
Woman Empowerment in Islam and Contemporary Challenges

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Abstract

The problem of women empowerment has become the centre of discussion between the secularism and Islam on the role and position of women in their respective societies. Liberal Islamists not only accept the empowerment of women but they promote it too with the use of the Muslim societies without critically examining the issue within the Islamic perspective. The empowerment of women has not been receptive to the Islamic scholarship. This work attempts to lay the groundwork on which the gap in the response in question may be bridged. In that respect, the provided work is based on a qualitative approach. It also resorts to second hand sources of information in analyzing the issue of women empowerment and criticize the important strategies that are employed to promote the same in a Muslim society. The paper then provides an Islamic analysis of women empowerment, and provides a conclusion on the additional action that should be taken.

Key words: Islam, Women, Empowerment, Feminism, Gender

1. INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment purports to generate the authority of ladies to make choices and acquiring access to opportunities and resources (Batliwala, 2014). Women empowerment means a balance of power between both sexes in the society where women are more empowered in the social, economic, political, legal as well as religious sectors (Rahman, 2013). One of the conventions of the United Nations (UN) that encouraged the concept of women empowerment was the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. In the UN 1995 document of Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the empowerment of women was once more strengthened and social, economic, and political dimension was given to it (UN Women, 1995).

Some Muslims support and facilitate the concept of empowering women since they believe it is an effort to eradicate forces that deprive women chances to gain and

experience their rights. Other Muslims possess the traits of suspicion of women empowerment and are against it due to their western backgrounds. Women empowerment is a relatively recent idea, which has not gained the necessary response in the Islamic scholarship. It is a good Islamic literature on various topics regarding women.

This literary work attempts to give some description of the demand to empower women, condemn the methods applied to proliferate the same in Muslim communities and analyze it in the frame of Islam. The study has two significant contributions. First of all, prepare the background of an Islamic analysis of the call. Second, indicate the existing Islamic discussions, which indirectly address the aspects of the call.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In respect to the issues of women, literature indicates that there are three main discourses concerning the contemporary Muslim scholars and researchers. The latter is the conservatives. The second are liberal Islamists. The third ones are the ones which strike a reasonable balance between the two former and which are herein denoted as the middle Islamist discourse.

Their place in the society is normally limited to their homes as daughters to become wives and mothers e.g. (al-'Abd al-Karim, 2009). The need of women empowerment is not acknowledged by such a discourse and the rest of this article fails to pursue it. This section does not focus on providing a profound analysis of the problem of women. Instead, it focuses on the most crucial aspects of women empowerment among liberal Islamists and middle Islamist discourses.

2.1. The Liberal Islamist Discourse

This discussion involves the members of the intellectual Muslim cadres that are heavy consumers of the western culture and are mostly uneducated and untrained in the Islamic sciences (al-Shafie, 2004). They embrace the Western concept of women empowerment after rebranding it in a self-posed Muslim oriented vision (Pruzan-Jorgensen, 2012).

The primary argument that should be discussed in this debate is that the Islamic texts believe in the equality of men and women. The liberal Islamists testify to the fact that it is the Muslim scholars who, reluctantly, projected inequality and patriarchy into the text in order to legitimize the political and social structures serving the interests of the ruling male elites and gratifying male chauvinism (Hidayatullah, 2014). They further maintain that scientific tradition of Islam represents the norms of men in the society and is a form of hegemony, which suppresses women (Barlas, 2006). They conclude that women and feminists, as a whole, need to rely on their experience and learning to develop a new jurisprudential struggle (ijtihad) to be economically and socially independent (Wadud, 2006).

The idea of patriarchy in the Islam religion has been ruthlessly pushed by the liberal Islamists but lacked any material or historical foundation to accord it any level of credibility (al-Masir, 1999). The patriarchy concept, however, is still prevailing in the thinking of the liberal Islamists in their arguments especially in their exposition of the

concept of guardianship and responsibility of men over women (qiwmah) in the Quran verse 4:34 (Sharah, 1993). An international movement named Musawah emerged and defended the denunciation of qiwmah and saw it as the model of oppressive patriarchy that needed to be changed (Brueske, 2018).

