
Islamic Jurisprudence on Gender Reassignment: A Critical Review of Classical and Modern Views

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Abstract:

This research critically examines the phenomenon of sex reassignment and transgender identity from an Islamic perspective, highlighting theological, legal, and moral dimensions. In recent years, gender identity debates have taken a central place in global discourse, influencing legislation even in Muslim-majority countries. This paper analyzes these developments through the lens of Islamic teachings, particularly the concept of *fitrah* (natural disposition), which affirms that Allah's creation is perfect and immutable. The Qur'anic injunction "*There is no change in the creation of Allah*" (30:30) serves as a central theological foundation for the Islamic prohibition against altering one's biological sex. Drawing upon primary sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, classical *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and contemporary scholarly opinions, this study differentiates between intersex conditions—where corrective intervention may be permissible—and elective gender reassignment based on psychological or emotional grounds, which is impermissible. The research also addresses common secular arguments supporting gender reassignment—such as identity, freedom, and human rights—through a critical Islamic framework. It critiques modern legislation in countries like Pakistan that allow self-perceived gender identity, arguing that such policies conflict with Islamic law and risk undermining social and moral order. Furthermore, the study explores the spiritual and societal consequences of normalizing gender reassignment, including threats to the family structure, deviation from divine guidance, and the influence of Western ideologies through media. The paper concludes with recommendations emphasizing the role of scholars, religious education, policy reform, and counseling services to address gender confusion within an Islamic ethical framework.

Keywords: Transgender, Islamic law, gender reassignment, *fitrah*, Shari'ah, identity, Pakistan, disfigurement, intersex, moral consequences

Introduction

The phenomenon of gender reassignment has emerged as a significant and controversial issue in the modern world. What was once considered rare is now becoming increasingly normalized through legal reforms, media portrayal, and international advocacy. Even within some Muslim societies, legislative changes have been made to accommodate and recognize transgender individuals, raising serious concerns from a religious and moral standpoint. This growing trend necessitates a deeper exploration from an Islamic perspective, as it directly challenges the divinely ordained concept of human nature and identity. Islam, as a complete code of life, provides clear guidance on the preservation of one's natural creation (*Fitrah*) and the boundaries of lawful medical intervention. Altering one's sex, whether through surgical or hormonal means, raises significant questions regarding the sanctity of the human body, the limits of personal autonomy, and obedience to the Creator's will. Addressing this issue is critical to preserving the Islamic worldview on creation, morality, and gender roles.

This paper aims to critically evaluate the practice of sex reassignment in light of Islamic teachings. The key objectives include clarifying the Islamic stance on *Fitrah*, distinguishing between genuine medical conditions such as intersex cases and psychological claims of gender dysphoria, examining legal developments in Muslim societies, and exploring the wider ethical and social implications. The study does not attempt a medical or psychological diagnosis, but focuses purely on religious evaluation and critical analysis. The methodology is based on a qualitative review of primary Islamic sources including the Qur'an, Hadith, classical jurisprudence, and contemporary scholarly opinions. Select references to medical findings are included for context, but the foundation of the analysis remains rooted in Shari'ah principles.

Concept of Fitrah (Natural Disposition) in Islam

The concept of **Fitrah** in Islam refers to the innate, natural disposition upon which Allah has created all human beings. It encompasses the inborn inclination to recognize the existence of the Creator, to seek moral goodness, and to conform to the divine order of creation. In Islamic theology, Fitrah is regarded as a fundamental aspect of human identity, serving as a spiritual compass that guides individuals toward truth and righteousness unless corrupted by external influences.

The Qur'an clearly emphasizes the importance of preserving this divine nature. Allah says:

"فَظَرَّتْ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ"

“(Adhere to) the natural disposition (Fitrah) of Allah upon which He has created mankind. There is no change in the creation of Allah” (Qur'an, 30:30).

This verse highlights the immutability of divine creation and underscores that any attempt to alter it, especially in the context of one's biological sex, is a deviation from the intended natural order. Classical Islamic scholars, such as Ibn Kathir, interpret this verse as a clear

command to uphold the original nature that Allah has created, warning against innovations or distortions that seek to modify it (Ibn Kathir, 2003).

Furthermore, the concept of Fitrah is foundational in discussions of moral responsibility and legal accountability in Shari'ah. Any practice or ideology that undermines this divine foundation, such as gender reassignment surgeries or self-identification contrary to biological sex, is considered a distortion of the human form (*muthlah*), which is explicitly forbidden in Islamic law (Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

Thus, the principle of Fitrah serves as a critical theological basis in rejecting the permissibility of sex reassignment in Islam. It affirms that the created form of a human being is not to be altered unless in cases of genuine medical necessity—such as intersex conditions—where Shari'ah allows specific, limited exceptions.

