

Islamic Feminism in Response to the Western Misogyny, and Women's Rights in the Islamic Context

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Abstract

Objectives: This study explores the complex interaction between Islamic feminism and Western feminism, focusing on how Islamic feminism addresses claims of gender oppression in Muslim societies and challenges Western feminist critiques. It also investigates the rights Islam grants to women and the misconceptions surrounding these rights in Western discourse.

Methods: Using a qualitative approach, the research examines feminist texts, Islamic scriptures, and historical accounts to analyze how Islamic feminism has developed as a response to Western narratives. It also evaluates feminist critiques and the socio-cultural impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on gender discourse in Islamic societies.

Results: The findings reveal that Islamic feminism emphasizes gender equality rooted in the Qur'an and challenges the patriarchal interpretations of Islamic teachings. It also highlights the misrepresentation of Muslim women in Western feminism, revealing instances of Islamophobia and cultural imperialism. Islamic feminism emerges as a framework that reclaims religious identity while advocating for gender justice.

Conclusions: This study concludes that Islamic feminism provides a powerful counter-narrative to Western feminism by asserting the compatibility of gender equality with Islamic values. It underscores the need to recognize the agency of Muslim women and dismantle stereotypes perpetuated by Western frameworks, fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive understanding of feminism.

Keywords: Islamic feminism; western feminism; women's right in Islam; Islamophobia; colonization; Neo-colonization

النسوية الإسلامية في مواجهة كراهية الغرب للنساء، وحقوق المرأة في السياق الإسلامي

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ملخص

الأهداف: تستكشف هذه الدراسة التفاعل المعقد بين النسوية الإسلامية والنسوية الغربية، مع التركيز على كيفية تناول النسوية الإسلامية للادعاءات المتعلقة باضطهاد المرأة في المجتمعات الإسلامية، وتحدياتها للانتقادات التي توجهها النسوية الغربية. كما تبحث الدراسة في الحقوق التي يمنحها الإسلام للمرأة، والمفاهيم الخاطئة المحيطة بهذه الحقوق في الخطاب الغربي. منهجية البحث: تعتمد هذه الدراسة على منهجية نوعية، من خلال تحليل النصوص النسوية، والكتب الإسلامية المقدسة، والسجلات التاريخية، لفهم تطور النسوية الإسلامية كرد فعل على السرديات الغربية. كما تقيم الدراسة الانتقادات النسوية والأثر الاجتماعي والثقافي للاستعمار والاستعمار الجديد على الخطاب الجندي في المجتمعات الإسلامية. النتائج: تكشف النتائج أن النسوية الإسلامية تؤكد على المساواة بين الجنسين انطلاقاً من مبادئ القرآن الكريم، وتتصدى للتفسيرات الأبوية للتعاليم الإسلامية. كما تُبرز الدراسة سوء تمثيل المرأة المسلمة في الخطاب النسوي الغربي، وتكشف عن مظاهر الإسلاموفوبيا والإمبريالية الثقافية. وتبرز النسوية الإسلامية كإطار يعيد تأكيد الهوية الدينية في الوقت الذي يطالب فيه بالعدالة الجنديرية.

الاستنتاجات: تخلص الدراسة إلى أن النسوية الإسلامية تُعد خطاباً مضاداً قوياً للنسوية الغربية، من خلال تأكيدها على توافق المساواة بين الجنسين مع القيم الإسلامية. كما تؤكد على ضرورة الاعتراف بفاعلية المرأة المسلمة، وتفكيك الصور النمطية التي ترسخها الأطر الغربية، بما يسهم في تعزيز فهم أكثر شمولاً وحساسية ثقافية لمفهوم النسوية. الكلمات الدالة: النسوية الإسلامية، النسوية الغربية، حقوق المرأة في الإسلام، الإسلاموفوبيا، الاستعمار، الاستعمار الجديد.