2.2. The Middle Islamist Discourse

The empowerment of women in this discussion is viewed as empowering the Muslim women to realize their potential and impact in the society without contravening the ideals and values of Islam in the Quran and the Sunnah (Farooqi, 20016). In this discussion, the liberal Islamists standards of female success based on monetary and social autonomy are criticized, the notion that the success of women and identifying women with the similarities to men is incorrect, and that success is not tied to this life but the hereafter (Maryam, 2020).

It is restated in the discussion that women have three roles in life that are: a human being, a female and a member of the society (al-Qaradāwī, 1977). In order to attain humanity on behalf of woman, Islam informs that, there is equality between woman and men in the realms of creation. On the other hand, Islam has divided women and men on certain issues e.g. financial support of the family. The mashruqat and mazluqat are intended to bring the two genders together and ensure that interactions between males and females are complementary in such a way that the males and females are able to play a constructive role in the society and emerge successful (al-Dosarian, 1432 AH). The place of Muslim women in the society may need re-evaluation since ijthad based on custom (urf) and common good (maslaha) may be different depending on the change of time and place (al-Qaradawwii, 2001).

The objectives of the Islamic Sharariah (maqasid al-Sharariah) make it possible to develop the arguments and solutions to the role of women in the society in accordance with the spirit and the word of Islam. (al-Ghazālī, 2005). Despite the primary role of women at home, there has to be a balance between women roles to the family and society (Imārah, 2009). It is this model of the female companions that brings the realization of such a balance. Women in the mainstream of Muslim world are needed, which would facilitate the struggle against the Western invasion in the cultural and education industries. The problem is not to highlight the limitations of women role within the society, but to pursue the opportunity that is not against the regulations and manners of Islam (al-Ghazali, 2008).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the qualitative approach and the use of the secondary information materials. The three discourses to be discussed below emphasize the research method:

1. Examine Islamic view of women empowerment.
2. Assess the key strategies used to empower women in the Muslim societies.
3. Both discourses above can be used to infer the Islamic evaluation of the call to empower women.

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

1.1. Claimed Objectives

1.1.1. Economic Objectives

The UN has incorporated female empowerment in human development and actualization of the sustained development (UNIDO, 2019). According to the UN, women have been found to be majority of the poor in the world and their unpaid labor in their homesteads has been the major reason of the same. The solution to poverty eradication in the world that is championed by proponents of women empowerment makes use of women employment (Duflo, 2012). Another economic profit theme is also to empower women as the World Bank clarifies that the companies who want to boost their profitability should employ more and empower their women (World Bank, 2014). Moreover, the availability of women to financing is being encouraged, which is among the empowerment of women, by the International Monetary fund (IMF). Since women constitute half the society, IMF presupposes that with the increase in the number of loans given to women with interests, the proportion of economic activity will increase, and economic growth will be achieved (IMF, 2018).

The UN report on long run development and profitability is not concerned with the local and international conditions which translate to poverty. These situations include corruption, a lack of compliance with the human rights, the rise of military expenditure in support of the global defense corporations and the global economic system in the advantage of the rich countries at the expense of the developing nations (Abu-Lughod, 2015).

The Islamic perspective rejects the feminization of poverty which forms the basis of socio-economic developments of women in the domain outside the household (al-Qatirjī, 2006). Particularly, the meaning of qiwamah in Islam the financial burden of a family is the privilege of men, hence indicating the explicit emphasis on the socio-economic role of the work of women in a home (Islahi, 2020). Besides, Islam has characterized conspicuously and guaranteed women their financial and economic rights (Salama, 2021). Consequently, feminization of poverty is unfounded as secular as well as Islamic theories view it.

1.1.2. Political Objectives

The obvious political objective of the call to empower women addresses the world peace. This relies on the two hypotheses. Firstly, the female gender will not be keen on attending war as compared to the male gender and, thus, forcing females into political decision making will ease world peace. Second, armed conflicts and unfavorable post-conflict situations mostly affect women. Such situations need to be overcome by providing women with the authority to have an influence in preventing conflicts, dealing with conflicts, and establishing peace (Webster, Chen, and Beardsley, 2019).

Even though empowerment of women may help in prevention and solution of armed conflicts, the injustice has always been the central concern of any conflict in the world. Therefore, in order to achieve a sustainable peace, the law must take precedence, which cannot take place when the world powers want the international governing laws to be used

to their advantage disregarding the other half of humanity (Ibn Khaldūn, 2015). In addition, the argument that states that the primary victims of wars are women is incorrect as the entire society becomes victims of war (al-Qaṭirjī, 2006). Interestingly, the Muslim feminists assume that women were not less bloody and violent when given opportunity to head countries (Mernissi, 1997).

