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An Appraisal of the Rights of Women under the Shar'iah

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Abstract:

This paper examines the rights of women under the shar'iah or Islamic law. A major aim of the paper is, among others, to correct some widespread misconceptions about the status of both the Islamic women and women living under the Islamic law or in an Islamic State. These misconceptions and illusions were born mainly out of mythology, including Arabic and Islamic mythology, such as the tale of the "One Thousand and One Nights", and information broadcast abroad by early European travelers and orientalist unfamiliar with language and local customs. Efforts will be made to cover certain issues such as the status of women during the jahiliyah period,ⁱ concept of sexual equality, evidence, inheritance, leadership (political or religious), marriage, maintenance, divorce, settlement of dispute, custody of children and individual dignity of women among others. The paper then concludes by restating the obvious that the compassionate and dignified status of women under the Shar'iah was decreed not because such status reflects the environment of the seventh century or due to threat or pressure of women and their organizations but rather because of intrinsic truthfulness. This demonstrates the divine origin of Islamic law or Shar'iah.

Keywords: Rights, Women, Shar'iah, Equality, Feminism.

1. Introduction

In the modern world of Islam there is a need for serious examination of the issues that may have thwarted the Muslim world's aspirations for development in all fields, whether political, cultural, economic or social. The legal rights and obligations of women in Islam are one such vital issue where thoughtful discussion is needed and is of much greater benefit than emotional judgment alone.ⁱⁱ The issue becomes even more important when we review the many misconceptions and illusions surrounding it. These misinterpretations are, unfortunately, all too common and widely disseminated by the written and electronic mass media.

Full recognition, love and compassion for women are evident throughout the Arab Islamic legacy. The Holy Quran declares:

- And among His signs is this, that He created from you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts, verily in that are signs for those who reflect.ⁱⁱⁱ

The rights of women are duly guaranteed under the Islamic law or Shar'iah. Shar'iah is so protective of women that even the non-Muslim women who are married to Muslim men have their rights fully guaranteed.

2. Status of Women During Jahiliyah

The status of women in Islam can be properly understood only when we know their status during Jahiliyah.^{iv} This is because no revolution can remove all traces of the past. Continuity is almost per moment and it is this continuity which maintains an organic relationship with the past. Whatever was reformed or prohibited by the Islamic revolution that prevailed during the Jahiliyah in respect of women, it crept back into Islamic Shar'iah through pre-Islamic Arab practices.^v

In the Pre-Islamic Society, women enjoyed no rights whatsoever and were treated no better than a commodity. Not only were they enslaved, but they could also be inherited as a possession.^{vi} The Holy Quran prohibits this practice.^{vii} Also, after inheriting a woman from her father, a man could marry her. The Quran strictly prohibits this too.^{viii} According to maulana Muhammad Ali:

- Among the pre Islamic Arabs, when a man died, his elder son or other relations had a right to possess his widow or widows, marrying them themselves if they pleased, without settling a dowry on them, or marrying them to others, or prohibiting them from marriage altogether.^{ix}

Also, the Arabs in Jahiliyah used to bury their daughters alive.^x According to Muhammad Asad:^{xi}

- This barbaric custom of burying female infants alive seems to have been family widespread in pre-Islamic Arabia, although perhaps not to the extent as has been commonly assumed. The motives were twofold: the fear that an increase in female offspring would result in economic burdens, as well as the fear of humiliation frequently caused by girls being captured by a hostile tribe and subsequently preferring their captors to their parents and brothers.

It was not that there was no opposition to this barbaric custom in those days. One of the staunchest opponents of this custom was Zayd Ibn Amu Ibn Nufayl, a cousin of Umar Ibn al- Khattab, the second Caliph after the Prophet.^{xii} However the Prophet of Islam said that one to whom a daughter is born and who does not bury her alive, does not humiliate her, nor prefers a son to daughter, will be sent by Allah to paradise.^{xiii} Another hadith or tradition of the Holy Prophet makes hell fire prohibited to one who has to go through trials and tribulation due to a daughter and yet who does not hate her and behaves well towards her.^{xiv}

In the pre-Islamic period there was no restriction on the number of wives a man could have. The tribal Chiefs and leaders had many wives in order to build relationships with other families. The practice of wooing other families and forging political alliances through marriage was practiced in other feudal societies too on a very wide scale. The Quranic revelation however came later on the issue of the number of wives when Allah declares in the Holy Quran thus:

- And if you have reason to fear that you might not act equitably towards orphans, then marry from among (other) women such as are lawful to you –two, or three, or four, but if you have a reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then (only) one-or (from among) those whom you rightfully possess. This will make it more likely that you will not deviate from the right course.^{xv}

The permission to marry more than one and up to four wives must be seen in this context. It was a drastic reduction in the number of wives one could take. This is however, a major possible justification for polygamy in Islam.^{xvi}

On the question of marriage, it must be admitted that the predominant form of marriage in the pre-Islamic period was contractual. There was never any concept of sacramental marriage in Arabia. Islam retained this form with certain improvements. However, in the jahiliyah period there were many forms of marriage.^{xvii} These include Nikah or zawaj al-ba ulah.^{xviii} Its essential elements are Mahr (dower money given to the bride –dowry) and ijab-wa-qubul (offer and acceptance of marriage). This form of marriage was and is still undoubtedly the best and was in keeping with the dignity of a woman even in the pre-Islamic period,

Another form of marriage was known as Nikah al-dayzan. Under this category, when a woman`s husband died, his eldest son would be entitled to marry her. This form of marriage has been prohibited by the Holy Quran.^{xix} Muta was another form of marriage. This is a temporary marriage whose period of validity is specified. The marriage is dissolved automatically at the expiration of the period. According to the Sunni Muslims, the Prophet prohibited this form of marriage after having allowed it during certain battles.^{xx}

There was also a form of marriage known as Zawaj at badal, that is, mutual exchange of wives. One man would ask another to forgo his wife in his favour and in turn would forgo his wife in the latter`s favour. This exchange would take place without offering any dowry.^{xxi} Zawaj al-Shighar was a form of marriage like any other common form except that no dowry was offered as the man would marry off his daughter or sister to a man who would marry his daughter or sister to him.^{xxii} The Holy Prophet prohibited this form of marriage.^{xxiii}