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1. Introduction

The twentieth century presented a challenge to Muslim countries all over the world, particularly in women's position and function in Muslim societies. Recognizing women's lower status in traditional Muslim history, the secular raises fundamental concerns that women have no rights in Muslim societies. Therefore, the subject of women in Islam is plagued with prejudices and misconceptions. This study investigates the misalignment between historical Islamic principles on women's rights and their portrayal in Western feminist discourse, addressing gaps in both interpretations. Even, historically, Muslim women were the holder of rights. In fact, under Islamic law, a Muslim woman has her own legal and economic identity, and independent access to land.

In the 1990s, numerous books were written from a feminist perspective on the topic of women in Islam, seeking to ground women's liberation from repressive conventions in the religion's fundamental source, the Qur'an. Since then, numerous Islamic feminists have raised their voices to the foundational work of Islam to develop their own feminist perspectives in a variety of contexts. Additionally, there is a particular form of God consciousness that, by affirming the equality and unity of human life, can help us stress justice and rights for all people (Barlas, 2008). According to Badran (2010), projects of a "theology-driven feminist discourse" are the best-known and most important works of Islamic feminism.

Western feminism, on the other hand, investigates questions of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and neo-colonialism through the lens of religion. Colonial and neo-colonial influences have shaped Islamic ideological development, with Western gender studies often adopting an anti-religious stance. This misrepresentation of Muslim women in Western culture was argued by Hasan (2005) clarified the response of blaming Islam for gender inequality. European cultural practice individually accuses Muslim women that they have been oppressed. Islam, however, supports or does not postpone marriage, divorce, and custody laws for indiscriminate dominance, and does not authorize men as dominate supremacy over women. In the European cultural tradition, Western women display negative attitudes and misrepresent Muslim women; without an adequate understanding of religion. This research seeks to explore how Muslim women (in the Islamic region) enjoy their own identity and independence. This study explores Islamic feminist identity, historical contexts of women's rights in Islam, and the misrepresentation of Muslim women in western discourse. Furthermore, the role of women in Islam can and must be examined in the light of his literary works. This research also looks at the status of women in Muslim culture historically in order to better understand how it relates to the Islamic heritage and how Muslim women's shifting roles relate to it.

2. Defining the Concept of "Islamic Feminism"

Islamic feminism is a scholarly and activist movement that seeks to achieve gender equality within an Islamic framework. Margot Badran (2010) defines it as a discourse and practice that asserts the compatibility of Islam and feminism. Amina Wadud (1999) emphasizes the need for Qur'anic exegesis from a feminist lens, while Fatima Mernissi (1991) critiques patriarchal interpretations of Islamic law. The term 'Islamic feminism' first gained traction in the 1990s as scholars and activists sought to challenge both patriarchal traditions and Western feminist misrepresentations.

It is simply defined; Islamic feminism is a feminist philosophy and activism that is based on the Islamic paradigm. 'Islamic feminism' refers to a wide range of viewpoints on improving gender equality in Muslim societies that promote equality and fairness for men and women in all aspects of their lives, drawing its understanding and mandate from the Qur'an (Badran, 2010). A complete picture emerges when we investigate the history, tactics, discourses, and particularly the concept of "religion" those Muslim women activists and thinkers contend with. Islam is increasingly debated as both a religious and socio-political framework, with various scholars and activists engaging in its interpretation (Rhouni, 2010). From the very beginning, Islam has given abundant positive advantages to women and granted them certain rights such as the right to land, which was granted only in the 19th century to Western women.

However, many Islamic feminist scholars, through different methods of interpretation, have broken down misogynistic conceptions of Islam. Leila Ahmed (1982) argued that one could not judge Islam more maliciously than the two other

monotheists by their attitudes toward women. Fatima Mernissi (2010) argued that many common hadiths used in Islam to perpetuate gender inequality are inappropriate. Mernissi also makes this point by employing the conventional Islamic methodology utilized by men who systematically propagated the weak hadith. Therefore, the majority of Western feminists are aware that Muslim women are especially marginalized. They know it simply because it is one of the realities that emerge in Western society and most ardently confess it because they do not know the reality of Islam (Ahmed, 1982). However, Cooley (1991) argues that someone made it their business to describe the negative way of Muslim women's ontological, theoretical, sociological, and eschatological status.