Preservation of One's Natural Creation in Islam

The preservation of the natural human form is a core principle in Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Islam views the human body as a trust (*Amanah*) from Allah, to be respected, protected, and maintained in accordance with divine will. Any deliberate alteration without valid Shari'ah justification is considered a violation of this trust. The human form, created in the best shape, is not to be tampered with unless for clear, necessary medical treatment—such as correcting deformities or addressing intersex conditions.

The Qur'an testifies to the perfection of human creation:

"We have certainly created man in the best of stature." (Qur'an, 95:4)

This highlights the honor and dignity bestowed upon the human form by the Creator. Altering it, especially through elective surgeries such as sex reassignment, is not only a physical change but a theological challenge to divine wisdom and order.

The Qur'anic verse:

“لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ”

"There is no change in the creation of Allah" (Qur'an, 30:30)

Serves as a foundational maxim in Islamic ethics. It is understood by classical scholars to prohibit arbitrary or cosmetic alterations to the body that are not medically necessary. Scholars like Al-Nawawi and Al-Ghazali have emphasized that unnecessary body modifications reflect discontent with divine decree, which borders on ingratitude (*kufran al-ni'mah*) and may lead to spiritual consequences (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

Moreover, in a famous Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) cursed those who alter the creation of Allah, such as those who tattoo, file teeth, or change facial features for beautification (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5931). This strongly suggests that altering sexual characteristics purely for identity-based reasons is also impermissible. Thus, the Islamic principle of “no change in the creation of Allah” (*la tabdila li khalqillah*) not only guides believers to preserve their God-given form but also reflects a deeper submission to divine wisdom and purpose.

Understanding Sex Reassignment and Transgender Identity

The phenomenon of sex reassignment and transgender identity has become a focal point of modern gender discourse. While these terms are often used interchangeably in popular contexts, they refer to a range of complex medical, psychological, and sociocultural experiences that deserve a nuanced analysis—particularly when viewed through the lens of religious ethics, including Islam.

Definition and Types of Gender Reassignment

Sex or gender reassignment refers to the medical and psychological process of altering an individual's physical sex characteristics to align with their identified gender. This may include a range of interventions designed to simulate the external characteristics of the opposite sex. There are generally two main types of interventions:

1. **Hormonal Treatment (Hormone Replacement Therapy - HRT):** This involves the use of estrogen or testosterone to develop secondary sex characteristics of the opposite sex. For example, male-to-female (MTF) individuals may take estrogen to develop breast tissue and reduce facial hair, while female-to-male (FTM) individuals may take testosterone to deepen the voice and increase body hair.
2. **Surgical Procedures (Sex Reassignment Surgery - SRS):** These are invasive procedures aimed at reconstructing genitalia to resemble those of the opposite sex. Common surgeries include mastectomy, phalloplasty, vaginoplasty, and facial feminization or masculinization surgeries.

These procedures do not change an individual's chromosomal or genetic sex but only alter external anatomical features. Despite these drastic alterations, medical literature acknowledges that such individuals do not become fully functional members of the opposite biological sex (Mayer & McHugh, 2016).

Modern Medical and Psychological Perspectives

From a medical standpoint, sex reassignment is considered a response to **gender dysphoria**—a psychological condition where an individual experiences significant discomfort with their assigned sex at birth. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), gender dysphoria is diagnosed based on distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning due to incongruence between experienced and assigned gender (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Medical professionals and gender theorists often advocate for gender affirmation treatments to alleviate psychological distress. These include social transitioning (changing name, pronouns, clothing), hormone therapy, and surgical interventions. However, recent studies have questioned the long-term efficacy of these treatments, with growing concern over post-operative regret, ongoing psychological issues, and complications (Dhejne et al., 2011).

Psychologists like Paul McHugh, former psychiatrist-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital, argue that gender dysphoria is a mental health condition that should be treated psychologically rather than surgically. He emphasizes that transitioning does not resolve underlying mental health issues and may even exacerbate them (McHugh, 2015).

Difference Between Gender Dysphoria and Intersex Conditions

A crucial distinction must be made between **gender dysphoria** and **intersex (khuntha)** conditions. While gender dysphoria involves a psychological discomfort with one's biological sex, intersex conditions refer to congenital abnormalities where an individual is born with ambiguous genitalia or chromosomal irregularities.

Islamic jurisprudence recognizes intersex individuals (*khuntha mushkil*) and provides specific legal rulings based on medical assessment to determine their gender for religious obligations such as prayer, inheritance, and marriage. Scholars from all four Sunni schools have addressed intersex rulings, showing that Islam has the flexibility to accommodate genuine biological ambiguity (Al-Qaradawi, 1999).