The other political agenda of women empowerment that is not evident is the West pursuit of interest in the Muslim world. Allowing women to reach this objective helps recruit and enlist women and feminists to the ideological war with the Islamist movements that aim to restore the Islamic civilization in the West (Rabasa, Benard, Schwartz, and Sickle, 2007).

The Liberal Islamists' Key Assumption

The liberal Islamic scholars claim that male scholars who lived during the Abbaside era did not include female scholars, secluded the interpretation of the Qur'an and the ḥadith, and established a tradition of literature of patriarchal literature that did not give women the justice they deserve compared to men (Hidayatullah, 2014). The liberal Islamists argued that by marginalizing the women scholars, the wrongful patriarchal viewpoints became the norm throughout the centuries (Barlas, 2002). The same statement made by the liberal Islamists persists in their writings that had come to passum in the discussion of the liberal Islamists.

The foregoing argument is defeated by three major arguments:

1. The authentic ḥadith is used to make one of the most known rules of fiqh i.e. the burden of proof is on the claimant (al-Burnū, 1997). The world legal systems are also based on such a rule to a large degree. The liberal Islamists find it illogical to prove their case and in most incidences, they rely on the unjust experiences of women in some Muslim societies to support their case (Abu 1997). It should be noted that the gap between what is taught by Islam and what Muslims do in the society is quite broad since this may not necessarily correspond with what the former is.
2. The multitude of pious and righteous male and female scholars of all times had no practical impossibility to keep silence in view of injustice imposed to women and against so called false interpretations of the Qur'an and ḥadith (al-'Abd al-Karim, 2009). Islamic history, especially in the Abbaside era is replete with stories of scholars who were standing their ground against evil and wrong as much as some of them died in consequence (al-Tamīmī, 2006).
3. There has never been a time when the number of women scholars was higher than that of men even in the earlier generations of Muslims preceding the Abbaside period (Abu ḥujayr, 1997).

1.2. Women's Empowerment and Feminism

The actual hypothesis of feminism is that women are oppressed or they are a disadvantageous group compared to men and that the oppression or disadvantage is not right or justified (James, 1998). Feminism aims at correcting the perceived injustice to

women and the concept of power is the solution to the transformation. Feminism is very limited in understanding what is wrong to women. There is no consensus among feminists concerning the kinds of subjugation on women that are experienced, and the antecedents that contribute to the subjugation bestowed on the women and the cessation of bringing justice to women (Tauna & Tong, 1994). Since the 1990s, the movement of feminism became an activist that required male-female confrontation, rivalry, power struggle, and complete equality between men and women (Caputi, 2013). The liberal Islamists use this type of feminism to empower women within the Muslim societies. They use so-called feminist interpretation of the Quran to point out that the Qurana recognizes the complete equality that exists between men and women in all the areas of life (Arnez, 2009).

Justice to Islam is the achievement of the rights on individual and communal levels (al-Sib2ai, 1999). To illustrate, the Islam law on bequeathing women is not solely based on the individualistic feminist perspective since in some cases, it gives the male the dual share of the inheritance than the female. However, in the communal perspective, where the financial load is placed on Men in Islam, the law places an equal share between the men and women shares of the inheritance. their duties (al-Nabarawi, 2004). The communalism of the justice is quite fixed and confirmed within the secular West as justice is all about doing the right thing (Sandel, 2009).

The Islam has proposed that the relations between men and women in the society is a partnership based on differentiation and integration of roles and responsibilities and not competition and rivalry (al- Kurdistānī, 1994). The Quran states that do not be envious of that which Allah has given one over another. Rewards will be divided as men get portion basing on their deeds and women will get portion basing on their deeds (Qur'ān 4:32). Nonetheless, this verse assures that the interactions between men and women are not rivalry because the reward of one is in proportion to his/her roles and responsibilities in life (al-Qaraḍawīw, 2001). Also, the verse indicates that, there exist differences in the reflected roles and roles of men and women. Otherwise, there was no necessity to refer to men and women separately and the text of the verse would have sounded as follows: each human being inherits his/her share of the reward according to his/her deeds (al-Nabarawī, 2004).