Contemporary religious discourse reveals that Muslim women are the result of ideological, historical, and political forces. To make silent Muslim women, the West is misrepresenting common Islamic practices like covering up the veil. Religion is commonly seen from the viewpoint of modern feminist philosophies as a contributing factor to women's vulnerability and their lack of economic and political development. Bullock (2002) argues that Islam must be seen as a gender-neutral religion and refutes the belief system discriminated toward women. They try to comprehend the situation of women in Islamic societies from the viewpoint of colonialism. This Eurocentric perspective on the rights of women labels Islamic feminism as an area of domination by ideology.

Islam has played a prominent role in feminist debates, but it has frequently been characterized as transcending the boundaries defined by dominant Western feminism as fundamentally patriarchal (Salem, 2013). Hasan argues that misogynist ideas and elements evolved at this point in Western cultural tradition. In order to deal with religious women, Western mainstream feminism has long had difficulties. Religion, they argued, is an intrinsically patriarchal institution that ignores women and makes them inferior to men (Salem, 2013). In Islamic societies, however, many women are a core element who have experienced the universe, there is no question about the religious spiritual structure. Islamic feminism is a field that can be described largely as an attempt to exert power within Islam over the development of information and meaning.

There were two prominent suppositions from the viewpoint of feminism. The first is that women are passive at all times and resist on rare occasions. The second presumption is that the realm of men is perceived to be religion and religious texts; indeed, most of the conventional feminist debate confirms this argument. However, many Islamic feminists intend to refute the idea that men only belong to religious texts. Hasan (2005) suggests that Returning to the Qur'an and it would make possible for Muslim men and women to develop religious equality. As the basis for their claims regarding patriarchy and Islam, other Islamic feminists use religious texts. In addition, the Quran is post-patriarchal and thus a return to it will make Islam post-patriarchal, but only if different interpretive practices are centred on that return. Czeisler et al. (1986) argue that for believers, the biblical concept of human dignity and equality between men and women is as important as other aspects of gender equality. It is important to highlight that this does not necessarily imply that women's texts are reinterpreted, as women, like men, are capable of repeating patriarchal views.

3. The Attitude of Western Feminism

Western feminist discourse has historically framed Muslim women as victims of a patriarchal Islamic society, reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes. This section examines three key issues: (1) Western feminism's reliance on Orientalist narratives, (2) its misrepresentation of Muslim women's agency, and (3) the selective criticism of Islamic practices without contextual understanding.

In the European cultural tradition, Western women still show their adverse attitudes and distort to Islam and Muslim women and misrepresent women. Many Western critics show misogynistic attitude to Islam without an adequate understanding about it (Hasan, 2015). Hasan also states that Muslim women's representation and the women's rights debate in Islam have always been at the center of an ideological struggle between the West and the Muslim world. Moreover, Islam has long played an essential role in feminist discussions, but the boundaries of dominant Western feminism, which is essentially patriarchal, have been sadly established (Salem, 2013). In lieu of their numerous assertions, the lives and experiences of many Islamic women comprise a significant portion of their existence. Islam as a religion offers a worldview

and experience for women in a spiritual context. Islamic feminism forms an area that can be generally characterized as exerting control within Islam over the formation of consciousness and meaning. These Orientalist narratives not only distort historical realities but also contribute to the broader misrepresentation of Muslim women in Western feminist discourse.

