

IMPACT OF IQBAL'S THOUGHTS ON ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN RIGHTS IN MUSLIM SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

Sir Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal in attributes of his work and personality was essentially a philosopher not just a poet. The poetry he used to disseminate his philosophical views is without any doubt well informed in Islamic philosophies, along with western and Indian philosophies. Fundamentally he was a humanist. He was inspired by the Sufi poets like Rumi, Mulla Sadra, Mansoor Hallaj. Iqbal's significant attempt is in synthesizing ceremonial religion aspects with the spiritual aspect of the prophetic and Sufi traditions to renovate Muslim thought is still relevant for Muslim societies. As he was well aware of the fact that unyielding interpretation of Islam will make the religion torpid and as a result it will fail to help Muslims to adapt with their ever-changing needs due to changes in the material environment. He specifically brought the rights of women in human rights domain. The woman of sub-continent was suppressed, subjugated, and degraded. The apostles of feminism avail all the possible chances in painting Islam as a discriminatory religion against women. One of a great Muslim poet, philosopher and scholar of all the times Allama Muhammad Iqbal, has also discussed about importance, role and rights of women in a society. His feminist approach can be seen evidently in a lot of his works such as poetry like Javed Nama, Ramooz-e-Bekhudi, and Zareb-e-Kaleem. He also analyzed the feminist movements of that time and considered it a trap by "capitalists" and money lenders. For Iqbal the terms "freedom and equality" are relevant. He highlighted the importance of women advancement and rights on so many platforms. And in this paper we will evaluate the concept of western feminism and the

Muslim Women roles and Rights in a Muslim Society in perspective of Allama Iqbal.

There is little doubt that to Allama Iqbal a woman's most important role is that of a mother. He linked motherhood to prophet hood in *Ramuz-e-Bekbudi (Mysteries of Selflessness)*: Motherhood is mercy, honor being linked, By close affinity to Prophet hood, And her compassion is the Prophet's own, Mothers shape the way that all men shall go, Matured, by the grace of Motherhood/The character of nations is the lines which score that brow determine our estate.

In according the highest respect to motherhood Iqbal is in keeping with Islamic tradition in which a hadith that says paradise lies under the feet of your mother is universally known and accepted. Iqbal's view that mothers are the pillars of a stable society, in that they nurture and guide future generations, may be regarded as "conservative" but it is not meant to diminish women in any way. It should be seen as representing a just and positive perspective in light of the growing number of single mothers, particularly in the west, many of whom live below the poverty line even in affluent societies such as the US.

In *Javed Nama*, Iqbal depicts the Sphere of Mars as an ideal spiritual democracy where there are no masters and no servants, no beggars and no priests. The only disturbance in this perfect Sphere is caused by the appearance of a European woman who tries to teach women how to become emancipated. The primary reason underlying Iqbal's desire to limit a woman's freedom appears to be his belief that this would distract her from the proper execution of her most important responsibility, namely that of taking care of the upbringing of the next generation. One of his statements on this subject reads: "Nations which give women more freedom than is necessary regret their mistake at one time or another. Nature has imposed such important responsibilities on a woman that if she

tries to discharge them fully, she cannot find the leisure to do any other work. Taking her away from her real duties and giving her work which can be performed by a man would certainly be wrong. For instance, making a woman into a typist or clerk is not only a violation of the laws of nature but a regrettable attempt to turn human society topsy-turvy.”

Iqbal considered it crucial for the development of a Muslim society that its women expend their energy on being good wives and mothers. To him, as to most Muslims, Fatima, threefold blessed on account of being the Prophet's (pbuh) daughter, Ali's wife and Hussein's mother, is the perfect role model for women. In his tribute to “Lady Fatima, the perfect pattern of Muslim womanhood,” Iqbal points out a number of attributes that he values in her her unlimited love, willingness to render selfless services, self-surrender to her husband's will and pleasure and her kindness, fortitude and patience.

History is witness that woman has always been deprived of their rights and suppressed. Not a single civilization or religion of the world has endowed women their due status except Islam. Nevertheless Islam is getting a hostile treatment from western world especially projected through western media. In the recent years France has implemented the law of non-veiling for women, If any women is found veiling, she will be charged 150 Euros on the spot. It's not the women but the men who are formulating and implementing laws for women. This is again a suppression on the voices unheard and marginal. As proposed by Hart sock based on Marx's claim that “a correct vision of class society is available from only one of the two major class positions in capitalist society”

Iqbal says,

“Johar'e mard ayyan hota ha bey min'nat'e ghair,

Ghair kay haath mein hae johar'e aurat key namood”

It shows that how western society exploits the potential of women. Not only the western woman is facing such condition but also the women of other societies counteract similar conditions. Indian civilization did not recognize woman as an individual rather she was taken as a property or plaything. In Buddhist civilization, seclusion from women was considered the ultimate success of man. In Greece, women were labeled as 'inferior creature' but later on she was called "goddess of sexual appetite". Romans did almost the same towards their women as the Greece did. History is witness that women has been subjected to suppression, subjugated, degraded, and sexually tortured. Since Iqbal perceived gender difference as a biological phenomenon and nature's plan. He did not consider women inferior to men. He takes women as a distinct, different and discrete creature therefore education should not aim to transform them into men. She should take pride in her being woman. She is entitled with the important duty to perform but with her own will. This notion of Iqbal supports Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), who is the founder of modern feminism. She writes in her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), "I do not wish (women) to have power over men, but over themselves." Islam has endowed women political as well as economic rights. Muslim women exercised their right to vote when European women did not even know what it really meant. Even in this modern world, woman can neither vote nor be elected in some parts of Switzerland. Women in the United Kingdom and America were endowed the right to vote after the World War I. It is surprising that how western women can claim that they are enjoying more rights and they are free while Islam bestowed them all the rights fourteen hundred years ago. History has witnessed that when Muslim women got power over themselves, they ascended to the seat of president and prime minister of the country. As compared to America that claims to be the champion of equality and complete freedom, not a single woman has ever assumed these powers. Contrary to this US President Nixon (196974) once said "I'm not for

women in any job. I don't want any of them around. Thank God we don't have any in the cabinet ... I don't think a woman should be in any government job whatever. I mean, I really don't. The reason why I do is mainly because they are erratic and emotional. Men are erratic and emotional too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be.”

Liberal, Social or Radical feminism do not confer upon any grandeur and glory to women status as it is evident from western societies where these movements are at work. The women are still unrest, distressed and perturbed there. The movements have to lessen the misery and despair of women. Iqbal believes that it is in Islam that Women find their right and respectable status. Iqbal maintains that ‘a woman lays foundation stone of a society, and if it is uneven, the wall raised up to skies will be irregular’.

“Khshat-e-an’al choon nehad maimar kaj

Ta surayya me ra’wadd dewar kaj”

SUMMARY

It is evident, that to Iqbal the oppression faced by the women was not tolerable but Iqbal was against that ‘equality’ demanded by European women because the natural responsibilities and the perceived roles of men and women are different, how both can be evaluated by the same scale.

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