

# Women Before and After Islam with Special Reference to Arab

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## Historical background of women before the advent of Islam

Before the advent of Islam the Arab use to treat women as a piece of their property. Women were not given any social status, right as well as respect in the society and were considered as a source of disgrace or embarrassment. After the death of their husband, they were not allowed to marry someone until her husband's guardian permitted her to marry someone otherwise she could not marry. Moreover the worse condition was that women cannot marry until that guardian grows up, either he would marry her (except his own mother) or get her marry with anyone else of his own choice without knowing the will of lady and take dowry on her behalf.

The situation was so pathetic when the Arabs came to know that any women gave birth to a female child they usually dig a hole and would burry that female child alive there. There was one incident in which one father was far travelling for some work and his wife gave birth to a female child, when he came to know he throw his daughter into the hole and cover with dust while his wife was screaming but his heart did not soften.

Whenever the father came to know that their wives have given birth to a female child their faces would become dark because of their hatred for female child.

## Reasons for hating female child

1. the female daughters were not allowed to take any part in the war
2. Daughters were considered as the source of shame and embarrassment
3. Most of the daughters were forced towards prostitution
4. They(daughters) had no legal status in the society and most of them were unaware of their fathers as well

In Madinah Abdullah Ibn e Ubay Ibn salool who was a head of the hypocrites takes money and in return forced the girls for being prostitutes.

## Economic Conditions

Economically Jews had more power in Arabia.

Slavery was economic institution of Arabia and women slaves were sold and bought like animals. Moreover when the foreigners come to visit Arabia for the purpose of trade as Makkah and Yathrib (madina) both in hijaz were the urban centers of trade and the females were forced to satisfy and entertain those traders. Such were the condition of women before the advent of Islam in Arabia

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## Women after Islam

In Islam there is absolutely no difference between man and woman as far as their connection with their creator(God) is concerned. They both are given same reward for performing any good deed and same punishment for performing any evil.

The Qur'an says "And for women are rights Over men similar to those of men over women"

The Qur'an in addressing the Muslims often uses the expression "Believing men and women " which emphasis the equality of men and women in regard to their respective duties, rights, virtues and merits.

Islam has assigned different roles and duties to the women in order to maintain the equilibrium in the society and family. In this article we shall discuss some of the roles, rights as well as responsibilities which are given to women by Islam some 1400 years ago

## Women as a wife

The first and most important right given to a woman is to choose her life partner with her will. The marriage without the consent of lady is null or void.

The messenger of God said "When one Of you want to give his daughter in marriage take her permission"

Another hadith the Messenger said

"Take the Women's permission regarding their private parts"

As it is clearly mentioned the importance of bride's permission for her nikkah. If parents or guardians (Wali) didn't take permission then this marriage is considered as null. In such a situation the bride has right to approach to the Islamic authorities for their intervention.

The relationship of husband and wife is truly based on love, respect and mutual affections

The Qur'an says "They are your garments and you are their garments"

The Messenger of God said" The best among you are those who are best towards his wife and I am the best of you towards my wives"(tirmidhi)

Another sayings of Messenger of God" A believer must not hate a believing woman(his wife) if he dislikes one of his traits he will be pleased with another"(sahih muslim)

On another occasion the Prophet Muhammad was asked to whom he loves the most and he replied my wife A'ishah(Bukahari)

To support his wife the messenger used to do work at home himself. Al Aswad asked A'ishah, what prophet used to do at home, She replied "he used to serve his households but when the time of prayers comes he would go up for the prayer(Bukhari)

### **Rights of wife**

1. The dowry(mehr)
2. maintenance
3. provide her privacy/separate house
4. provide her food, cloth and all necessary things
5. provide her safety and protection
6. Treat her with respect, love and honour

### **Women as a mother**

Mother has given highest position in Islam and Islam commands children to be grateful, respectful, kind and obedient towards their mother. "Mothers rights are much more than fathers" rights"

The Qur'an says "Your lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and to be kind towards parents

Once a man came to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! Who from amongst mankind warrants the best companionship from me?" He replied: "Your mother." The man asked:

"Then who?" So He (PBUH) replied: "Your mother." The man then asked: "Then who?" So the Prophet (PBUH) replied again: "Your mother." The man then asked: "Then who?" So He (SAW) replied: "Then your father." (Bukhari)

On another occasion the Prophet Muhammad said "Your heaven lies under the feet of your mother(Sunan nisai)

In short one should always be respectful and obedient towards his/her mother and never ever express any anger in front of her even if she does something wrong.

### **Women as a Daughter**

As mentioned earlier in this article what people of Arabs used to do with daughters. They used to bury them alive, they had no legal rights and whenever the news of female birth was brought to anyone of them there face would become dark and was filled with inward grief.

The Prophet Muhammad came and elevated the status of this gift given by God, welcoming the daughters, and rising high the importance of their upbringing with words to delight the hearts of the believing fathers and bring joy to their soul.

The relationship of Prophet with his daughter Fatima is one of the finest example of father- daughter relationship. The Prophet used to respect and love her so much that he would standup for her when he would see her approaching towards him(Musnad ahmed)

The importance of daughters can be understood from this hadith as Prophet Muhammad said" whoever has three daughters or sisters or two daughters and sisters and lives with them in a good manner and has patience with them, and fears God with regard to them will enter Paradise (Jamia tirmidhi)

### **Rights of daughters**

1. Right to life and protection
2. Right to education
3. Right of inheritance
4. Right of marriage with consent
5. Right to maintenance and financial support

### **Conclusion**

From all the points presented above briefly both Muslim men and women are equal in status in terms of their rights and both are rewarded the same for performing good deeds and punished the same for performing any evil as both are created from the same source. Women are highly respectable in any role weather it is mother, daughter, sister or wife. They have full rights in area of education, economics, poltics etc and moreover they have choice of choosing their partner by their own constent and they

have right of asking for divorce, custody of children and their financial allowances. It was Islam for the first time who provide them the right of inheritance and share from the property of father and deceased husband as well.

Women in any role deserve respect and honor and at the same time equal opportunities as they constitutes half of our population and are productive for all the spheres of life.

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