Islamic feminists reintroduce the Western pressures on Muslim communities, revealing a reactionary propensity that has exaggerated Muslim identity and emphasizes a simple dichotomy between Islamic and Western societies. Religion is commonly seen from the viewpoint of modern feminist theories as a contributing factor to women's vulnerability and their lack of economic and political development. Religion is a discourse that transcends earthly issues and at the same time asserts itself as equally transcendent status (Lincoln, 2010). However, hate of Islam is based on the distrust or dislike that has occurred in Western nations and societies for many decades (Runnymede, 1997). Hasan (2015) argues that modern Orientalist tendencies continue to take a reductionist stance and primarily concentrate on caricaturing Islam and Muslims. For decades, some issues with Muslim women have generated widespread concern and intervention from Westerners. Not only a worthy development in Muslim women but also their good sort of fascination, such as the clothing and marriage scheme, are the reasons for concern of the West. Haller (2011) argues that the fascination of Muslim women and the beauty of Islam are regarded in a falsely elitist manner, and the cultural tradition and imposing power cause them to believe that "white people are right". This Muslim woman, taken aback by the West's challenge, came to the conclusion that Islam requires the liberation of women. They are unable to comprehend that the Islamic community has provided numerous opportunities for Muslim women. It is important to note that not all Western feminists perpetuate Orientalist narratives. Scholars such as Lila Abu-Lughod (2013) advocate for a nuanced approach, urging feminists to recognize Muslim women's agency rather than assuming they need saving. By portraying Muslim women as passive victims, parts of Western feminism inadvertently reinforce Islamophobia narratives rather than supporting genuine gender justice. A more inclusive feminist approach would engage with Muslim women on their own terms, acknowledging diverse feminist struggles across cultural contexts.

4. Gender-based Islamophobia

Western feminists regret, that Islam oppresses women which can be classified as gender-based Islamophobia, which is one of the central elements of the colonial imperialism of Western feminism. Gender-specific Islamophobia has the impact of defaming Muslim people since women in Islam are arguably preferable and more enlightened by contrasting the treatment of other religions in the world. For this purpose, by endorsing the imperialist wars which have subjugated the Third World populations, they misuse Islamic feminism to serve colonial interests longer. Westerners erroneously misrepresent a number of fundamental aspects of Islam; influenced by this misconception, some Muslim feminists also misinterpret Islam. Many of them are against the veil system of Muslim women. However, the veil is part of the cultural and religious identity of Islamic societies, or for many Muslim women in non-Islamic societies, and Muslim women are willingly choosing to voluntarily protect themselves. France's 2004 hijab ban illustrates how gender-based Islamophobia manifests in state policies. While framed as a secular measure, it disproportionately targets Muslim women's right to express their religious identity (Scott, 2007). Media narratives often depict veiled Muslim women as symbols of oppression rather than as individuals exercising agency (Abu-Lughod, 2013). These portrayals reinforce stereotypes that Islamic feminism directly challenges.

Some Western countries, like France, have passed laws prohibiting or restricting women from wearing the veil in public. The veil has brought to light gender-based Islamophobia in the West. Western feminists who believe the hijab is an oppressive symbol for Muslim women welcome these decisions as well. They do not, however, criticize the patriarchal aesthetic standards of Western society that they may impose on these women, nor do they reject the notion that renouncing religious traditions is a form of oppression. The West boldly portrays Muslim women as the world's most miserable victims of Islam, a patriarchal and authoritarian faith (Hasan, 2015). Western feminists view the harem as an oppressive environment for settled Muslim women. In Muslim culture, Fatima Mernissi (2010) claims, there is an ethical difference between the Ummah public world, which is coded as the male world, and the isolated home and harem world, which is

coded as female and kin. Islam differs from the methodology of Western sex and does not want to treat overt female sexuality as dangerously active. For this purpose, veiled preservation is needed that enables women to move through public spaces without sacrificing the protection of isolation.

