

SOCIAL WELFARE AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN MUSLIM SOCIETY (FROM HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE)

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Abstract: *The concept of spirituality and religion with perspective to social welfare enhances overall well-being by Muslim women. An Islamic yesteryear reveals that women have condescending enlightenment and erudition in social welfare execution. From the very outset of Islam, both Men and Women have played vital role in social welfare of crown of creation. Both genders work on societal, ethical and moral practice and their works resonate and prompt as devotion. But the people extort and change the Islamic principles for women. All societal and cultural rules are made by men and they do not consider the work of women as resonant as men's works are. In the past, women considered as property and sold or bought and had no value. Different cultures and civilizations of different religious and dogmas did not give respect to women. And before Islam, the land of Arab presented the heart wrenching condition of women. But history also reveals that it is the doctrine of Islam which makes people learn ethics, moral values and gives respect to women. Muslim women play pivotal role in spiritual and social practices for the crown of creations. Therefore, social welfare illuminates Islamic practices for mankind and alternates the social depression and deprivation. "There will be nothing weighing heavier on the scales of a Muslim in the Hereafter than good morals. Allah the Almighty hates those who act and speak ill". (Tirmidhi, Birr, 62)*

Keywords: *Muslim Women, Crown Of Creation, Social Practice, Spiritual Services, Social Welfare*

Introduction

” يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ“
(13:49)

From elementary enlightenment, woman had played a key role in man's creation with men. Later people began to exploit women by making them a model for their purposes and goals. All the principles and rules of civilizations and laws are made for men, and the woman is excluded from the human race. The woman was only considered a gender and unprofitable property like a time and land. Like all different nations and civilizations, other religions did not give women legitimate respect. In this context, if we validate and analyse the Arab land, then the condition of woman was pathetic and miserable. The unusual behavior was his reward. The Quran secured cruel behavior with the woman before Islam.

”واذا بشر احد هم بالا نثى ظل وجهه مسودا وهو كظيم يتوارى من القوم من سؤى ما بشر به ايمسكه على هون ام يدسه فى التراب الاسأى ما يحكمون“
(58:16)

"And when some of them are given good news to the girl, her face becomes black and becomes full of anger, hiding from the people, because of the good news of the evil which was given to him (whether it was sent Keep it or burst it in dust) "

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not claim the honor and glory of women while following the Quranic Rights, but in the fields of wisdom, bravery and devotion, civilization and hypercivilization, women were erected equal to men. In Quran Al-Ahqaf describes this as follows:

”وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا“ (46:19)

“And for each and every has one according to what he did.”

Women follow behind the teachings of Holy Prophet as men performed. Like other fields of life, Muslim women have also mentioned memorable and insignificant impressions in the field of Social welfare and Sufism. From the start of Islam to today, "the role of Muslim women in philanthropy and universal goodwill" is worth seeing.

In men, where the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Taabiein” (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Taba Taabiein” ,the son of Imams, the scholars, “Mohadaseeno Mufasreen”, “Mufaqreeno Mujtahideen”, Literati and Islamic jurist were born in the same society where women were famous for their knowledge, bravery, wisdom and politics, sufism and piety and philanthropy and social welfare.

Problem Statement

This article highlights the role of Muslim women who played essential role in spreading social welfare but the problem is that few numbers of books are present to appreciate and remember the mantle of women in highlighting social welfare. The benefit of this article is to make

reminder and accentuate the names of the great women who take part in social welfare in the past.

Objective

The main objective of this paper is to draw attention towards the women's role in proliferating social welfare and to put a name to all those Muslim women who were forgotten and were not known by lay man.

Literature Review

Amphioxus Meaning of Service or Welfare

Ibne Manzoor African wrote in his book "Moajaum" that the word "خَدَمَ" and "welfare" means to serve.

"خدم: الخَدَم: الخدم، والخدام: واحد الخدم و تخدمت خادما الى اتخذت، ولا بد لمن له خادم ان يخدم الى يخدم نفسه."
(Moajaum:ibne Manzoor,V14, 1660)

Ibne Faris wrote in his book

"خدمه يخدمه فهو خدم"
(Maqalwwaul Lugat: Ibne Faris, P:63)

Terminological meaning of Service or Welfare

The word "SERVANT" has the same meaning and usage in the language of Urdu, English and Arabic. Similarly the word "servant" is used in the sense of "helper", "attendant", "supporter" and "retainer".

In encyclopedia of National Language Promotion Department, the word "welfare" means "to support", "to take care". (Encyclopedia of National Language)

Molvi Kareem-ud-din writes "Servant" means "to serve" (Urdu Lugat: V.8,p.339,1987)

Syed Tasdeek Hussain wrote about "servant" that "to serve" (Lugaat Kishwari:p.247,1986)

In Urdu-Daira-Maarif-e-Islamiah, "servant" means "to do welfare" and "to serve" (p.803)

The plural noun of "SERVANT" is "خَدَمَ" and plural is "خَدَمَ".

What is Social Welfare

To worship Almighty Allah and to serve humanity are two important parts of Islamic teachings.

"التعظيم لا امر الله، والشفقة على خلق الله"

(Marqaat Sharah Mashkaat: V:11, p.290)

"It means to respect orders of Allah Almighty and to serve humanity."

There are two kinds of worships in Islam. One is Rights of Allah and another one is Rights of human beings. There are two kinds of successes mention in Islam. One is worldly success and another one is afterlife success. Worldly success makes man respectable and gets wealth after fulfilling religion and worldly criteria. Afterlife success achieves through social welfare and service. Mujajad-ud-din Mohammad Bin Yaqoob Alferoz Abaadi writes that success (falah) is based on four things.