Another form of marriage was Zawaj al-Istibda. Here, the husband would ask his wife to have sexual intercourse with another man in order to get pregnant. He would refrain from going near her until she has conceived from that person. Generally, people used to send their wives to men known for their bravery, generosity etc. The child born was considered a gift from him.^{xxiv}

As regards the issue of Sadaq or Mahr, that is, dowry during the jahiliyah period, there is no much difference between then and now. A man would ask for the hand of a woman from another man (wali or guardian), pay dowry and marry her. Most of the Qurashites and other tribes followed similar customs. As a matter of fact, in the jahiliyah period some women lived an independent life and were free to make their own decisions as did the first wife of the Prophet, Khadijah. Their independence derived from their financial status.^{xxv}

During the pre-Islamic period, mahr was given to the family of the woman for asking her hand in marriage. In fact, there was a difference between mahr and Sadaq. The former was paid to the marriage guardian (wali) and the latter to the bride herself.^{xxvi} Mahr in jahiliyah was considered a bride price, just as in other tribal societies. The marriage guardian had the right to spend it any way he liked.^{xxvii} Islam has prohibited the bride`s people from taking anything from the mahr. It had been designated as the bride`s property.

The Quran says:

- And give women dowries as free gifts. But if they of themselves be pleased to give you a portion there of, consume it with enjoyment and pleasure.^{xxviii}

During the jahiliyah, there was no common practice with regard to Sadaq. Some used to give entire amount to their daughters, some even used to add to it to honour their daughters and others used to take away either the whole amount or a part of it. Similarly, there was no fixed limit to Sadaq or Mahr in the pre-Islamic period. It mostly depended on the financial status of the person concerned and the social status of the bride. At times, it could be as high as 100 or 150 camels.^{xxix}

On the issue of divorce, the Arabs were well acquainted with talaq (divorce) as they were acquainted with the concept of marriage during Jahiliyah. Talaq simply means divesting oneself of all the rights one has over one`s spouse and separating her from oneself.^{xxx}

In those days, divorce could be given for any reason, even if the wife spoke highly of her people. During the Jahiliyah, granting divorce was in the hands of men. However, in certain circumstances, women could persuade their husbands to allow them a divorce. It must be noted however, that, in Islam, according to the jurists, divorce lies in the hand of the husband, not the wife. Accordingly, the Holy Quran has provided that the marriage tie is on the hands of the man.^{xxxi}

During the jahiliyah, too, there were women who stipulated the condition at the time of marriage that they would have the right to divorce, they would live with their husbands as long as they liked and would initiate divorce when they liked too. This was due to their high status in the society.^{xxxii} Another form of divorce widely prevalent during the pre-Islamic period was known as Zihar which literally means “back”. The man would tell his wife she was like his mother`s back, like her womb, like her thigh, like her sexual organ or like the back of his sister or aunt. The Holy Quran prohibits the practice of Zihar. The Quran says:

- Those of you who put away their wives by calling them their mothers, they are not their mothers. None are their mothers save those who gave them birth, and they utter indeed a hateful word and a lie. And surely, Allah is pardoning, forgiving.^{xxxiii}

The Quran further says:

- But he who has not the means should fast for two months successively before they touch one another, and he who is unable to do so should feed sixty needy ones. That is in order that you may have faith in Allah and His messenger. And these are Allah's limits.^{xxxiv}

The above punishment was prescribed with a view to discouraging this practice, which was an absurd one.

In another form of talaq or divorce called al-ila a man takes a vow to leave his wife for a period of time, may be a few months, a year or two years, during which he does not go near her as a sort of punishment.^{xxxv}

In the jahiliyah period, the period of waiting (iddah) after the husband's death was one year. Islam has abolished this. It has reduced the iddah period to four months and ten days. The Quran says:

- And (as for) those of you who die and leave wives behind, such women should keep themselves in waiting for four months and ten days, when they reach their term, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a lawful manner.^{xxxvi}

However, if she were pregnant then her waiting period would last until the delivery of the child.^{xxxvii}

During the jahiliyah, a divorcee was given nothing by way of maintenance. She was not entitled to a house or anything else in irreconcilable divorce.^{xxxviii} The child was invariably related to the father. It was the prophet who said that the child should be of the mother.^{xxxix}

With regard to inheritance, many Muslim historians have said that a woman was treated like a commodity. She had no right to inherit from either her husband's or her father's property or any other relative's property. Instead, she herself was an object of inheritance. In the pre-Islamic period it was generally thought and accepted that inheritance was not meant for women and small children and that it was for those who wield weapons and capture booty.^{xi}

During the time of the Holy Prophet, a man by name Aus bin Thabit died leaving behind two daughters and a small son. Aus's cousins came and took away his entire property as neither wife nor daughters or son could inherit it. Aus's wife went to complain to the Prophet, pleading her inability to feed her children since the entire property belonging to her husband had been taken away by his cousins.^{xii} This incident prompted the revelation of the following Quranic verse:

- For men is a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, and for women a share of what the parents and the near relatives leave, whether it be little or much – an appointed share.^{xiii}

Almighty God said further in the Holy Quran concerning women and children:

- And they ask you a decision about women, say: Allah makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book is concerning widowed women, whom you give not what is appointed for them, nor to the weak among children, and that you should deal justly with orphans.^{xiiii}

A verse finally came on inheritance as regards the shares of legal heirs:

- Allah enjoins you concerning your children: for the male is the equal of the portions of two females; but if there be more than two females, two-thirds of what the deceased leaves is theirs; and if there be one, for her is the half. And as for his parents, for each of them is the sixth of what he leaves, if he has a child, but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, for his mother is the third, but if he has brothers, for his mother is the sixth, after (payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt. Your parents and your children, you know not which of them in the nearer to you in benefit. This is an ordinance from Allah. Allah is surely ever-knowing, wise.^{xlv}

This was a revolutionary step as far as women were concerned. May be women were not so totally deprived of inheritance in the pre-Islamic period as Muslim historians had previously thought, but it is undeniable that men had a far greater share than women and that there was no fixed share for women. They depended on the arbitrary decisions of their men folk. The Holy Quran removed all uncertainties and fixed a share in inheritance for women which, while less than that for men needs to be seen in its totality.^{xlv} What Islam did was to remove all ambiguities and fix a compulsory share in inheritance for women.