5. Misconception of Patriarchy

Orientalism is characterized by its portrayal of entire societies as constant, unchanging, and necessary. Specifically, with respect to Islam and traditional Western female religious literature. Hasan (2017) argues that the reflection on the West's hegemonic culture and the provincialization of Eastern Islamic cultural practices mimic the desire for a "part of Muslim society" within the dominance of Western culture. The Universalist feminist movement seeks to normalize both Muslim women and Islamic customs and tends to create Western cultural hegemony. Their supposed philosophy that Islam is inherently patriarchal is based on patriarchy, which is the source of oppressive Muslim women. Salem (2013) argues that religious women turned out to be a homogeneous group that the underlying patriarchy of the religion. However, Ahmed (1992) argues that Western feminist critiques of Islam stem from a presumption of moral superiority, which leads to the portrayal of Muslim societies as inherently patriarchal. This supports the argument that the Western lens often misunderstands the complexity of gender roles within Islam.

The negative portrayals of Islam, however, are due to the Islamophobic mindset, as mainstream Western feminism has long had trouble dealing with religious women, especially Muslims. That is because they want to place the blame on Muslim women. Therefore, Bullock (2002) challenges the assumption that Islam is inherently patriarchal, arguing that gender bias arises from cultural interpretations rather than religious doctrine. This aligns with Islamic feminist perspectives that advocate for a return to Qur'anic principles of gender justice. The secular feminist movement argues that patriarchy is the result of any religious organization that excludes women naturally and renders them inferior to men. Their firm insists that only in a secular sense can human rights exist. On the other hand, many religious feminists raise critical questions about how feminism has oversimplified religion. The subject of choice and the way decisions are made are at the center of this discussion. We also need to ask ourselves who decides that religion oppresses women and which authorities are responsible for such a decision. Hasan (2017) argues that the opposition doctrine between Islam and women's rights is the product of a misunderstanding of Islam, and Leila Ahmed (1992) argues that it is actually in the hands of patriarchal men or feminists who have the principles of Western feminism and to support the notion of the general superior. As homogeneous and powerless, the discursive construction of Third World women is comparable to the construction of religious women as standardized and automatically suppressed or suffering from a false conscience.

6. Propaganda of Colonist Women

Oppression against women is a global issue, oppressing women all over the world, but the strong conviction of Western feminists is that Islam is responsible for women's oppression in particular. They accuse that Islam has no conscience, and no rights for women - only thought of as animals. Leila Ahmed (1982) argued that Islam provided women with a range of positive benefits and has given certain rights to women such as the right to property that was only given in the 19th century to women in the West. As with the right to state, women are still not given, for example, under rabbinical law, and one certainly cannot judge Islam more viciously in its stance toward women than the other two monotheisms. Islam, however, supports or does not postpone marriage, divorce, and custody laws for the indiscriminate dominance and power of men over women. Without knowing anything about Islam, it is the odd assumption about Muslims that they are oppressed. These are the true barriers surrounding Western society, and their significant knowledge gap about understanding Islam is indeed theirs - they know nothing about Islam. They are not even able to describe oppression properly but recognizing Muslims as ignorant, backward, irrational, and uncivilized.

There is a Western project aimed at westernizing Muslim communities and distinguishing Islam from Muslims. Hasan (2017) argues that impressive interference and law ultimately promote the imposing notion of Western society also confuses and splits the Muslim community. Hasan (2012) also states that women who pervade popular culture and literature,

particularly in the West, depict Islam as a religion of oppression. Many Muslim women are the target of this Westernization war. Through the imperialist feminist propaganda, day after day, the most significant Islamic rituals present themselves negatively and falsify Islam. Many Muslims reject Islamic traditions for this purpose and follow the paradigm of Western culture. This is becoming part of their modern style. However, in a wider definition of Islam that is democratic, anti-patriarchal, and anti-imperialist in line with the Muslim world's numerous cultures. Therefore, these are the pillars of faith and tradition that have built wider societal narratives of masculinity and femininity.