On the contrary, transgender individuals do not suffer from physical ambiguity but from a psychological or identity-based discomfort. Hence, the Islamic rulings applicable to intersex individuals do not extend to transgender persons seeking elective sex reassignment.

Scientific Findings on Limitations and Irreversibility of Sex Reassignment

Despite significant advances in medical science, the biological limitations of sex reassignment remain clear. A person's **chromosomal structure (XX or XY)** cannot be changed by hormones or surgery. Even after full surgical transition, the internal reproductive organs cannot be replicated or made functional. For instance, a transgender woman (biological male) cannot menstruate, conceive, or give birth. Likewise, a transgender man (biological female) cannot produce sperm or function as a biological father.

Several long-term studies have shown that sex reassignment surgery does not guarantee psychological relief or improved quality of life. A landmark Swedish study by Dhejne et al. (2011) found that transgender individuals who had undergone surgery still faced significantly higher risks of mortality, suicide, and psychiatric hospitalizations compared to the general population. Moreover, **irreversibility** is a major concern, especially for young individuals undergoing transition. Hormone blockers and surgeries can lead to permanent infertility, loss of sexual function, and irreversible physical changes. Detransitioners—people who regret transitioning and return to their birth sex—have increasingly come forward, reporting that they were not properly informed of the consequences, and that their underlying mental health issues were never addressed (Vandenbussche, 2021).

These findings challenge the assumption that medical transition is a safe and effective solution for gender dysphoria. Instead, they call for a more cautious, comprehensive approach that prioritizes mental and emotional well-being, particularly for vulnerable youth.

The process of gender reassignment involves a complex combination of psychological, medical, and social factors. While modern science offers ways to mimic the appearance of the opposite sex, it cannot change the fundamental biological and genetic reality of an individual. From both scientific and Islamic perspectives, this distinction is critical. Islam, while showing compassion to those suffering from mental and emotional distress, upholds the sanctity of the human body and the divine wisdom behind one's creation. The theological principle of *Fitrah* and the Islamic prohibition against altering Allah's creation serve as strong ethical boundaries against elective sex reassignment. Understanding the realities and limitations of sex reassignment is essential for Muslims seeking to align their personal struggles with divine guidance, and for scholars and policymakers addressing these issues within an Islamic framework.

Shari'ah Perspective on Gender Reassignment

Rulings from Qur'an and Hadith

The Islamic legal tradition, or Shari'ah, is derived primarily from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), and it encompasses a complete moral and legal framework for guiding human life. In matters related to personal identity, bodily integrity, and sexuality, Islamic teachings are rooted in the divine understanding of creation and purpose. The issue of gender reassignment, therefore, must be examined within this sacred framework, not in isolation from it.

Divine Creation and the Immutable Nature of Human Design

The Qur'an asserts repeatedly that Allah has created mankind in the best form and that His creation is not to be altered without legitimate reason. This foundation becomes critical in understanding the Islamic stance on sex reassignment. The Qur'an states:

"لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ"

"There is no change in the creation of Allah" (Qur'an, 30:30).

This verse is often cited by Islamic scholars to argue against unnecessary or prohibited alterations to the human body. Changing one's sex without legitimate medical necessity is seen as a form of tampering with the divine creation, an act not only of physical distortion but also of spiritual rebellion.

Another relevant verse is from Surah An-Nisa:

"And I will command them (Satan will say), so they will change the creation of Allah." (Qur'an, 4:119)

According to classical Mufasssirun (exegetes) like Ibn Kathir and Al-Tabari, this verse condemns those who modify Allah's creation without valid justification, identifying such actions as inspired by Shaytan (Satan). This is directly applicable to elective gender reassignment surgeries, as they represent a conscious rejection of one's biological identity created by Allah.

Hadith on Bodily Integrity and Gender Imitation

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also addressed matters of bodily alteration and gender behavior with great seriousness. One of the most widely cited hadiths in this context is:

"Allah has cursed those women who imitate men, and those men who imitate women." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5885)

This hadith is interpreted by scholars to prohibit not only behavioral imitation but also any form of bodily transformation that seeks to align with the opposite sex. Classical jurists like Imam Nawawi and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani have emphasized that such imitation (*tashabbuh*) is

considered a major sin, especially when done publicly or with the intention of permanently altering one's identity.

Another narration from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim states:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) cursed the women who pluck their eyebrows and those who file their teeth for the purpose of beautification and change the creation of Allah.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5931; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2125)

The principle derived from this hadith is that cosmetic alterations of the body for reasons of appearance are impermissible, let alone complete sexual transformation. If even minor aesthetic changes are prohibited, then major alterations such as gender reassignment are far more serious in the eyes of Shari‘ah.