With particular reference to the religious status of women during the pre-Islamic period it is not out of place to say that the situation was not too bad. There were a number of Kahinahs, that is, priestesses amongst them.^{xlvi} From very ancient times women in Arabia, especially in the South (Yemen), have performed the functions of priestesses. During the regime of Qutban^{xlvii} as early as 150BC, we heard of a woman priestess called Barat. There was also a priestess by name Tarifah in Southern Arabia, who predicted the fall of the dam of Marib. Similarly, a priestess, Afira in the same region used to interpret dreams successfully.

In the Northern Arabia, there was also a priestess called Hudaym. The dispute about the sharing of the waters of the well of Zamzam in Mecca was referred to her for arbitration by Abdal-Muttalib, the grandfather of Prophet Mohammad. The dispute was decided in his favour.^{xlviii} Priestess Al-Ghitalah predicted the birth of the Holy Prophet twenty years before his prophethood.^{xlix}

Apart from the priestesses, there were also female deities in the pre-Islamic period. During the reign of Qatbam, Hadrmaut and Saba Sun were worshipped. For the people of Yemen, the sun was a female deity though the people of Egypt, Sumer etc. considered it to be a male deity. The Arabs then used to name themselves Abd Shams (slaves or worshippers of the Sun). The first to be named Abd Shams was a person who worshipped among the followers of Queen Sheba in the period around a thousand years before Christ.¹

Among the female deities in Kaba were Al-Laf, Al-Uzza and Manat. Al-Lat was a very old and highly respected deity worshipped by several Arab tribes. In Hijaz Banu-i-Thaqif worshipped it as the Quraysh worshipped Al-Uzza.ⁱⁱ Al-Lat also formed part of several names among the Arabs.ⁱⁱⁱ Al-Uzza was the most important deity of the Quraysh and Kinanah. The idol of Al-Uzza and her temple were demolished by Khalid bin al-walid when Islam triumphed in Mecca. The third female deity was Manat whose temple was

situated about seven miles from Medina or in Qadid between Mecca and Medina or at the nearby town of Wadan or according to yet another source at Fadak.^{liii}

The Holy Quran refers to these deities in the chapter Al-Najim.^{liv} It raises the question:

- Are the males for you and for Him the females?^{lv}

The verse points to a contrast in the values and attitudes prevalent among the Arabs. While they worshipped the female deities and desired their intercession they did not like to have female children.

The position of women; however, cannot be viewed only ideologically. Islam had resolved the problem by granting a high status to women and recognizing their individual rights and dignity. What the Quran does is to give a definite normative and legal shape to women's rights and duties. It accepts many practices prevalent in Islamic society but rejected those which were derogatory, iniquitous and unjust from the human point of view.^{lvi} In the pre-Islamic period, there was neither a scriptural authority nor a legal one at that. There were only traditions and age-old practices which gave sanctions to what people did or did not do. The Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet filled this vacuum as did by divine injunctions and the prophetic Sunnah. In addition to the divine commands, the Prophet also had legal acumen in abundance to weed out all those practices which might be legally termed iniquitous.^{lvii}

3. Rights of Women under the Shar'iah

A woman in Islam is placed on a noble and lofty plain. Women are accorded a place of respect and honour in the society as opposed to the situation in pre-Islamic societies. A woman in Islam enjoys full and complete social, economic, religious and legal rights. As a mother she enjoys a unique status.

The opinions and advice of a mother weigh much in the Islamic society. The injunction of the Holy Quran that believers should respect their parents is with particular reference to women: Allah declares in the Holy Quran:

- And we have enjoined on man to be good to his parents. In travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years' twain was the weaning (hear the command) show gratitude to me and to thy parents: to me is (thy final) goal.^{lviii}

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) had said unambiguously that one's paradise lies at the foot of one's mother, therefore a mother must be treated with respect and care and that the best association one can ever have is that of one's mother.

Islam requires from both men and women the same religious obligations, such as the worship of Allah, prayer (salat), charity (Zakat), fasting in the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca. A woman is expected to discharge these obligations like her male counterpart. The two sexes are therefore equal in the performance of their religious duties.

Although the Holy Quran has assigned leadership role to the man^{lix}, the same Holy Quran has implored the man to govern his home in mutual consultation with his wife and should not be autocratic.

Efforts will now be made to consider the specific rights which a woman has in Islam.

4. Sexual Equality

Islam does not only endorse the objectives of equality, development and peace for women but strongly advocate and defends these rights. The approach of Islam towards the achievement of these objectives is holistic, not fragmentary. The Holy Quran, the final and eternal guide of the mankind makes it very clear that man and woman are two physical forms of the same soul. There is therefore no original difference between them. The Almighty Allah declares in the Holy Quran:

- Men! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single being and out of it created its mate; and out of the two spread many men and women. Fear Allah in whose name you plead for rights and heed the ties of kinship, surely, Allah is ever watchful over you.^{lx}

This divine declaration has put an end to the discrimination against woman in that the whole mankind is the offspring of a human soul. Originally, everyone, man or woman, has the same descent and no one is nobler or meaner by birth. It has also made it clear that all human beings, men or women are servants of the one True God. They should therefore worship and serve Him. Islam has therefore condemned the notion that man is more honoured for being a man and that woman is inferior for being a woman.

The above Quranic words could be described as the universal declaration of human rights revealed to mankind by his creator, the Almighty God, who alone possesses the absolute knowledge of the origin and nature of the creation of mankind. This verse constitutes divine warning for all times to come that all the sex-related discriminatory practices prevalent in the human society are unnatural and therefore baseless, false and absurd. The whole mankind is the offspring of a single soul. Any form of discrimination against either sex is tantamount to the division of a single whole and therefore it is unacceptable. The Holy Quran, in upholding sexual equality, has drawn our attention to a biological fact when it provides:

- And be heedful of the wombs that bore you; for God is ever watchful over you.^{lxi}

The above verse of the Holy Quran reminds us of the place of origin of our biological existence, that is, the mother's womb. This shows that human biological existence is another clear evidence of man-woman equality. Equality in the creation of man and woman highlighted in the Holy Quran is indeed a reality. Prophet Muhammad also empirically established this equality in the creation of man and woman through his mode of organization of the society in Medina. No sex discrimination was practiced by the prophet or his successors.

