

Women empowerment in building a better world in the light of Risala- i- Nur

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Abstract—Women’s empowerment has become a central issue in the contemporary context of social justice, and world peace. The present study draws insights from Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s monumental *Risala-i-Nur* to explore the concept and significance of women empowerment in building a better and harmonious world. Written during a time of moral crisis and social change, *Risala-i-Nur* offers a spiritually grounded and morally rich framework for understanding the status, rights and responsibilities of women within society. The study further interests how *Risala-i-Nur* challenges social practices that degrade women or deprive them of education and intellectual growth. Nursi advocates women’s access to religious and moral education as a means of strengthening both personal identity and social cohesion. She presents women as guardians of faith, morality and cultural continuity, especially in times of moral decline and ideological confusion. In this sense, women’s empowerment is inseparable from the moral and spiritual regeneration of society as a whole.

Index Terms—Empowerment, Challenges, Risala-i-Nur, Compassion, Humanity

I. INTRODUCTION

Islam is not only a religion; rather it is a universal civilization as well as the best and complete life style for natural livelihood. Someone criticizes Islam without having knowledge regarding rights and freedom of women bestowed upon by Islam. It is frequently heard that Islam imprisons women within the boundary of house wearing ‘Burkha’ (Veil). Of course Islam does not allow nudeness, half nudeness and free movement in the name of women freedom. On the other hand Islam recognized veiling system protects purity and honour of women nation. Today discussion is going on and demand is raised around, regarding women freedom and women rights, but Islam is the only religion that declared equal

rights for both men and women fourteen hundred years ago. Practically Islam highlighted for the first time on the idea of women freedom as well as women equal rights.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

- To portray the rights of women
- To highlight the position and dignity of women in Islam

III. METHODOLOGY

This study follows analytical and descriptive approaches. Primary and secondary sources of information have been used to support the analysis and prepared with the assistance of research papers, critical essays, articles related to this study.

IV. DISCUSSION

Condition of women among other nations before Islam:

Before Islam the status of women was not better than that of any other furniture of the house among many nations in the whole world according to their prevailing tradition. Women were also sold just like four footed animal. Their views were not given value at the time of marriage. They did not inheritate the wealth of their relatives. Rather women themselves were considered deserted goods like other household goods. Women were considered subordinate to men. They did not have any right on anything. Rather husband had the recognized right that he could use his women shaped wealth as and where he liked to use. Even in Europe in the countries which are considered as the most civilized countries, there were such people who did not recognize women as

mankind. The Christian people considered women as the source of all sins.

In 586 A.D. a little sympathy was exhibited on women in French and after several oppositions they accepted a proposal that, it is true that women are also human being, but they are created only to serve men folk. In England the most civilized country in the world a bill on women rights was recommended in 1500 AD.

Though ancient Greece and Rome are considered as the motherland of modern civilization, there also women were not given deserved status. In ancient Greece and Rome women were considered as despised thing. Women were practically sold in the hand of husband. A man could marry only one woman, but he could continue sexual relation with many other women. Of course dowry system was not prevailed in ancient Rome. A father could give marry his daughter according to his will. A husband had such right that he could kill his wife if he wished. Women had no right to vote in ancient Greece & Rome.

In ancient India also the condition of women was not satisfactory. Women did not inheritate the wealth of their father or husband. If a cruel husband oppressed his wife, she could not get free from his oppression except her death. Though since long in Hindu society women power were given honour through goddess worshipping, yet "satidah" (willing death of wife with the death of her husband) was prevailing among some tribes. The Hindu mythology has not directed to do so, but the cruelty of men folk and social injustice compelled them to die in the funeral of their husband.

Condition of women in Arab Society before Islam:

Before Islam the condition of women were more sorrowful in Arab society. In the eye of law they had no rights. Women were like their movable wealth. Women were a part of wealth of father or husband. They continued free and open sexual relation with women. The conjugal and sexual life of men and women was not more developed than that of animals. They involved in sexual relation congressionally under the open sky. But they did not like female child. So they expressed sorrow after the birth of a female child and killed them alive.