The Principle of *Muthlah* (Disfigurement) in Shari‘ah

Islamic jurisprudence also holds the principle of *hurmat al-jasad* (sanctity of the body), which prohibits mutilation or disfigurement. The process of sex reassignment, especially through surgery, involves the removal or alteration of genital organs—an act that falls under the prohibition of *muthlah*, or disfigurement. Islamic law strictly forbids this, even in the case of deceased individuals:

“Breaking the bones of a dead person is like breaking them while he is alive.” (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 1616)

If disfiguring the body of the deceased is forbidden out of respect for human dignity, then doing so to a living body without necessity is even more severe. Many contemporary scholars, such as Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the Islamic Fiqh Council, maintain that surgical alteration of the body for gender identity reasons is not permissible, as it constitutes *taghyīr khalq Allah* (changing the creation of Allah) and violates the trust of bodily sanctity.

Permissibility in Case of Intersex (Khuntha) Individuals

While elective gender reassignment for transgender individuals is not permitted, Islam does recognize the existence of *khuntha* (intersex) individuals—those born with ambiguous genitalia or unclear biological sex. In such cases, the Shari‘ah allows for medical intervention based on expert diagnosis to determine and assign the most appropriate gender. This distinction is critical, as intersex conditions are biological realities, not identity-based preferences. Classical jurists provided guidelines for assigning gender based on observable physical signs and, in modern times, on medical evidence. If surgical intervention is deemed necessary to resolve ambiguity and establish a clear identity, it is allowed under the principle of *darura* (necessity), which is a recognized exception in Islamic law.

The Shari‘ah perspective on gender reassignment is rooted in the core Islamic belief in the perfection of Allah’s creation and the preservation of human dignity. Through both Qur’anic injunctions and Hadith evidence, Islam prohibits any elective alteration of the body that seeks to change one’s divinely assigned sex. Such acts are viewed not merely as medical or psychological decisions but as moral violations that disrupt the harmony of creation and challenge the sovereignty of the Creator. While Islam accommodates rare cases of intersex individuals through limited, medically-justified interventions, it does not support gender transition based solely on psychological identity or personal preference. Upholding the Shari‘ah rulings on this matter is crucial to preserving both the theological integrity and moral health of the Muslim community.

Classical Jurists’ Views on Altering the Human Body

Islamic jurisprudence is deeply rooted in the preservation of human dignity, bodily integrity, and the divine purpose of creation. Classical scholars across all major schools of thought have maintained that altering the human body without necessity is impermissible. They based their rulings on the Qur’an, Hadith, and principles of Islamic legal maxims (*Qawaid Fiqhiyyah*) that protect life, religion, intellect, progeny, and property—collectively known as the *Maqasid al-Shari‘ah* (objectives of Islamic law). Any bodily alteration that contradicts these objectives is viewed as a violation of the sacred trust placed upon the human body by Allah.

Prohibition of *Muthlah* (Disfigurement) and Its Application

One of the most frequently cited principles in this context is the prohibition of *muthlah*, which refers to the act of disfiguring, mutilating, or altering the human body in a manner that is harmful or unnecessary. This principle originates in both Qur’anic teachings and Hadith. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, mutilation of the enemy’s body in warfare was explicitly forbidden—even after death. This sanctity extends to all human beings, alive or dead.

In a Hadith narrated by Aisha (RA), the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Breaking the bone of a dead person is like breaking it when he is alive.” (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 1616)

This establishes the principle that the human body must be respected and preserved, regardless of its condition. Applying this to sex reassignment surgery, the surgical removal or restructuring of healthy organs—such as genitalia or breasts—would fall under the category of *muthlah*, as it involves disfigurement without a Shari‘ah-based necessity.

Classical jurists from the Hanafi, Shafi’i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools have all supported this principle. According to Al-Kasani, a prominent Hanafi jurist, “any harm to the body without necessity is *haram* (forbidden), as it constitutes unjustified assault on the trust of Allah” (Al-Kasani, *Bada’i al-Sana’i*, Vol. 7). Similarly, Imam Nawawi of the Shafi’i school stressed that cosmetic alterations motivated by imitation or beauty, rather than medical need, are impermissible and are considered changing the creation of Allah (*taghyir khalq Allah*).

Permissible vs Impermissible Medical Interventions

Islamic law, while firm on the prohibition of unnecessary bodily alteration, does recognize exceptions based on *darura* (necessity) and *hajah* (need). These are applied in cases where a medical condition necessitates intervention for preserving health, correcting a deformity, or restoring normal function.

Permissible medical interventions include:

- **Corrective surgeries** for congenital deformities or post-trauma reconstruction.
- **Treatments for diseases or conditions** that significantly impair function or quality of life.
- **Surgical decisions for intersex individuals**, where medical and religious criteria support the assignment of gender.