1.3. Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

The necessity of complete equality between the two sexes men and women is not a recent one and the wave of this issue had gathered impetus in the nineteenth century and there are many answers to the same issue which are founded upon the Islamic teachings e.g (al-Kurdistani, 1994),(al-Dosarir, 1432 AH), (al-Nabarawi, 2004) and others. The sub section concerns the relationship between women empowerment and the acquired latter concept of gender equality that developed in the 70s.

Social sciences gender is a social construct that makes out of social roles biological roles. Gender is not a dichotomous variable that distinguishes between males and females and is a continuum of social creatures in which males and females belong (Yenor, 2017). Gender

equality theoretically means that women should be granted equal power and rights and resources as men. In practice, gender equality is aimed at eliminating the difference between social roles between men and women, and accordingly, to change the association between men and women, especially in terms of power (Rahman, 2013). Gender equality is a human right, according to the UN literature, which is significant in securing peace and sustainable development (UNIDO, 2019). Gender equality facilitates women empowerment and women empowerment is another effect of and a means of gender equality (Gurkan & Barut, 2019).

The concept of gender is directly conflicting with the Quran verse 51:49 which discusses the creation of everything in pairs, and so is the humankind (Muslim et al., 2010). Men and women might be equal in most aspects, but they are rather different in physiological and psychological aspects. It is stated in the Quran chapter 3: 36 that the male does not equal the female (Ibn Hismadidi and Shams al-Din, 2018). Among the renowned fiqh rules is the fact that the Sharī'ah does not distinguish similar things, but it

does distinguish between the entities of the different entities (al-Burnū, 1997). On the part of roles and responsibilities where the semblance of the quality, abilities, or need is the scenario, the Sharī'ah does not draw the line between the man and the woman and vice versa (al-Ghazali, 2008). The ontological value (i.e. humanity), dignity and honor, right to protection, property ownership and ability (ahlllyah) to make financial transactions, right to know, qualification to ijihad and consent to marry are some of the areas in which Islam asserts equality between men and women (al-Dosarir, 1432 AH). These areas that Islam distinguishes as related to each gender comprise body parts that must be covered (awrah), clothing, exemption of women by certain religious obligations (ex: Friday congregational prayer or Jumu'ah), the portion of an inheritance, testifying in financial transactions (qīshās) and harmful penalties (hudud), the collective obligation of battle (jihād), the permission of a male custodian (walii) in marriage contracts, and the custody of children (al-Dosarir, 1432 AH). The Prophet said that Allah cursed those who desired to have some appearance with women and those who desired to have some appearance with men (al-Bukhari ḥadith no. 5885). The text of the ḥadith is generic and thus implies that the forbidden acts are generalized to all the acts that promote such form of pretence between two sexes (al-Kurdistānī, 1994).

The Islam equity is a consideration of the disparities in line with the objectives of the Sharī'ah to establish justice and well-being to the whole society (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996). Men and women are similarly endowed and they need life, protection, dignity, honor, prayer, zakat, fasting, Hajj, power to make legal decisions, right to property, transact financial business and knowledge. Thus, Sharaiḥ does not draw a line between them in these aspects. The Sharriah, however, acknowledges the ability, nature or necessity variation, which exists between them which they observe in the Jumu'ah and Jihād obligation, witnessing, inheritance and dressing. This concept of absolute equality between the male and the female sex contradicts the verse Allah has not burdened a soul exceeding

[within] its capacity (Qur'an 2:286) (Ibn Kathir, 2007). The inequalities in features and talent should not be disregarded only to serve exactly the same roles and responsibilities to men and women (al-Kurdistānī, 1994). This post injustice would affect women and the society negatively. Therefore, the Islamic religion requires a fair and gender equality or gender equity in that it recognizes the difference as well as the similarities between men and women (Badawi, 2016).

The concept of gender promotes homosexuality and transsexualism as a social standard (Yenor, 2017), which is in direct opposition to the text of the Islamic (al- 0 Zachabib, 2002) and (Ibn Hism ad al-Dini, Shams al-Dini, 2018). Also, one has to insert the fact that the concept of the equality between the genders is attacked by the latest scientific efforts of the West. These articles suggest a wide range of issues associated with gender equality, including gender dysphoria in children and a harmful impact of gender-neutral parenting on society among other social problems (Soh, 2020).