During the age of darkness there was the prevailing of accepting unlimited wives. At the same time they could marry two Sisters together. After the death of

father they could marry his step mother or divorced step mother.

Hazrat Muhammad (sm) and women:

The prophet Mohammad (sm) had opened the veil of eyes of the people of the world. He taught people to respect people. He established rule and justice in the society and he made obligatory upon men folk to protect women rights. Women were given ownership of property and rights to marry. A father cannot compel his daughter to marry against her will. The system of *muharana* is unique in Islam. Women have also share of wealth of their husband, father and other relatives. If husband denies her rights she can divorce him.

The Holy Quran and Women:

The holy Quran has brought a great revolution regarding the condition of women. The equal right of both man and women was written for the first time in history and it was executed. The holy Quran says:

And women shall have rights similar to the rights against men, according to what is equitable; decree over them and Allah is exalted in power (Surah al-Baqara 2:228).

Before Islam the Arabs killed their female child in fear of poverty. Islam forbade such heinous and inhuman practices and the holy Quran declared:

"Kill not your children fear of want: we shall provide, sustenance for them as well as for you verily killings of them is a great sin" (Surah Bani Israil 17: 31).

Allah says: When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief with shame does he hide himself from his people because of the bad news he has had; shall he retain it on sufferance and contempt, or bury it in the dust? "Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on" (Surah al nahal 16:58, 59).

Without the existence of women the survival of human race is impossible. So the holy Quran declares:

"To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows (children) male or female according to His will."

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi emphasized on women education. He established a spiritual university in Anatolia and in order to enroll at this university he demanded from essences which are impotence (Ajz),

poorness (Faqr) compassion (Shafqah), and contemplation (Tafakkur). He also regarded women as the privileged and inherent students of this university by giving the title of compassion heroines. A woman whose nature is uncorrupted doesn't prefer the great pleasure is which she gets preserving her morality to the taste coming from the sins. The true pleasure for women is to preserve her morality and as to her dignity and honour, it is to provide a basis for the developed societies by raising generations.

Nursi's disciples meet together in homes and institutions in some mixed gender meetings and interactions between the sexes are natural and common. Nursi women study and work in social institutions side by side males when and where feasible. Nursi disciples see women as the first teachers of society and believe that it is essential that women acquire as much education of all types as possible. It was a belief of said Nursi that women are the "heroes of compassion" and that it is women's strong innate sense of compassion that places women in a unique position to keep society on the track of compassion and kindness to others.

Nursi warned against liberation organization that seek to change women into thinking that they are like men and should act as men do, just because they do have equal rights and responsibilities to that of men. Nursi believed that women and men have different inherent natures and that their roles in society, though they may overlap in many cases, are essentially different.

The key for women is to be the model and first educator in the home, to care for her husband, home and children as her first order of business and to be protected and cared for in kind by her husband who should be the main breadwinner and ultimate guide and authority in the home.

Nursi said that the role of "mothers" loom large in child education, because women are the symbols of the next generations. There is a well known saying: who brings up a male, brings up a man, but who brings up a woman, brings up a generation. The most effective teacher is mother.

It attracts attention in *Risala-i-Nur* that the very first and effective teacher of the human is his mother. Allah bestowed upon the women such a holy duty as "motherhood". No matter how old a man is, all lessons and education he takes throughout his life is based on the education given by mother. The sense of

humanity and showering mercy which are the signs of humanity are learned fundamentally from the behaviors' of their mothers.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say that Islam never dishonor women, rather it made obligatory to acquire knowledge upon both men and women. In some aspects women are given higher position than men. Said Nursi had not differed in his writing *Risala-i-Nur* as discussed above. *Risala-i-Noor* promotes a balanced vision of empowerment that reconciles spiritual values with social participation. It rejects both oppressive traditionalism and unrestrained materialism, offering instead a middle path that respects women's dignity, freedom and contributions to the public and private spheres. Emphasizing mutual respect, cooperation between men and women, and moral responsibility, Nursi's thought contributes to a holistic model of sustainable development.

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