The question at this juncture is: what is concretely implied by equality of status of the sexes? First, in its generalized sense it means acceptance of the dignity of the sexes in equal measures.^{lxii} Second, one has to see both men and women enjoying equal rights: social, economic and political. Both should have the equal rights to contract a marriage or to dissolve it; both should have the right to own or

dispose of property without interference from the other; both should be free to choose their own profession or way of life; both should be equal in responsibility as much as in freedom.^{lxiii}

The Quran does not subscribe to the view that Eve was born from the crooked rib of Adam and thus has an inferior status. Maulana Qari Muhammad Tyeb, accepts equality of rights of men and women. According to him, women enjoy the same rights as men, and in certain respects, they enjoy even more rights. He cited the example of Aisha, wife of the Holy Prophet, from whom the Prophet said that half the knowledge of his revelation should be acquired and the other half from all his companions.^{lxiv}

The Quran also says:

- We have honoured the children of Adam....^{lxv}

Maulana Usmanimaintains that the children of Adam include men as well as women and hence, according to this verse of the Quran, both are equally honourable without any distinction of sex.^{lxvi} The Qur'an also uses the metaphor "apparel" for men and women. The Quran says:

- They are apparel for you and apparel for them.^{lxvii}

This clearly implies that, like apparel both need each other and one cannot be complete without the other. There cannot be inequality where there is complementarity.

Maulana Azad has much more advocated equal rights for women. Against this background, he cites the Quranic verse:

- The rights of wives (with regard to their husbands) are equal to the (husbands') rights with regard to them.^{lxviii}

In support of his contention, He says further that the Quran not only creates a belief about the rights of women but it also clearly declares that they are equal to men in matters of rights. As men have rights over women, women also have rights over men. As women have obligations towards men, men also have obligations towards women. He maintains that the Holy Quran has brought about a great revolution in the life of human beings.^{lxix} The women are lifted out of deprivation and dishonour and are seated on the throne of equality.

It can therefore be said that there is no doubt that there is a general thrust towards equality of the sexes in the Quran. There are various reasons for this. First, the Quran gives a place of great honour to the whole of humanity. Second, as a matter of norm it advocates the principle of equality of the sexes. Biological orderliness, according to the Quran, does not mean unequal status for either sex. Biological functions must be distinguished from social functions.^{lxx} According to the Quran, women's religious status, like their social status, is as high as that of men. It states:

- Lo! Men who surrender unto Allah and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth, and women who speak the truth, and men and women who preserve, and patient men and patient women and humble men and the humble women and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard it and men who remember Allah and women who remember Allah, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.^{lxxi}

Commenting on this verse, Maulana Muhammad Ali has said that this verse repeats ten times that women can attain every good quality to which men have access and settles it conclusively that according to the Quran women stand on the same spiritual level as men.^{lxxii} Thus, unlike in other religions, in Islam, there is absolutely no distinction between men and women in religious matters. In some religions a menstruating woman is considered unclean and kept away from her normal functions, such as cooking. The Quran takes a purely biological view of menstruation. The Quran says:

- And they ask thee about menstruation, say it is harmful; so keep aloof from women during menstrual discharge and go not near them until they are clean. But when they have cleansed themselves, go into them as Allah has commanded you.^{lxxiii}

Maulana Muhammad Ali has maintained that it is not menstrual discharge that is harmful but having sexual relations while the woman is in that condition.

It must be noted however that the Holy Quran does speak of man having a slight edge and social superiority over women. This must be seen in its proper social context. The social structure in the Prophet's time was not such as to admit of complete sexual equality. However, when the Holy Quran gives man a slight edge over woman, it clarifies that it is not due to any inherent weakness of the female sex, but due to the social context. The Quran says:

- Men are maintainers of women as Allah has made some to excel others and as they spend out of their wealth (on women).^{lxxiv}

From this verse, it is clear that the excellence or superiority which Allah has given one over the other or to men over women is not sexual superiority or excellence. It is due to the social functions that were then performed by the two sexes. Since man earns and spends his wealth on women, he, by virtue of this fact, acquires functional superiority over women. The feminists have, however, argued that women's domestic work should also be counted as economically productive and not taken for granted merely as their domestic duty. Men and women are complementary to each other. This position is quite justified and must be vigorously defended.

5. Equality in Obligation and Reward

Islam treats both man and woman equally in that whoever leads a pious life in accordance with divine guidance is entitled in equal measure to attain salvation and eternal success in the life hereafter. Almighty God declares in the Holy Quran:

- "Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and his faith, to him we will give a new life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on them their reward according to the best of their actions."^{lxxv}

Under the Shar'ia, the criterion of superiority or status in the sight of Allah is that of one's righteous conduct, ruling out any reference to one's gender or nationality. The Holy Quran confirms this point in unmistakable terms:

- Mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things.^{lxxvi}

From the above verse of the Holy Quran, it is clear that the Holy Quran has laid a great emphasis on the spiritual equality of man and woman. Almighty God has further corroborated this fact when He declares in the Holy Quran thus:

- I will not suffer the work of any of you, be it male or female to go to waste; you are members of one another.^{lxxvii}

Both man and woman are equally obliged to practice the principles of Islam and their deeds are equally rewarded. No discrimination will be made against or in favour of either on the basis of their sex for rewards and the spiritual equality between man and woman.

6. Equality in Education

The Holy Quran in about 750 verses exhorts all Muslims, male or female, to read, think deeply and ponder over the signs of God, universe, laws of the nature, sun, moon, stars, turn of the day and night, origin of life, creation of man, history, historical principles of rise and fall of nations etc. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has categorically asserted that:

- Acquiring knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim man and woman.^{lxxviii}

The Holy Prophet has also said that it is the duty of every Muslim to pursue knowledge throughout his or her life span even if it means leading the knowledge seeker to China.