Impermissible interventions include:

- **Cosmetic surgeries for beautification**, not related to medical need.
- **Sex reassignment surgeries for psychological reasons**, where the goal is to change one's biological sex to match gender identity.
- **Permanent body modifications for self-expression**, such as tattoos or implants, without Shari'ah justification.

Therefore, while Islam is not against medicine or surgical intervention, it strongly differentiates between genuine medical need and alterations that stem from dissatisfaction with Allah's creation. Elective gender reassignment surgery, which alters one's sexual identity without addressing a physical anomaly, is generally categorized as *haram* by the majority of classical and contemporary scholars (Al-Qaradawi, 1999; Bin Bayyah, 2018).

Distinction Between Intersex (*Khuntha Mushkil*) and Transgender Issues

A key distinction in Islamic law lies between **intersex individuals** and **transgender persons**. Intersex individuals (*khuntha* or *khuntha mushkil*) are those born with ambiguous or mixed sexual anatomy, making it difficult to classify them as clearly male or female. This condition has been recognized by Islamic scholars for centuries and has specific jurisprudential guidelines. The classical jurists developed detailed rules for determining the gender of an intersex person based on observable signs—such as the organ from which urine is passed, the development of secondary sexual characteristics, and expert medical opinion. In cases where gender can be determined, it is permissible—sometimes even obligatory—to assign the individual a specific gender and, if necessary, perform surgery to bring clarity. This is seen not as changing the creation of Allah, but as **affirming** it in cases where it is unclear.

In contrast, **transgender individuals** are biologically male or female but experience **gender dysphoria**, a psychological condition wherein one feels emotionally and mentally aligned with the opposite gender. Islam treats this as a psychological issue requiring therapy and spiritual support—not surgical transformation. Since the external and internal sexual characteristics are typically normal in transgender individuals, the rationale for surgical intervention does not meet the threshold of *darura* or *hajah*.

Modern fatwas from institutions such as Al-Azhar and Dar al-Ifta' of Egypt confirm that while medical treatment for intersex individuals is permissible, surgical or hormonal alteration for gender identity reasons is not allowed. These rulings reaffirm the Islamic stance that identity is tied to biological sex, not subjective feeling (Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, 2016).

In summary Classical Islamic jurisprudence offers a well-defined framework for distinguishing between permissible and impermissible bodily interventions. Grounded in the principles of preserving creation, preventing harm, and upholding dignity, Islamic law strictly forbids unnecessary bodily alterations, including sex reassignment surgeries for transgender

individuals. However, it makes reasonable and compassionate allowances for intersex individuals based on medical assessment and juristic reasoning. Upholding this distinction is essential in navigating the moral and legal challenges posed by modern gender ideologies while remaining faithful to the teachings of Islam.

Legal and Social Developments in the Muslim World

In recent decades, legal and social perspectives on gender identity have undergone significant transformations across the Muslim world. Some Muslim-majority countries have introduced legislation that recognizes gender identity beyond biological sex, sparking both national and international debates regarding the compatibility of such laws with Islamic teachings. One of the most prominent examples is Pakistan's **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018**, which grants transgender individuals the right to self-identify as male, female, or a combination thereof, and allows them to change their gender identity on national identification documents without the need for medical or judicial approval (Government of Pakistan, 2018). While the intent behind the law is to protect individuals from discrimination, it has drawn strong criticism from Islamic scholars and jurists, who argue that self-identification without biological or medical basis contravenes clear Islamic principles on gender roles, identity, and legal status.

Other Muslim-majority countries have taken varying approaches. In countries like **Iran**, gender reassignment surgeries are legally permitted following religious approval, stemming from a controversial fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini. In contrast, conservative nations such as **Saudi Arabia** and **Malaysia** maintain stricter interpretations of Islamic law, prohibiting elective sex reassignment and public expressions of non-conforming gender identity. These differences reflect the complex intersection of traditional Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), state governance, and modern human rights discourses.

The role of contemporary Islamic scholars has been central in navigating this terrain. Prominent jurists such as **Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi**, **Sheikh Ibn Baz**, and **Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah** have issued statements clarifying the Islamic view on transgender issues. While expressing compassion for those suffering from psychological gender distress, they emphasize that gender identity in Islam is fundamentally tied to biological sex, as determined by observable signs or chromosomal evidence. These scholars have consistently opposed laws that permit self-identification or gender reassignment on psychological grounds, stating that such policies represent a deviation from the divine framework outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Critiques of transgender legislation in the Muslim world focus on their departure from **Islamic jurisprudence**, which categorically distinguishes between intersex individuals—whose cases require compassionate, evidence-based legal accommodation—and those seeking sex reassignment for identity or emotional reasons. Legal recognition of transgender identity, based solely on self-perception, is seen by many scholars as **legitimizing an act of disobedience** to Allah's design. This is considered a form of **taghyīr khalq Allah** (changing the creation of Allah), explicitly condemned in the Qur'an (Surah An-Nisa, 4:119). In essence, many of these laws are viewed as importing Western secular ideologies into Islamic legal systems without proper theological grounding.