Elina Vuola (2001) argued that the patronizing view of religion by feminist scholars meant they didn't see the complete picture. There are two kinds of feminist blindness: on the one hand, resistance to the importance of the faith of women. On the other hand, feminist studies have a kind of "religious paradigm" in which women are most often seen through the lens of religion, especially in studies by Western scholars about Muslim countries. For believers, the biblical idea of gender equality is just as essential as other facets of gender equality (Klein, 1996). Hasan (2012) argues for returning to the Quran, and it would make possible for Muslim men and women to be theologically equal. Islamic feminists frequently cite religious texts to support their arguments regarding patriarchy and Islam. In other words, the Qur'an is post-patriarchal, and Islam would be post-patriarchal if the return is based on various interpretive practices. Noting that women are just as capable as men of perpetuating patriarchal interpretations does not necessitate a reinterpretation of women's texts, but rather of the approaches women and men use to interpret. As a key approach to reinterpretation, many female scholars who concentrate on feminism and Islam favour historicization because it contextualizes those traditions and thus makes them no longer relevant today. Although women in religion are portrayed as 'others' in society, religion, and culture, their courageous actions demonstrate that they can protest not only verbally but also physically. In addition, the rise of women's consciousness is connected to their untold sacrifices and afflictions, which are emphasised in the authors' works. Colonial-era narratives about Muslim women's oppression continue to influence Western feminist discourse today. By portraying Islam as inherently patriarchal, these perspectives overlook the agency of Muslim women and the role of Islamic feminism in challenging gender injustice. Recognizing and dismantling these colonial frameworks is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and intersectional feminist dialogue.

7. Patriarchal Challenges of Woman in General

The persistent subjugation of women across cultures is not an inherent aspect of society but rather a product of patriarchal structures that continue to limit women's agency. While different societies frame patriarchy in unique ways, its core function remains the suppression of women's autonomy and rights. These gender stereotypes are transmitted from generation to generation. Even in the globalised world of today, women are denied their rights and continue to be subjugated. In different ways than men, women have been oppressed and discriminated against throughout history and continue to be so today. However, patriarchal subjugation is globally responsible for women's oppression. In the present world, women can be described as voiceless or powerless individuals, an argument made by Spivak in her essay about the subaltern. Spivak is pessimistic about the possibility of the subaltern or marginalized person ever having a chance to tell her story. Here women can be considered as a parallel to that of colonized subjects controlled by dominant colonizers. The condition of women became wide-reaching and repression in common with colonized people and colonized women can consequently be considered to be doubly oppressed (Ashcroft, 2006). Therefore, Women are psychologically depressed as Antonia Navarro holds that the majority of writing depicts the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife, this subject matter often been considered superficial compared to the depiction of repressed and oppressed lives of women of the lower classes. Masselos (2002) claims that third world women are considered as subaltern people. The mentality of the subaltern at the time of opposition, at the moment of their action against domination, the dialectics of collaboration and acquiescence on the part of the subalterns. The wide range of attitudes between resignation and revolt has been underplayed in this mode of historiography (Gupta, 2016). Even women in the Indian subcontinent do not dare to challenge the traditional ideas of love and marriage prevalent in post-colonial India. Amitabh Roy comments succinctly: "It is a pity that she submits in the name of decency and honor to the very sexist, casteist and communal prejudices that have stood in their way and

denied fulfilment to them”.

Here women continue to hold into their dominating role falsifying the idea that women should only obey orders. Women in the post-colonial Indian subcontinent are torn by the pulls of pre-colonial heritage; their desire for freedom and equality was at least partially sparked by their experience with the global forces of an uneven and blatantly unfair economic and political order. The Indian subcontinent has male-dominated societies that shape women through patriarchal familial and social power structures (Islam & Rashid, 2022).

According to Madhumita Das (2020), it is a world of double standards where principles and ideals are used as a mask to cover the worst kind of social injustices where cruelty and barbaric behavior are used as tools to perpetuate the age-old exploitative system. Zaidi (2016) shows in his study how women noosed by traditions, negotiate their way to self-realization by blending the modern with the traditional. However, a new generation of educated women struggled against child marriage, widow burning, and child murder of women, as well as measures to empower women (Islam, 2022).