The great emphasis on the seeking of knowledge by both men and women can be better appreciated when we consider the religious importance attached to it by the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran says:

- Only those of His servants who are learned truly fear God.^{lxxix}

This small verse of the Holy Quran possesses far greater strength and incentive to stimulate men and women to acquire more knowledge not for the sake of greater social, economic and political empowerment against the other sex but to seek divine empowerment. In the early period of the Islamic history women were regarded for their scholarly status. Aisha and Hafsa, the wives of the Holy Prophet were good examples. The Holy Prophet even commanded that the slave girls be educated. He asked Shifa bin Abdullah to instruct his wife Hafsa bint Umar accordingly. Lectures of the Holy Prophet were regularly attended by women. At the time of the Holy Prophet's death many Muslim women were already scholars.

7. Rights to Own and Dispose of Property

The Holy Quran for over 1400 years proclaimed the right of every woman to buy and sell, to contract and to earn and to hold and manage her own property and money. The Holy Quran declares:

- Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned.^{lxxx}

A woman has the right to keep her property or wealth whether earned or inherited, spend it as she may please. This right was granted to Western women very recently. The women of India had to wait until 1956 for a right which Muslim women have always taken for granted. Concerning the right to one's earning the Holy Quran says:

- And do not covet those things which God has bestowed on some of you more freely than on other; for men is allotted what they earn but ask God of His bounty; for God has full knowledge of all things.^{lxxxii}

8. Right to Inheritance and Dower

The Holy Quran grants a woman a share in the inheritance of the family, warns against depriving her of that inheritance, specifies that the dower of her marriage should belong to her alone and never be taken by her husband. The Holy Quran says:

- you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit forcibly the women (of your deceased kinsmen) nor (that) you should put constraint upon them that you may take away a part of that which you have given them, unless they be guilty of flagrant lewdness. But consult with them in kindness, for if you hate them it may happen that you hate a thing wherein Allah has placed much good.^{lxxxiii}

It is clear from this verse of the Holy Quran that Islam not only recommends but also insists upon the equality of women and men as one of its essential characteristics. The Quran has denied emphatically and in strong term denigration of women.

It is generally argued that women are considered inferior to men because they have been given half the share in inheritance compared to their male counterparts. This is erroneous for many reasons. First, sexual equality is altogether a different category from inheritance. The former is a moral category while the latter is an economic one. If for some reasons the share given in inheritance to one or the other sex is less or more it does not imply that the recipient of the lesser share is considered inferior. Inheritance depends very much on a social and economic structure and the function of a particular sex within it.^{lxxxiii} The women had a role different from that of men in the Arabian society when the Holy Quran was revealed. The verse of the Holy Quran which fixes various shares in the property of a deceased person provides thus:

- Allah enjoins concerning your children for the male is the equal of the portion of two females; but if there be more than two females, two-thirds of what the deceased leaves is theirs; and if there be one for her is the half. And as for his parents, for each of them is the sixth of what he leaves, if he has a child; but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, for his mother is the third, but if he has brothers, for his mother is the sixth, after (payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed

or a debt. Your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearest to you in benefit. This is an ordinance from Allah.^{lxxxiv}

A careful reading of this verse shows that the Holy Quran has taken care to give women a share in the property of the deceased not only as daughters but also as mothers. Similarly, they also inherit as wives according to the Holy Quran.^{lxxxv} In the pre-Islamic period there was no regular law in this respect. Sometimes women inherited property, sometimes they did not.

It can therefore be said that whereas in the pre-Islamic period women were not regularly, as a rule, given any share in inheritance, the Holy Quran ensured that they got in it in their capacity as daughters, wives and mothers. The fact that they are given half of the share of male heirs is to be seen in its sociological and economic context. It is a well-known principle of Islamic law or Shariah derived from the Holy Quran^{lxxxvi} that a wife is to be looked after by her husband even if she possesses a great deal of wealth. She is not obliged to spend any of her wealth and it is her right to claim maintenance from her husband.

In the same vein, at the time of marriage the woman is entitled to her dower (Mahr) which is hers and hers alone, whatever the amount and she can demand whatever she wants, which her husband is obliged to pay with good grace.^{lxxxvii} Thus, as a wife she adds to whatever she got by way of inheritance as a daughter, and that too without any obligation either to maintain herself or her children. The dower or Mahr amount in most of the Muslim communities is usually quite high and puts a substantial amount into her hands. This dower also acts as an insurance against divorce, which is relatively easy in Islam. The question is what is the position of a daughter who does not marry for certain reasons, social or otherwise. She would have only what she inherits. She may also have to look after herself. Such cases may be exceptional but never the less they are possible.

9. Right to Freedom of Expression

Islam allows full freedom to a woman as much as to man. During the Holy Prophet's time, women used to consult him regarding personal, political, religious, economic and social matters as well as matters related to women's role in war or even sex. They used to have frank and bold discussions with him; arguing and forcefully putting their own points of view before the other companions. The prophet never discouraged them. He used to listen to all their problems peacefully and tried to satisfy them. Once; a woman openly reprimanded the second caliph, Umar regarding a problem related to women in the mosque full of worshippers. Umar indeed acknowledged in front of all the people present, whose ruler he was, that he was wrong but that the woman was right and resumed his sermon only after offering apologies to her.

10. Political Rights of Muslim Women

History bears witness to the fact that in Islam women have not enjoyed the same rights with men when it comes to politics. The rights involved in this situation include the Muslim women's right to participate in election either to vote or to be voted for. The Muslim woman's right to participate in political affairs is also inclusive.^{lxxxviii} As early as the period of the Holy prophet Muhammad and his immediate Caliphs, Muslim women had already engaged themselves in performing various duties of legislative, advisory, executive and judicial nature.^{lxxxix}

The question at this juncture is can a Muslim woman become a head of a state, that is, Islamic state. This question resurfaced recently in Pakistan when Benazir Bhutto became prime minister. The Ulama, especially those who were in the opposite camp, had raised a hue and cry even before her appointment. They declared that a woman cannot become head of an Islamic state. There is absolutely no Quranic provision or provisions in the Prophetic Sunnah against a woman becoming a head of state. The Quranic revelations, more often than not, used to come in response to one or the other situation. In Prophet Muhammad's time no such situation arose nor did anyone ever raise such a question. However, there was a time when a daughter of a Persian ruler came to the throne. The Prophet was then reported to have disapproved of it.