2. LIBERAL ISLAMISTS' METHODOLOGIES FOR PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The liberal Islamists embarked on an intellectual decoupling of the Islamic scientific tradition and heritage that they consider chauvinistic to the woman. They embarked on creating work that is empowering the women. This section criticizes the major methodologies employed by them in the undertaking.

2.1. Far-fetched Qur'an Interpretations

The liberal Islamists rely on the alleged new unorthodox interpretations of the Quran (al-Shafii, 2004). They adopt two general approaches contextualization of history and thematic contextualization (Hidayatullah, 2014). This sub-sub-heading outlines these two approaches and remembers two instances of how the liberal Islamists use the strategies to extract away verse 4:34 of the Qur-an generating the idea of qiwmah.

Some of the verses of the Quran cannot be applied today due to their contextualization. The Quran 4:34 disapproves the egalitarianism ethos of the Quran that calls the equality of both genders as conceived by the liberal Islamists. The liberal Islamists believe that the verse was of a particular period and spatial dimension in which woman suppression to men was a norm and imply that the text of the verse is no longer pertinent (Hidayatullah, 2014). Suppose this had been an argument, the answer is: How can such subjugation be acknowledged in the Qur 23? It must possess a written abacus that overrides the verse 4: 34 or inspirational developmental order to desire to get rid of the supposed oppression (Ibn al-'Arabī, 1992). Neither, however, is there an abrogating text nor an extension of the revelation in order to render qiwmah inapplicable (al-Dosarir, 1432 AH).

Some of these verses are framed in the thematic contextualization with the general themes in the Quran in attempting to re-interpret such verses in justifying the empowerment of the women by the liberal Islamic activists. The liberal interpretation of Islamists literature thought of this as Intra-Quraynnic Interpretation (Hidayatullah, 2014). This study prefers the thematic contextualization as it more clearly identifies the meaning of the approach of

the liberal Islamists and does not overlap with the already established Intra-Qur-anic interpretation in the science of the Quran exegesis. Other liberal Islamists utilize Monotheism (Tawhīd) to annul the idea of qiwamah in their intellectual struggle to accommodate the meaning of verse 4:34 to represent gender equality. They proclaim that Tawhīd demands the supremacy of Allah in the whole creation and Allah is not gendered. According to them, gender hierarchy should be the obedience of the men in form of qiwamah, which is contrary to Tawhīd and results in oppression and injustice and hence is condemned (Wadud, 2006). That being the case since Tawhīd is the most essential of the terms of the Islamist thinking then, in the event that the claim of the liberal Islamists is not devoid of water, there must be an express Quranic text or the authenticated Sunnah text that revokes qiwamah, which is absent (al-Dosarib, 1432 AH).

Extrapolation of Events and Incidents

It is a tactic of generalizing the conclusion by applying the use of isolated cases and incidences that have been previously established to empower women.

The liberal Islamists recall concerning the feminine companions who had converted to Islam at the dawn of its history and lived in Islam, withstood persecution and relocated to Abyssinia and then to Madinah. Liberal Islamists are drawn to the modern political activism and perceive these happenings as the participation of women in politics (Faqīrī, 2015). The political activists are normally persecuted, imprisoned and at times exiled due to their political sentiments which do not favour the oppressive ruling regimes. However, the fact that the said precedents are an erroneous analogy (qiyas fausi) is incorrect. The reason is that the practical cause of the influence (illah) is different in each instance (Abu Hujayr, 1997). The male and female company of Companions, who had changed their faith to Islam in its early days, had contrived their religion safely on the testimony of faith. They were under persecution and ran off migrating due to this fact (Ibn Kathir, 1990). The ideals of different religions are not the driving force of political activism in the modern world, and the political activists may be religiously ignorant. The first pillar of Islam is the political participation, which is a concept that makes Islam a political cause. This contradicts the fact that Islam is a healthy way of life which entails worship of Allah. Politics is part of such way of life, but not its element or foundation (Mihanna, 2018).

Among gender equality, liberal Islamists promote the idea of a woman being an Imam who exercises the right to lead the congregational prayers of mixed sex including Jumu'ah sermon (Ali, 2019).