Beyond legal concerns, the **social, moral, and spiritual consequences** of such policies are deeply troubling to traditional scholars and religious communities. The normalization of gender fluidity challenges deeply rooted Islamic values regarding family structure, modesty, and societal roles. It creates confusion among youth, undermines the sacred concept of Fitrah (natural disposition), and opens the door to broader moral relativism. From a spiritual perspective, it may lead individuals away from contentment with Allah's decree (*rida bi al-qadr*) and toward dissatisfaction with divine wisdom. Islamic scholars warn that institutionalizing gender reassignment as a right could lead to a **cultural and ethical rupture** in Muslim societies, weakening their resistance to Western liberal norms that contradict Islamic teachings.

In summary, while the protection of human dignity and prevention of harm are integral to Islamic law, the legalization of gender reassignment and recognition of non-biological gender identities are largely incompatible with the foundational principles of Shari'ah. The modern legislative efforts in some Muslim-majority countries, though perhaps well-intentioned, require careful re-evaluation in the light of Qur'anic injunctions, Prophetic teachings, and classical jurisprudence.

Moral and Spiritual Consequences

The legalization and normalization of gender reassignment in some Muslim-majority countries carry profound moral and spiritual consequences for both the family system and the broader Muslim society. Islam places great emphasis on the family as the foundational unit of society, and its integrity is considered essential for the moral and spiritual health of the community. The family structure, as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah, is built upon distinct roles based on gender, with specific responsibilities and rights for men and women. When this natural distinction is blurred through legislation allowing gender reassignment, it can destabilize the foundational principles of the family. The Qur'an outlines the roles and responsibilities of men and women within marriage and the family, stressing the complementarity between the two sexes. For instance, Surah Ar-Rum (30:21) highlights the relationship between husband and wife as a source of tranquility and affection, underpinned by natural differences. When gender distinctions are erased, as is the case in some interpretations of transgender rights, the very foundation of this structure begins to erode, leading to confusion and instability within family dynamics. The normalization of gender fluidity may lead to challenges in child-rearing, as children may be exposed to conflicting ideas about gender and roles, creating confusion in their understanding of biological identity and societal expectations.

Furthermore, the impact on **societal cohesion** is significant. Islamic society is guided by the moral values and divine laws set forth in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and these laws serve as the framework for maintaining social order. The redefinition of gender identity undermines the clear distinctions set by Allah in His creation and the divine order of society. From an Islamic perspective, such actions are seen as disobedient to Allah's natural design, which is a central tenet in the faith. The alteration of the human body, particularly when it is elective and not medically necessary, can be viewed as an act of rebellion against Allah's will, leading to

social instability and moral decay. Islamic teachings consistently stress the importance of contentment with Allah's divine decree, as articulated in the concept of *rida bi al-qadr* (acceptance of divine will). To reject or alter what Allah has created, including one's gender, can be seen as challenging divine authority. This disobedience to the natural laws laid down by Allah is believed to have serious moral and spiritual repercussions for individuals and society at large.

Historical examples from Islamic history and scriptural narratives illustrate the consequences of rebellion against nature and divine law. In the Qur'an, the **story of the people of Lut (Lot)** is a clear example of divine punishment for violating the natural order of creation, particularly in the case of sexual deviance. The people of Lut were destroyed for engaging in behaviors that contradicted the divinely ordained laws of marriage and sexuality. Allah's punishment was swift and devastating, serving as a stark reminder of the consequences of rejecting natural laws:

"Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lut. We saved them before dawn as a favor from Us. Thus do We reward the one who is grateful." (Qur'an, 54:34-35)

This historical example serves as a warning against deviating from Allah's intended design for human sexuality. The people of Lut's transgressions—rejecting divine guidance on gender and sexual relations—were met with catastrophic consequences, which Islamic scholars view as a direct result of their rebellion against the natural order. In a similar vein, the moral decline seen in societies that legalize or promote gender reassignment and other non-traditional gender identities is viewed as a path toward social and spiritual decline.

The **role of external ideologies** in shaping public opinion also cannot be understated. With globalization and the influence of Western liberal ideologies, particularly in the fields of gender and sexuality, many Muslim societies have seen a shift in cultural values. The media plays a critical role in this process, often framing issues of gender fluidity and transgender rights as a matter of personal freedom and human rights. In many cases, the media portrays such issues in a manner that normalizes them, presenting them as progressive steps towards equality and human dignity. This has led to a growing acceptance of non-binary gender identities among certain segments of the population, particularly in younger generations.