The Holy Quran does not disapprove of the rule of the Queen of Sheba who had South Yemen as her domain. She would overrule her male counselors and act according to her own will.^{xc} When her kingdom, was about to be attacked by Solomon's forces, she consulted them.^{xcii} The Quran says:

- She (the Queen of Sheba) said, O Chiefs, advise me respecting my affairs, I never decide an affair until you are in my presence. They said, we are possessors of strength and possessors of mighty prowess. And the command is thines so consider what thou wilt command. She said, surely, the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it and make the noblest of its people to be low; and thus they do. And surely I am going to send them a present and to see what (answer) the messengers bring back^{xciii}

It is quite clear from the above Quranic verses that the Queen of Sheba was a legitimate ruler. She was also known to be very wise. She used to overrule her male counselors and take her own politically wise decisions. Had Allah disapproved of a woman as head of the state or had a woman's rule been of disastrous, the Quran would have painted the Queen of Sheba in an adverse light and would have shown her to be inferior to her male counselors, but it is otherwise.^{xciii}

From the above provisions of the Holy Quran, one can safely say that there is absolutely nothing in the Holy Quran which directly or indirectly forbids a woman from becoming head of state, or that she is considered ineligible for the position. We must, however point out that certain theologians have argued, on the basis of the Prophet's hadith, that a woman cannot become head of a state. That hadith goes thus:

- Abu Bakra said that Allah caused me considerable benefit from one sentence. When news reached the prophet (p.b.h.) that Iranians had made the daughter of Cusroetheir ruler, he observed: That nation can never prosper which has assigned its reign to a woman.^{xciv}

We must note, however, that the above hadith is an isolated one.^{xcv} It is not one repeated by more than one companion of the prophet^{xcvi}. It is a well-known principle of Sharia that the isolated hadiths are not binding and that it is not necessary to act upon them. One can therefore not make this tradition, which is an isolated one, binding on us and for all ages to come. It is strange that the ulama or Islamic scholars Pakistan made this tradition the basis of their charter of demands that a woman cannot become a head of state in that country.^{xcvii}

Apart from being isolated, there is every possibility that this tradition or hadith is a bogus one. Maulana `umar Ahmad Usmani has shown that this hadith did exist before the Battle of Camel in which `A'isha, the wife of the Prophet, participated. Abu Bakra, the narrator of this hadith remembered it only after the battle had started, and `A'isha had assumed command of the army against Ali, who was elected as the fourth Caliph. Abu Bakra did not remember it earlier, which is proof enough of the fact that it was forged in the context of this battle.^{xcviii}

In the battle of camel, `A'isha the Prophet's wife was in command of the army which had many illustrious companions of the prophet in it. None of them objected to her being in command nor did they desert her for the reason. Even Abu Bakra, the narrator of the hadith did not desert her. How then could it be said that a woman cannot become leader of a government when her leadership was accepted by such eminent companions of the prophet?

It can further be said on this issue that outside the scope of Sharia to be the head of state is a highly coveted privilege. Conversely, within the scope of Sharia to be the head of state is neither a privilege nor highly coveted but only a great responsibility and accountability. Therefore, the question of deprivation does not arise. What is more, it is a unique feature of Sharia that one who seeks a position of authority is considered the most incompetent for it. The early successors to the prophet, the righteous Caliphs, did not use to celebrate their nomination to the office but highly regretted it. As a matter of facts, Islam strictly recommends that the head of state should maintain the same living standard, as that of an ordinary man, and devoid of all luxuries and special status. In view of the above and the biological condition of women it is better that the women are exempted from or relieved of risky, tedious, demanding and nerve-racking round the clock business particularly if they have little children craving for their personal attention. It is therefore a matter of taking a softer attitude towards them, lightening their burden and allow men to bear this hard Islamic duty. It is not a case of deprivation but that of relieving.

11. Women and Islamic Law of Evidence

The worth of women in the Islamic law of evidence has been a very hotly debated issue in Islamic theology. With regard to the evidence of women in matters of written financial contracts, the Holy Quran provides:

- You who have attained to faith, wherever you give or take credit for a stated term, set it down in writing. And let a scribe write it down equitably between you, and no scribe shall refuse to write as God has taught him; thus shall he write. And let him who contracts the debt dictate, and let him be conscious of God, his sustainer and let him not weaken anything of his undertaking. And if he who contracts the debt is weak of mind or body, or is not able to dictate himself, then let him who watches over his interests dictate equitably. And call upon two of your men to act as witnesses, and if two men are not available, then a man and two women from among such as are acceptable to you as witnesses, so that if one of them should make a mistake, the other could remind her. And the witnesses must not refuse (to give evidence) whenever they are called upon.^{xcix}

The Muslim jurists have deducted a general rule from this verse of the Holy Quran that one male witness is equal to two women witnesses and hence man is superior to woman. We must note that this verse mentions two female witnesses and one male witness in reference to financial contracts only. There is no mention of contracts of other kinds and yet the jurists have concluded from this verse that in any matter, financial or otherwise, a woman would be treated as a half witness. The Zia regime enforced this Islamic Evidence Act in an attempt to Islamize the law in Pakistan. However, the mere fact that the Muslim jurists have held this view does not mean that it is absolute. It should be treated as their interpretation and reading of the verse.