The liberal Islamists recall of a hadith of the female companion Umm Waraqah . It is narrated by the ḥadīth, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would visit her in her house. He appointed a prayer

caller (mu'adhdhin) to say prayer call (adhān) on her behalf, and he permitted her to say prayers in front of her family as the head of the family (Abu Dawwud 592). There is also a controversy regarding the authenticity of this ḥadīth amongst the scholars (al-'Abd al-Karim, 2009). When it happens to be an authentic hadith then the wording of a hadith does

not allow the Imam who heads the congregation prayer to confine the congregation to the household of Umm Waraqah. To draw conclusions on general congregational prayers, it is necessary to have evidence on its own which is not available. The pragmatic Sunnah of the Prophet that was adhered to by the Companions and the Followers demonstrate that women were not allowed to lead any congregational prayers that were mixed sex. And it is not said that any female Companion, the addition of xtishah into (including) has resulted in mixed-sex congregational prayers in general (Ibn Qudaymah, 1997).

2.2. Unscholarly Ḥadīth Criticism

The liberal Islamists reject the ḥadīths that cannot match their message of empowering women citing the argument that the ḥadīths are spurious. Among these ḥadīths is the fact that Allah Messenger went out to the place of prayer on the day of celebration (id). He bypassed other women and said to them, O womenfolk, give charity... Of wanton and religious I have never heard of such who might more readily persuade a wise man than one of you. They said, O messenger of Allinah, what want we in our religion and our judgment? He replied, The sayeth that woman testimony is one half of man testimony? They said, 'Yes.' This, he told her, means that she lacked her judgment. Then it happened, When a woman menstruates, she prays not and she fasts not? They replied, 'Yes.' He intended by this, as he said, the absence of her religion (al-Bukhari ḥadīth no. 304 and Muslim ḥadīth no. 80).

The above hadith is degrading to women to the liberal Islamists who hold that it discounts the equality of women with men as proclaimed in the Quran based on their dignity and honor (Mernissi, 1992). Thus, liberal Islamists articulate the above ḥadīth spurious but it possesses the highest degree of authenticity that is agreed upon. This motive of rejecting the hadith under consideration lacks the academic approach of ḥadīth sciences. In particular, whenever ḥadīth seems to be in conflict with the Quran, then it has to be treated as a topic of the renowned branch of Usul al-Fiqh (Usullah, 2000). This type of treatment was not seen in the liberal Islamists.

attempt. The Prophet ﷺ spelled out what he referred to by the lack of discernment when he referred to the Qurian text of 2:282. The lack of religion was also indicated by Prophet ﷺ when he failed to fulfill the daily prayers and fasting due to the menstruation. As a matter of fact, the ḥadīth means the advice of the Prophet ﷺ to women not to ignore a natural strength that they have, that is, the ability to manipulate the minds of the men including the wisest among them (al-Qaradawii, 2001). The prophet ﷺ was a well mannered person, and he was unable to demean the women, and better on the happy day of the id (Ezzat, 2015). The ḥadīth merely reminds of the qualities that are relevant to the psychological and physiological nature of women that

cannot be compared to those of men (al-Dosariro, 1432 AH). Thus, the ḥadīth does not contradict with the Qur'an and it belongs to the category of Sunnah which ascertains the Qur'an.

The other liberal variant of Islamism has been abandoning ḥadīths that do not serve their cause of empowering women by declaring a narrator (sanad) weak despite having been reported to be trustworthy by ḥadīth authorities. Among such hadiths is that which was quoted by the Companion Abu Bakrah and which tells us that Never will triumph such a nation as makes a woman its ruler (al- Bukhari ḥadīth no. 4425). The liberal Islamists declare Abu Bakrah as unreliable due to a renowned event and decree in 10 Umar caliphate and claim the 8 to be spurious (Mernissi, 1993). However, this is what the ḥadīth scholars unanimously hold, that Abu Bakrah is reliable (Ibn 1995). Better still, one of the ḥadīths that is actually being discussed is contained in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, that has the most significant portion of being actual after the Qur 2 junction declared authentic by the consensus of the scholars and the Muslim Ummah accepted it (Ibn 800 800, 2013).