Women are kept unprivileged and circumscribed with no choices of their own. Therefore, the perpetuation of this practice pushes back women from leadership and authoritative positions. Tina Chanter (2010) asserts that women were only considered unsuited to the roles reserved for men because of lacking in education to become politically informed and responsible citizens and once they were given this opportunity, they were as good as men. Feminist theorists like Beauvoir, Savitt, Geetha, and Chanter make it evident that gender stereotypes are merely social constructions and not determined by God so they can be challenged.

Feminists highlight the significance of the social, political, and economic structures that shape human societies and insist that gender must be taken into account when examining the effects of oppression and dominance, as well as power and impotence, in our society. Feminist theory investigates gender-related differences in role expectations, status, and authority. A Man occupied a prominent position in all aspects of life, leaving woman as a fragile creature dependent on him for her very existence and sustenance. In such a situation, understanding a woman's struggle in a society dominated by men is relatively simple. She was deemed incompetent when it came to intellectual or artistic endeavours. However, women have to ponder, study, and make decisions, and they should express themselves through speech, art, etc.

Bell Hooks, an American professor, feminist, and social activist, calls for the articulation of marginalised voices. For the oppressed, the colonised, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side, moving from silence to speech is a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. The act of speech, of "talking back," which is not merely a gesture of meaningless words, expresses our movement from object to subject; it is the liberated voice (hooks, 1989). Mohanty's objective is to grant Third World women the same autonomy and expression as Western women (Mohanty, 1988).

There has always been a history of societal, legal, and economic barriers that have denied women their basic human rights. Feminists have raised their voices in protest of the new generation of women's struggles to free themselves from masculine domination and injustices. Feminist issues, like many other social justice issues, cut across lines of race, religion, and nation. Author Noor Fatima claims, "One of the major concerns of contemporary literature all over the world has been to highlight the plight of women, their increasing problems, and their physical, financial, and emotional exploitation". Simon de Beauvoir (2017) asserted that one does not become a woman at birth. The new woman expresses resentment as they speak out against an oppressive society. Today, women will attain their status; their voice will no longer be suppressed. The new unquestionably deals with the concepts of those who have raised their voices and their awareness of the world. In addition to making sacrifices, contemporary women have survived by battling back and responding to society, religion, and culture through their achievements.

The roots of all the above problems are patriarchal domination, not by any religion even Islam. As Sultana (2010) writes, patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres as well as to find out the cause root of women's subordination. It means that patriarchy is the main subject to the oppression of women. The problems experienced by the women could not be separated from the patriarchy that surrounds them, where the status of women in society is positioned below the male and is considered a less important role in society (Mafakhir, 2016). In patriarchy, the woman is rated as a

weak person. They do not have any power to struggle and solve any problem that appears in her whole life. These views make women become weaker and sometimes also form their thought, character, and behavior to be inferior to men.

8. Women's Rights in Islam

The rise of feminism can be traced back to discrepancies in the interpretation and application of Islamic teachings, which were affected by various historical and cultural factors. In Muslim and Arab civilizations, there has been a considerable rise in societal, scholarly, and grassroots initiatives aimed at liberating women and supporting their empowerment over the last 150 years (Koburtay et al., 2023). It is worth noting that the Islamic perspective on women's rights can align with many of the rights that women in the Western world currently enjoy (Allah, 2021). These include the right to education, the right to work and own property, equal pay for equal work, recognition of individuality and independence, political representation, and the ability to enter into and dissolve marriages, among various other rights (Hasan, 2017).

Arab feminist movements have progressed through several stages. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a wave of scholars and activists advocated for women's rights in society (Al Hessa, 2020). Many significant personalities were influenced by colonialism and had the ability to contact with Western countries and draw inspiration from their women's rights movements. This period also saw a worsening of women's situations in many Arab regions, leading to the formation of grassroots movements promoting women's rights. (Koburtay et al., 2023). The position of women in Islam is examined, and a complicated and nuanced picture emerges. Reforms based on the Quran were put into place during the classical era, greatly improving their status within the family and society (Esposito, 1975). The fundamental text of Islam, the Qur'an, emphasizes that men and women have a common humanity and that women should have the freedom, comfort, and social standing needed to engage in their respective cultures' economies (Koburtay et al., 2023).