The interpretation of this verse by the Muslim jurists is not free from criticism. First, the verse is concerned only with financial matters. Most of the modern commentators who are sympathetic to women's rights are of the opinion that it does not indicate inferiority of women. Women in those days were not sufficiently experienced in financial matters, and hence two female witnesses were recommended by the Quran so that, in case of forgetfulness, one could correct the other. Thus, Muhammad Asad has this to say on the matter:

- The stipulation that two women may be substituted for one male witness does not imply any reflection on woman's moral or intellectual capabilities. This is obviously due to the fact that, as a rule, women are less familiar with business procedures than men and, therefore, more liable to commit mistakes in this respect.^c

Secondly, although two female witnesses in place of one male witness have been recommended; only one would bear witness, the other's function being nothing more than reminding her in case she falters on account of her inexperience in financial matters and not due to her inferior intellectual ability.^{ci}

12. Marital Rights of Women in Islam

Marital rights are an important indicator of women's general status in a society. In most of the societies and religious systems in the past, women have been given no independent right to enter a marital relationship of their own free will. A woman was generally considered incapable of choosing a life partner as her mental capacity was supposed to be inferior to that of a man. The Holy Qur'an

does not subscribe to such view. It considers a woman mentally as well as morally equal to a man. Both will be equally rewarded or punished for their good and bad deeds.^{cii} The Holy Quran provides:

- Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah much – Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.^{ciii}

From the above verse of the Holy Quran it can be seen that the Almighty God has equated both sexes in terms of moral responsibility, and rewards and punishments. This can be logically extended to the sphere of marriage also. Marriage in Islam is a contract between two equal partners. A woman as an equal party can stipulate her preferred conditions in the same way that a man, the other partner, can. Men enjoy no superiority in this respect. The qadi or the person who solemnizes a marriage cannot do so without ensuring the approval of the woman concerned and the conditions she wishes to stipulate, including the amount of dower she wishes to have from the husband to be. These conditions are laid down in the presence of two witnesses who testify before qadi, who then puts them before the bridegroom for his acceptance and approval to marry her. When the bridegroom gives his acceptance and approval, the qadi then solemnizes the marriage. It then follows that without the woman's approval, and approval of her conditions, a marriage cannot take place. She is clearly an equal partner in contracting a marriage.^{civ}

Among the major marital rights of women in Islam is that of sexual intercourse with her husband, sex is not a taboo in Islam. It is considered a legitimate activity within the framework of marriage. It is not a sin for a woman to engage in sexual activity with her husband. It is considered necessary for procreation. Apart from the special divine modes of creating Prophet Adam, his wife, Nana Awawu and Prophet Isa,^{cv} the creation of human beings is through the sexual act. Against this background, the Holy Quran says:

- So let man consider of what he is created. He is created of water pouring forth, coming from between the back and the ribs.^{cvi}

"water pouring forth" is nothing but semen which comes from between the back and the ribs. The Holy Quran therefore accepts that a sexual relationship between man and woman is necessary for procreation. Hence sex within the marital framework is legitimate and necessary. During the pre-Islamic period, there was no restriction on the number of women one could marry. Thus restricting the number to four wives was a reform. It must be noted that the orthodox Muslims consider it as lawful to have sexual relations with women captured in war or purchased in the market. Most of the modern scholars and commentators are of the opinion that such a relationship is not legal and has not been permitted by the Holy Quran.

It is apposite to say at this juncture that there is no concept of child marriage in the Holy Quran as such. The Holy Quran mentions only the concept of nikah^{cvi} irrespective of age and status. Its main concern is marriage as union between woman and man for procreation and for solace for each other and not when and with whom. It is erroneous to say that the Holy Quran allows child marriage. Some scholars of Islam have argued that the Holy Quran 65:4 talks of marriage with a girl who has not reached the age of puberty. This verse goes thus:

- And those of your women who despair of menstruation, if you have a doubt their prescribed time is three months, and of those too, who have not had their courses.^{cvi}

It has been said that "those who have not had their courses" does not necessarily refer to those who have not reached the age of menstruation. On the other hand, these may mean those who do not menstruate for any physiological reasons whatsoever.^{cix}

We must note however that those scholars who advocate child marriage do not impose the father's decision on the girl when she grows to adulthood. Instead, she is given the option of puberty according to which the girl who has been given in marriage in her childhood by her marriage guardian^{cx} has the option of accepting or rejecting the marriage on reaching adulthood. This right of her is absolute and no one can interfere with it, not even her father or any other male or female relative. Fyzee has this to say on this:

- If a Muslim minor has been married during minority by a guardian, the minor has the right, on attaining majority, to repudiate such marriage^{cx}

13. Maintenance of the Wife

Maintenance is the lawful right of the wife under a valid marriage contract on certain conditions. It is the right of a wife to be provided at the husband's expense, and on a scale suitable to his means, with food, clothing, housing, toilet necessities, medicine doctors and surgeons' fees, baths and also the necessary servants where the wife is of a social position which does not permit her to dispense with such services on when she is sick^{cxii}. All the modern Arab Laws more or less repeat this general Sharia provision, with some slight modifications. In Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait and Algeria, there is an identical provision that maintenance consists of food, clothing, housing and the amenities thereof, treatment fees according to custom, and servants for women whose equals have servants^{cxiii}.

The Holy Quran puts the entire burden of maintenance of the wife on the husband and whatever her own wealth and income she is not obliged to give her husband anything from her income. Even where the husband is poor and the wife is wealthy, the husband has to give her maintenance according to his capacity. Maintenance by her husband is the lawful right of the wife, irrespective of her means or religion. This position is virtually unanimously held by the Muslim jurists and modern statute^{cxiv}. The entitlement of the wife to maintenance derives from the authority of the Quran, Prophet's tradition and consensus. The Holy Quran provide:

- The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers according to decent custom is upon the father of the child. No one should be charged beyond his capacity. A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child, nor should be to whom the child is born by his child. And on the father's heir is incumbent the like of that^{cxv}

For the divorced women, the Quran commands:

- Lodge them where you dwell, according to your wealth, and harass them not so as to straighten life for them^{cxvi}
- As regards the tradition or hadith of the Prophet, the Prophet preached in his last sermon that:
- Show piety to women, you have taken them in the trust of God and have had them made lawful for you to enjoy by the word of God, and it is your duty to provide for them and clothe them according to decent custom^{cxvii}
- Maintenance of the wife is deemed a debt on the husband from the date of withholding it once it is due. Only payment or discharge can settle the debt^{cxviii}

14. Islamic Feminism

The cruelty or injustice against women over the years in different societies has fueled the agitation by women for their rights to be recognized in the society. This gave rise to various feminist movements, seeking to improve the quality of life for women. Feminism as a contemporary social force stands for challenging the politics of sexual division of roles in society in its entire cultural, economic and political ramifications. This is done from different perspectives. Feminism has different aspects including but not limited to religious feminism, liberal feminism, cultural feminism and radical feminism.