2.3. Employing Unauthentic Ḥadīths

In their attempt to explain the need to empower women in politics, the liberal Islamists apply a narration claiming that individuals had to have more dower to marry women. In this regard, he proceeded to the pulpit and ruled that the dower was not to exceed four hundred dirhams. One of the women of the tribe of Quraysh stood up and said to 'Umar: thou hast no right to constrain dower and referred to the verse of the Quran which declares 4: 20. And on which Umar said, Was the woman right And I was wrong, and that he ascended the pulpit, and repeated his command. The liberal Islamists employ this narration to declare that women played a role in the active policy under the reign of the just caliphs (Faḳīrī, 2015). The above narration has been however proclaimed to be weak both in the sanad and the text (matn) (Abu 200 1997).

In their claim that women are empowered, liberal Islamists state that women can also participate in conflicts with men in war situations (Aqsūrī, 2019). The liberal Islamists recall an ḥadīth concerning Umm. 'Ammārah Nusaybah bint K'ab . One of the ḥadīths narrates that the clothing of certain women was brought to the 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭa 2. One of these garments was excellent, and large... I will forward it to a superior addressee, Umm 'Ammarah Nusaybah bint K'ab said Umar. I heard Allah Messenger ﷺ saying on the day of the battle of Uhud, when I went to the right or the left, I said to myself, the right, I saw her Defending me arguing against (Ibn Saad, 2001). The narrators of the chain of this ḥadīth include al- Waqid, Ya'qoob ibn Muhammad ibn ISis and M Final. One more ighadith fabricator is called Al -Waqidian (al-Dhahabib, 1982). Yaqoob ibn Muhammad ibn is weak (al-Baghdadi, 2011) and Mousa ibn 021708 (al-Bukhari, 2008). The ḥadīth that in its sanad includes a fabricator is incidental and should not be used (Ibn al- Ṣalala Hannah, 1980). The ḥadīth under question is entirely spurious since the sanad comprises of forger, a weak reporter and an unknown reporter.

The matn of the above hadith conflicts with a good ḥadīth of, Umar distributed garments to

a company of hem women in Madinah. and a fine piece of clothing was still found in it he said, Umm Saliyah is more worthy of it, because of her carrying of the water skins on the day of battle at Uhud on our behalf (al-Bukhari 49 th audio no. 2881). The resemblance between the incident in the two ḥadiths. implicates this to be given as a reward to Umm Salīyah to provide water to the troops at the battle of Uḥud. Lots of other ḥadiths also testify to the support of female companions during the battles of the prophet to facilitate the provision of food, water as well as looking after the injured (Abu Ḥujayr, 1997).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Foundations of Women's Empowerment

The culture of feminism and gender equality empowers women such that when they subject themselves to masculine traits, when they take up roles traditionally done by males and when they exhibit individuality, they are said to be empowered. Such discourse perceives masculinity as something to aspire to and indicates that femininity is lesser to masculinity and disproves the notion of initiating the call of empowering women as a pro-women movement (Farooqi, 2016). The discourse of women empowerment by liberal Islamists fails to appreciate the contribution of women and their empowerment to undertake female dominated roles (al-Qaṭirjī, 2006).

Islam in its turn considers femininity as a natural phenomenon regarding the presence of women in the society and it rewards them on the grounds of feminine. It is connected with the fact that Islam is concerned about the difference between men and women as in one of the ḥadiths the Prophet ﷺ said,

Grant good to women, since a woman is created out of a rib and curved portion of a rib is upper portion of a rib. Thus, until you attempt to straighten the rib the rib will be straightened but immediately you quit (attempting to straighten the rib) the rib will resume its curve. So do good to women (al- Bukhārī ḥadith no. 3331 & Muslim ḥadith no. 1468). According to this hadith, the characters of women cannot be likened to the characters of men and no one should attempt to mold women in the personalities of men since this goes against the nature of the women whom Allah created (al-Qaraḍawī, 2001). This kind of nature is the best suited and it is what helps the women to carry out their responsibilities in life. Moreover, the culture of achieving homogeneity on women resembles the folly of creating the two sexes, to complement each other. The right and responsibility allocation in the Islamic faith considers the unequal nature of characteristics and in the distant future the reward is correspondingly equal to efforts and abilities (al-Kurdistania, 1994).