It is already recognized that numerous scholars have focused on Muslim women's autonomy by highlighting on the processes of reinterpreting and contextualizing Islamic scriptures. Asma Barlas discusses religious understanding and authority that make complications with the Quran to explain the notion of patriarchy, and claims that the Quran advocates absolute gender equality (Barlas, 2008). According to Manjur Hossain Patoari (2019), Islam has secured gender equality and women's rights in all stages of life, yet Muslim women are misled that they are backward and oppressed. Islam is greater to women, having come before all laws and legislations in caring for women and granting them their appropriate standing (Al-Saadi and Sarheed, 2023). Islamic teachings, as outlined in the Qur'an, granted women legal rights to inheritance and divorce, marking a significant advancement compared to other societies at the time (Patoari, 2019). However, over time, patriarchal interpretations of these texts contributed to the erosion of these rights, leading to the restrictions seen in later historical periods (Ahmed, 1992).

Judith Tucker's (1998) study tried to understand how Islamic scholars have seen concerns about women and gender roles across time. Tucker contends that Islamic law is more complex than is commonly assumed in terms of women's rights and needs. Kecia Ali's book "Sexual Ethics in Islam" (2006) investigates what constitutes an ethical deed or belief in the eyes of God. For a long time, Ali handles very difficult themes and employs the Qur'an, Hadith, and law to answer concerns given by men. It is critical that Islamist feminism has the ability to change Muslim women's cultural standards and daily activities, however, such action may not be available to all Muslim women (Halverson & Way, 2011). They not only had access to monetary resources, but they also appeared to have grown up in communities and cultures that allowed them to investigate their faith while also respecting their right to freely discuss it.

9. Conclusion

Throughout the 20th century, Muslim countries struggled, particularly with women's roles. Among the secular concerns is the traditionally low status of women in Islam. They assert that Muslim women have no legal protections. This is why so many misconceptions exist among Islamic women. The reasons for the subjugation of Muslim women contradict their historical equality under Islamic law. Muslim women have legal privileges at all times. Islamic law recognises Muslim

women as legal and economic individuals. Feminists work on women in Islamic sought, Qur'anic support, for women's independence in the 1990s. Islamic feminists influenced other Muslim activists to adopt feminist perspectives. By emphasising human equality and unity, God's consciousness may assist us in promoting justice and rights for all. Theology-driven feminist discourse is the most significant work of Islamic feminism. While, Western feminism is devoted to the study of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and neo-colonialism. Western gender studies have become atheistic, whereas colonialism and recolonization have influenced Islamic theology.

European culture faults Muslim women contrary to popular belief. Islam does not support patriarchal, force marriage, divorce, or child custody. Without comprehending Islam, Western women continue to criticise Muslim women in popular culture. A possible limitation of the study is that the intellectual framework of Islamic feminism cannot adequately address gender equality issues in Islam. In contrast, academics such as Leila Ahmed, Fatima Mernissi, and Amina Wadud introduced a new school of thought regarding the position of Muslim women during the 1990s. The term "Islamic feminism" has been used by theorists to characterise the shift in discourse and subsequent work resulting from the influence of feminist analysis on Islamic philosophy. This study uses their conversation as a springboard to investigate the philosophical connections between Islam and feminism and to explain whether or not the confluence preserves the academic gender model divide. When viewed through a feminist lens, however, it is evident that Muslim women have made significant contributions in the past. There are reliable intellectual inclusion paradigms at work. Islamic feminism may be viewed as a movement that strives to influence the growth of Islamic scholarship and comprehension. Women's rights in Islam have undergone significant shifts, from the progressive legal frameworks of early Islam to the restrictive patriarchal interpretations that emerged later. Today, Islamic feminists challenge these distortions by advocating for gender justice rooted in the Qur'an. Understanding this evolution is crucial to dismantling misconceptions and supporting women's empowerment within Islamic societies.

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