Islamic feminism gleaned from the writing and works of Muslim protagonists as a feminism discourse and practice that derives its understanding and mandate from the Holy Quran, seeking rights and justice within the framework of gender equality for women and men in the totality of their existence. Islamic feminism explicates the idea of gender equality as part and parcel of the Quranic notion of equality of all human beings and calls for the implementation of gender equality in the state, civil institutions and everyday life. It rejects the notion of a public and private dichotomy, conceptualizing a holistic Umma in which Quranic ideals are operative in all spheres.

Islamic feminism aims to recover the notion of gender equality, radical in its day that the Quranic revelation introduced into 7th century patriarchal Arabia.^{cxix} Human equality, from which gender equality cannot be separated, did not sit well with the patriarchal cultures into which Islamic feminists patriarchal thought institutions, and behaviours largely remain resistant over time to the revolutionary Quranic notion of gender equality to the extent that the equation of patriarchy and Islamic became axiomatic.

Islamic feminism has taken on the two-fold task of exposing and eradicating patriarchal ideas and practices which make the women inferior to men and recuperating Islamic core idea of gender equality which is indivisible from human equality. Islamic feminism is an inter-Islamic phenomenon produced by Muslims at various locations around the globe. It is predicated on the belief that it will promote the enjoyment of social justice within the Umma while it will also contribute to the creation of society where all human beings will be treated equal irrespective of their ethnic religious and gender affiliations. As regards the older Muslim societies in Africa and Asia, Islamic feminism appeared first in countries which Islam penetrated earlier, countries which had a large and expanding educated and professional female middleclass and countries with a history of homegrown feminist thought and activism.^{cxx}

The new Islamic feminism paradigm began to surface about two decades ago simultaneously in Old Muslim societies in parts of Africa and Asia and in newer communities in Europe and North America. In Iran, immediately post-Khomeini, Muslim women and certain male clerics assented for the practice of women's rights they found being infringed upon or rolled back grounding their arguments on the provisions of the Holy Quran which is the virtual constitution of the Republic. In South Africa, Muslim women and men who had engaged, as South Africa in one of history's fiercest battles for human dignity and justice, in the immediate post-apartheid era focused their attention on question of Justice especially gender justice within their own Muslim community.

In North America, women in immigrant and convert communities turned to the Holy Quran as a guide to life in new complex environments in which they did not have ready-made life-templates as Muslims.

Islamic feminist thoughts circulated with the advent of the printing press and rise of print journalism in Muslim societies. It is spreading infinitely faster and globally through the internet and the satellite. It has a vibrant presence in cyberspace reverberating in the digital Islamic galaxy. The theoretical core of Islamic feminism countries to be grounded on Quranic interpretation or tafsir. The central focus remains the explication of gender evidence of the application of Islamic feminist theory in practice. A good example is the revision of the Moroccan Mudawwana or civil code, now the most gender-equalitarian sharia – grounded civil code. It is also evident in the new draft revision of the family code in Indonesia. Similarly, it was the application of gender just interpretation of Islam predicated on the arguments confessed, through a dynamic investigation of fiqh or jurisprudence, that led to the acquittal of two Nigerian women accused of adultery and condemned to death under the new criminal or penal laws enacted in various Northern Nigerian States while their partners were never held accountable.

15. Conclusion

This paper has examined the rights and status of women in Islam. Emphasis has been placed on the original and authentic sources of shar'iah. This represents the standard according to which degree of adherence of Muslims can be judged. It is a known and well established fact that during the time of decline, many Muslims did not adhere strictly to the teachings of Islam on the dignity of women. Their deviations were, however, unfairly exaggerated by some writers. The deviations were superficially taken to represent the teachings of Islam to the Western readers without taking the trouble of making original or unbiased study of the authentic study of these teachings.

Despite the above situation the following three facts are not easily compromised with regard to Muslim women:

- a. The history of Muslims is rich with women of great achievements in all make of life from as early as the seventh century^{cxxi}

- b. It is impossible for anyone to justify any mistreatment of women by any decree of rule embodied in the Islamic law nor could anyone dare to cancel, reduce or distort the clear-cut rights of women under the Shar'iah.
- c. Throughout history, the reputation, chastity and maternal role of Muslim women have remained the objects of admiration by impartial observers.

Lastly, it is not an overstatement to say that the current status of women generally was not reached naturally or by sheer kindness of men. It was achieved through a long process of struggle and sacrifice on women's part. In the case of Islam or Shariah, the compassionate and dignified status of women was decreed not because such status reflects the environment of the seventh century, or due to threat or pressure of women and their organizations but rather because of intrinsic truthfulness. The summary is that this demonstrates the divine origin of the Shar'iah or Islamic law and its message. Unlike human ideologies or philosophies the Shar'iah principles do not grow obsolete. In any event, it is the message of All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah (God) whose wisdom, knowledge and understanding are far beyond the ultimate in human thought and progress.

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- cxi. Asaf A. A. Fyzee, (1974) , Outline of Muhammadan Law, oxford university press , 4th edition, p. 94.
- cxii. Jamal J. N. , 1990, the Status of Women Under Islamic Law and Under Modern Islamic Legislation, London, Graham & Troman Ltd. , P. 58.
- cxiii. Ibid.
- cxiv. Ibid at page 60.
- cxv. Holy Quran 2:233.
- cxvi. Ibid 65:6.
- cxvii. See Bukhari, Fada Ashab al-Nabi, P 1021.
- cxviii. Jamal J. N. , op. cit. p. 60.
- cxix. Atya Baffoun, (1982), Women and Social Changes in the Muslim World, Women's Studies International Forum, V. , p227.
- cxx. See Agaju Madugba, Ahmed Oyerinde, Juliana Taiwo & Yakubu Musa, Shar'iah, Appeal Court Frees Safiya-Decision is victory for Islamic Law. This Day Newspaper Vol. 8 No. 2529, Tuesday, March 26, 2002. See also Constance Ikokwu, Safiya Acquittal: The Triumph of Reason over Law, This Day Newspaper, Sunday March 31, 2002 page 13.
- cxxi. See for example, Nadvi, A. S. , (1959), Heroic Deeds of Muslim Women, Islamic Publications Ltd, Lahore, Pakistan, pp. 5-11.