The core argument of the empowerment of women according to the liberalism Islamist discourse is the equality of man and woman in humanity (Barlas, 2002). To achieve justice, there must be a balance between the social roles of men and women in all aspects of life. The liberal Islamist rhetoric assumes that both sexes should be in the state of complete equality as a precondition of justice (Ali, 2019). However, the fact that both genders are equal human beings does not imply that they are equal in all their characteristics and, hence, all aspects of life. Islam also cares about justice and considers

equality as the outcome and not the position of justice (al-Dosarial, 1432 AH). In the sense that it does not interfere with justice, equality comes to reality. Where femininity and masculinity can not play any important role, the Sharariah does not distinguish a man and a woman in its ruling and the other way round (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996). Comparing the roles and responsibilities of men and women would be unjust taking into consideration that there exist multiple characteristics, traits, abilities and needs. Then, Islam does not aim at securing gender equality but, on the contrary, gender equity (Badawi, 2016).

3.1. Women's Empowerment and Ijtihād

The liberal Islamists recognize and appreciate that Islam is permissive to certain aspects of equality between men and women. They however fail to understand or acknowledge the social features in which Islam puts a boundary between men and women. They assume that even the Islamic text lacks such differentiation though they are prejudiced by male chauvinism. Therefore, liberalized Islamists demand access to women and feminists to open the gate of ijtiḥād in order to redefine and reform Islam and Sharī (Ezzat, 2015).

However, most of the liberal Islamists who promote empowerment of women are not well versed in the Islamic sciences and Arabic. Thus, they lack the conditions which require ijtiḥād (al-Shafīe, 2004). The liberal Islamists apply the supposed efforts as counter to the well-developed strategy of the Islamic sciences in the interpretation of the empowerment of women in the Islamic readings. It is crucial to mention that the Quran had clearly instructed to refer women related matters to Allah. The Quran says, And they request you [O Muhammad] a legal injunction (fatw), against women. Say, Allah commands you injunctions on them (Qur' an 4:127). According to this teaching, one sticks to the Qur- an and the original Sunnah in answering the questions of women (Muslim and et al., 2010), which include women empowerment.

3.2. Assessment of the Call

Women empowerment as championed by the liberal Islamists is contravening the fundamental teaching of Islam like qiwamah, marriage, family and the human nature of men and women. The orthodox principles and practices of the Muslim societies are also brought on board by the call. The main inescapable consequences of the liberal Islamist approach to women empowerment are:

1. Breach of Islam interpretation and application.
2. The family institution is breaking down.
3. Raise and spread of this social vice such as late marriage, divorce, single-parenting, homosexuality and transsexuality.

The liberal Islamists empower women leading to high rates of religious, family, and social corruption that negatively influence the survival of religion and progenies. Among the five broad objectives of the Sharī'ah, maintenance of religion is the most valuable (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2011). According to Islamic perspective, the corruption (mafsadah) which will be realized due to promotion of women is larger than the potential worldly good (maslihah). The call by the liberal Islamists to empower women should not be heeded by the Muslim world

according to the fiqh rule that repelling corruption is more superior than acquiring benefits (al-Burnū, 1997). Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ admonished trial of women when he told, I left not after me, trial more injurious to men than [the trial of] women (al-Bukhari ḥadith no. 5096 & Muslim ḥadith no. 2740). Beyond any doubt, one of the elements of that trial is the secular imperative of women empowerment and its implications.

4. CONCLUSION

Among the questions that should be answered is the following one: Do Muslim women need to be empowered? Abscondingly yes is the answer. This empowerment can only be achieved when the Sharariah objectives are well known keeping in mind the fixed and the variable of Sharariah (al-Ghazali, 2008). As such, Islamically consistent orientation refers to empowerment of women which entails enabling Muslim women to fulfill their duty and practice their job in life in accordance with Sharariah. The notion can be sold as Women Islamic Empowerment.

The ignorance and misuse of the concept of qiwmah and masculinity in some Muslim communities cause women in the society to be humiliated, devalued, and minimized (Maryam, 2020). These cultures contradict the Islamic perspective of women as human beings and challenge them in their role in the society. The resultant effect of it is that half the society women cannot do their best in the execution of their functions and the society loses. The goal of women empowerment in respect to Islam should be to reform such cultures by aligning them to good Islamic values.

Finally, subsection 5.1 briefly referred to the methodology of Qur'ān interpretation that is used by radical Islamists and which they label as the feminist readings of the Qur'ān (Hidayatullah, 2014). This field and its relations with Western hermeneutics should be further researched and explicated by Islamic response as it is one of the pillars of liberal Islamists to empower women.

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