However, the promotion of these ideologies through media and political lobbying can conflict with the traditional Islamic view on gender, which is rooted in the biological and natural distinctions between male and female. The widespread influence of secular ideologies via media platforms is often seen as a direct challenge to the moral teachings of Islam, as it pressures Muslims to reconcile their faith with views that contradict divine law. The increasing acceptance of transgender rights in Muslim-majority countries, particularly through legal reforms, reflects this external ideological pressure, raising concerns about the erosion of Islamic values and the stability of Muslim societies.

In conclusion, while the protection of human dignity and the rights of individuals is a fundamental concern in Islam, the societal and spiritual consequences of legalizing gender

reassignment must be carefully considered. From the perspective of Islamic law, altering one's gender based on personal identity is seen as a rejection of the divine order, leading to both individual and societal moral decline. The family system, which is central to Islamic society, is particularly vulnerable to disruption as traditional roles and distinctions between men and women are challenged. The influence of media and Western ideologies further complicates this issue, as it reshapes public opinion and encourages acceptance of practices that are not in line with Islamic teachings. These developments require serious reflection within the Muslim community to ensure that societal changes align with the moral, spiritual, and legal principles of Islam.

Refutation of Common Arguments Supporting Gender Reassignment

In contemporary discourse, gender reassignment is often justified on the grounds of personal freedom, identity, and human rights. Advocates argue that individuals should have the right to define their own gender identity, even if it contradicts their biological sex, and that society should affirm and protect these self-definitions. Emotional and psychological arguments are also frequently employed, with proponents highlighting the distress experienced by individuals with gender dysphoria. However, from an Islamic perspective, these arguments are deeply problematic when measured against divine law, natural disposition (*fitrah*), and the objectives of Shari'ah.

The argument of “**freedom**” is commonly invoked to defend gender reassignment, claiming that individuals should be free to live according to their chosen identity. However, in Islam, freedom is not absolute; it is bounded by the divine will and moral responsibility. Human beings are not autonomous creators of their moral codes but are instead servants (*'ibad*) of Allah, obligated to live within the boundaries He has set. The Qur'an reminds believers:

“And it is not fitting for a believing man or believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice about their affair.” (Qur'an, 33:36)

Thus, the Islamic concept of freedom is not synonymous with individualism or self-determination in the Western liberal sense. Rather, it is a disciplined submission to the commands of Allah, even when they conflict with personal desires or societal trends. The right to alter one's sex cannot be considered a legitimate freedom in Islam because it contradicts divine creation and promotes self-determination over divine authority.

Similarly, the appeal to “**identity**” is insufficient from a Shari'ah perspective. In Islamic theology, identity is not solely a subjective feeling; it is rooted in one's *fitrah*—the natural disposition with which Allah has created every human being. The Qur'an explicitly states:

“(It is) the natural way of Allah on which He created mankind. There is no changing the creation of Allah.” (Qur'an, 30:30)

Islam does not recognize self-perceived gender identity as a valid reason to reject one's biological sex. Feelings of being "trapped in the wrong body" are considered psychological or

spiritual challenges to be addressed through counseling, spiritual purification, and submission to divine will—not through physical alteration. Redefining one's identity on the basis of internal perception is seen as promoting illusion over truth and undermining the objective reality upon which Islamic rulings are based. The argument of “**rights**” is also frequently raised in defense of gender reassignment. Advocates claim that denying someone the ability to transition violates their human rights and dignity. While Islam values human dignity (*karamah*), it differentiates between legitimate rights and actions that lead to moral corruption. The notion of rights in Islam is not determined solely by human desire or social consensus but is derived from divine revelation. An action that contradicts the Qur'an and Sunnah cannot be considered a legitimate right, even if it is popularized by global institutions or legal systems.

Another common justification is the **emotional and psychological distress** experienced by individuals suffering from gender dysphoria. It is argued that allowing gender transition is a compassionate response that alleviates mental suffering. While Islam emphasizes compassion, it does not support solutions that violate divine law. The treatment for psychological suffering must also align with the teachings of Islam. Just as Islam would not permit suicide as a response to depression, it does not permit mutilating the body as a response to gender dysphoria. Scholars like Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen and Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi have emphasized that psychological disorders require therapy and spiritual healing, not physical changes that contravene the natural order.

The concept of “**being born in the wrong body**” is particularly troubling from an Islamic standpoint. It suggests a flaw in Allah's creation—something fundamentally rejected by the Qur'an. Allah says:

“He is the One who forms you in the wombs however He wills. There is no god but Him—the Almighty, All-Wise.” (Qur'an, 3:6)

To claim that one is born in the wrong body implies that Allah has made a mistake, which is blasphemous from the Islamic theological perspective. The belief that Allah has created someone with a mismatch between body and soul is a direct challenge to His wisdom and perfection. Instead, any psychological distress should be seen as a test (*ibtila'*) and an opportunity for spiritual growth, not a justification for altering one's creation.

