence, was ending prominent social ills, which were ailing society on a macro scale. For this, it emphasised on rights and duties of individuals on each other, and the also on the society as a whole. For women, it ended infanticide, and created a society in which both sexes were equal in their worship and stature. Furthermore, Islam introduced the right in various social domains such as marriage, inheritance, role of scholarship and leadership, as well as a coveted role inside homes, as primary nurturer and guide to the proceeding generations. However, the underlying mindset of the society permeates into the fabric of religion, and this is what happened in the evolution of Islam throughout centuries since its emergence. It was found that although conservative interpreters attempted to accord a "stronger" role to men, scholars such as Mohammad Ali Syed argued that, women are deemed on the same level as men, in all socioeconomic and political arenas. This assertion is based on the following verses from the Holy Quran:

"And covet not the thing in which Allah hath made some of you excel others. Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned. (Envy not one another) but ask Allah of His bounty. Lo! Allah is ever Knower of all things" (Pickthal 4:32).

Similarly, it is observed that whenever Allah addressed the matters of human societies, He addresses both men and women on an equal footing throughout the Quran.

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men

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<sup>49</sup>Collard, Leea. "Islam, Democracy, and the Leadership Role of Women in Government." (2020).

<sup>50</sup>Elius, Mohammad. "Islamic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis." Arts Faculty Journal (2010): 195-205.

<sup>51</sup>ibid

<sup>52</sup>ibid

<sup>53</sup>ibid

and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (33:35)

Furthermore, the study revealed that western modernism, although not openly accepted in Islamic scholarship, has still influenced it, especially in the sense that it encouraged modern Islamic scholars to review the Quranic and Hadees interpretations related to this subject, whose often times misogynistic interpretations (by old scholars of that era) were taken for granted. Consequently, even many orthodox scholars Shi'ite scholar Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, issued a fatwa that Islam forbids men from exercising any kind of violence against women. It was found that Islam protects all the rights of women towards marriage and other prominent decisions regarding her personal life. Although, Fatima (R.A.) was not financially and/or socially independent from the Prophet's (S.A.W.) guidance at that time, nevertheless, the Prophet (S.A.W.) sought his daughter's explicit consent in the crucial matter of her marriage. In progressive interpretation of Islam, although the emphasis is on establishing legal relationship between man and woman by marriage, however, this marriage is not deemed as an exchange of "duties", but rather a "mutually beneficial" contract. This is evidenced by the fact that women are free to require her husband to sign a pre-nuptial contract, in which they could demand anything of their wish (as long as it is within moral bounds) from their husbands, and the husband is obligated to comply with it throughout their period of marriage.

In the light of preceding analysis and findings, this study promulgates following recommendations:

- The role of women in modern society should be deemed beyond a constricted framework of familial relationship. This is because in terms of value of human productivity, the modern world is similar to the time of early battles. It is established from research that nations cannot sustainably progress without active productivity of their women. Hence, women's education and professionalism must be encouraging on all domains
- Islamic shariah laws should be allowed to be re-interpreted, especially now, when modern techniques of linguistic analysis have become available. This will substantially help in defenestrating several mis-interpretations by early scholars
- Constitutional provisions should be established and implemented to protect women's right of marriage, education, and professional development.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the subject of status of women in light of Islamic teaching and modernity. In this respect, the study found that majority of conservative and misogynistic views regarding women found in orthodox Islam are actually product of early systemic misogynist society, which influenced early scholars in their interpretations of Quran and Hadees as well. It was further continued by adherence to principles of conservatism which many Islamic scholars followed in the preceding centuries, which resulted in degradation of women in many Muslim societies.

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