In conclusion, the commonly cited arguments in support of gender reassignment—freedom, identity, rights, and psychological distress—are not valid from the perspective of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Islam does not deny that individuals may experience real emotional suffering related to gender identity, but it insists that the response must align with divine guidance. The preservation of the natural human form, submission to Allah's will, and spiritual contentment with one's divinely assigned identity are key principles that govern this issue. Modern arguments for gender transition fail to meet these standards and must therefore be respectfully, yet firmly, refuted within an Islamic framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the phenomenon of gender reassignment and the broader discourse surrounding transgender identity present complex challenges to contemporary Muslim societies. Through a careful analysis of Islamic teachings, scholarly perspectives, and medical realities, it becomes evident that Islam provides a clear framework rooted in the preservation of the human being's *fitrah*—the natural disposition created by Allah. The Qur'anic injunction, "*There is no change in the creation of Allah*" (Qur'an, 30:30), affirms that altering one's biological sex is not only a physical disfigurement but also a spiritual deviation from divine will. While compassion and understanding are integral to Islamic ethics, they must not be confused with permissibility in matters that contradict core principles of Shari'ah. The differentiation between intersex conditions, which are legitimate medical cases with specific juristic rulings, and psychological gender dysphoria must be maintained, as the former may warrant medical intervention, while the latter requires psychological and spiritual support within Islamic boundaries.

The findings of this research demonstrate that modern laws in some Muslim-majority countries that allow gender self-identification and surgical reassignment often conflict with traditional Islamic jurisprudence. These laws, influenced by secular ideologies and global media narratives, risk undermining the moral structure of Muslim societies, particularly the family unit. Furthermore, emotional and psychological justifications for gender reassignment, while genuine in suffering, do not align with Islamic solutions that prioritize spiritual healing, patience, and submission to divine decree.

Therefore, it is essential for religious scholars, policymakers, and educators to reaffirm Islam's stance on maintaining the integrity of one's natural creation. This includes raising societal awareness about the moral and spiritual consequences of gender ideology and offering faith-based counseling and support for individuals struggling with gender identity issues. Only through sincere adherence to divine guidance and a renewed emphasis on Islamic moral values can Muslim communities navigate these challenges while preserving the sanctity of life, identity, and the divine order established by Allah.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, several key recommendations can be proposed to help Islamic societies address the challenges posed by gender reassignment ideologies while remaining firmly rooted in the teachings of Islam. First and foremost, scholars (*'ulama*) and educators hold a pivotal role in guiding Muslim youth, who are often the most susceptible to external ideological influences. They must actively engage in delivering clear, compassionate, and well-reasoned Islamic perspectives on gender identity, the value of *fitrah*, and the importance of submitting to the divine will. Through sermons, academic writings, and youth programs, religious leaders must address the confusion caused by modern gender narratives and help restore confidence in Islamic teachings on identity and purpose.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for **policy reforms** in Muslim-majority countries to align national legislation with Islamic values. Laws that permit gender self-identification without medical or religious oversight should be reconsidered or repealed in favor of frameworks that reflect the Qur'anic and prophetic guidance. National policy should differentiate between intersex cases, which require compassionate and specialized rulings, and cases of gender dysphoria, which require moral and psychological support rather than surgical or legal affirmation of a new identity. Governments should collaborate with Islamic scholars to ensure that policies on gender and personal status are deeply rooted in Islamic jurisprudence.

Furthermore, **strengthening religious education** across all levels of schooling is essential. Curricula must include contemporary ethical issues within an Islamic framework, providing young Muslims with the tools to critically assess modern ideologies through the lens of their faith. Mass awareness campaigns, utilizing modern media platforms, can also play a critical role in educating the public on the Islamic stance regarding gender, while promoting positive values such as contentment (*rida*), self-respect, and divine purpose.

Finally, it is imperative to establish **Islamically-guided counseling centers** to provide professional and spiritual support for individuals experiencing gender confusion or identity distress. Rather than condemning such individuals, these centers should operate with compassion and wisdom, offering psychological assistance, Islamic counseling, and community support. Addressing such issues within an ethical and religiously consistent framework will help preserve the integrity of Islamic teachings while ensuring that those in need receive appropriate care.

Together, these recommendations serve as a roadmap for preserving the moral, legal, and spiritual foundations of Muslim societies in the face of contemporary challenges. By combining firm adherence to Islamic teachings with compassionate outreach and education, the Ummah can resist harmful ideologies while fulfilling its duty to uphold truth and justice.

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