- i. BAQA BLA FANA بقابلا فناء
 - ii. GHANA BLA FAQAR غنا بلا فقر
 - iii. IZZAT BLA DOOLAT عزت بلا دولت
 - iv. ILM BLA JAHAL علم بلا جهل
- (Basair Zawi altamiz Alqahira:p.213)

Islam is the only religion which focuses on social welfare from the very first day. In European states, the term “Welfare State” introduced in 1909 and it was applicable in 930. (The Social Science Encylopedia:p.898)

Titnus elaborates the meaning of social welfare in these words:

“All collective interventions to meet certain needs of individual and/or to serve the wider interests of society; [these] may be broadly grouped into three major categories of welfare: social welfare, fiscal welfare and occupation al welfare.”

(International encyclopedia of Social Sciences: V.12, P:142)

In international encyclopedia of social sciences, social welfare is defined as:

“Activities that directly concern the economical and social well being of individuals and families. (Vol.12, P:142)

Social welfare is a broad term. This word carries a deep and vast meaning. The word “social” means that all the living beings on this planet whether they are humans and animals and to serve these things are our moral and religious responsibility.

Allah has created different kinds of things e.g. human beings, plants and animals and these are all included in creature of Allah and to take care of all these things are like doing social service and welfare.

The Holy Quran gives the characteristics of believers in many surahs and these traits are to spend money in the way of Allah, to take care of orphans and to feed poor people.

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) served humanity for whole of his life. When he (P.B.U.H) made the foundation of Islamic state, he said in his first sermon:

”افشوا السلام وصلوا الارحام واطعموا الطعام وصلوا بالليل والناس نيام تدخلوا الجنة بالسلام“

(Ibne Abi Shabta:Alhadees:25389)

It means:

“Spread peace (Islam), to feed, do act of good behavior, to say prayers in night and doing all this all of you enter into jannah.”

Social welfare is the basic education of Islam. From Islamic point of view, to respect and to serve humanity is important things. Everyone is equal in the eyes of Allah. It is also an old tradition to serve humanity and to help and support needy people. The definitions of social welfare vary from historical perspective and for different countries and cultures.

Types of social welfare

There are different types of social welfare in Islam;

i. To feed pauper and the poor, ii. To make Muslim happy, iii. To eliminate distress and grief of people, iv. Not to reveal secret, v. To help and support people, vi. Do good acts with widow, vii. Do good acts with orphans, viii. To take care of orphans, ix. To build hotel for guests, x. To do plantation, xi. To do good acts with neighbors, xii. To build mosques, xiii. To spend in the way of Allah, xiv. To free the servants, xv. To be humble with captive and slaves and xvi, To forgive the debts of debtors

The Holy Quran and Hadith focus on social welfare and service. All these above mentioned types of social welfare complete the religion of Muslim. Allah says that those people who love Allah and feed the poor are true believer of Allah.

“ويطعمون الطعام على حبه مسكينا ويتيما و اسيرا” (76:8)
“And they (Muslims) in love of Allah feed pauper, orphan and captive”

Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umro Bin aalaas (R.A) anecdotes that somebody asks from Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) which Islam is better?

“اي السلام خير قال: تطعم الطعام و تقرأ السلام على من عرفت و من لم تعرف”
(AL Jama: ALHADEES:12, V:1)
“It is Islam to feed people whether you know him or not”

To do social welfare is a spiritual merit and without any discrimination, Islam gives order to both men and women to do social welfare and service. The social welfare of Muslim women is more resonant than men’s work. Muslim women play an important role in spiritual and social practices for the whole mankind.

Role of Muslim women in Social Welfare

Ummahatul Momineen, daughters of Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “Sahabiyaat” and sufi women are remembered for their historical and commendable work. In every age, such almighty and the most holy people were there to guide people towards enlightenment. Muslim women seem prominent in public training, purification of the self and guiding towards the light of Divine recognition, social service and welfare from the historical context. They did not demonstrate even less capabilities in the spiritual training of the human being and moral improvement.

History is witnessing that the ranks of the people who serve on the earth are justified by holy souls and non Muslims also play vital role in social welfare. But in the follow-up of the Sunnah of Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , the saints and Sufis are prominent to follow Sunnah. There are not only men in this field but also women are happy with heart and soul.

During a period of time, strange conflicts continue between the east and west regarding the woman. The West is using slogan of Feminism and the East is using the slogan to protect women. In fact, the West made women a gender market; the East Middle also exploited them in the face of religion.

Therefore, it is necessary that the world should be introduced to such women who lived in the Middle East and chose the right path not only for themselves, but also guided others and to serve humanity and made themselves useful and helpful for others. They made a smooth path to eternal happiness and guidance. Because the Quran also teaches it:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

"There is a wide range of majesty, al-Qafhaaf, 91 and each is according to what they have done."

It means that Islam eliminates the particularization of men and women in practice. If we take a look on the life of the wives of the Holy Prophet ((peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the characteristics like to help the disabled people, condescension with orphans, charity for the sake of Allah are prominent part of their lives and Muslim women follow these attributes and these attributes and virtues are also part of Muslim women who truly follow Ummahatul Momineen.

Hazrat Sauda (R.A) and Hazrat Zainab binte Jahash (R.A) were the wives of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). Both had the generous and soothing heart. They removed the tegument and worked on tanning as well. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) suggested spending money on husband and children would get double reward by women. (Al-Isti, abfima, rifat-ashah, V.4, p:1856)

Ummul Momineen Syeda Zainab Binte Khazima (625) was well known as “Mother of pauper” (Umul Masakeen). (Abu Dawud:hadith:1667) She was very helpful towards pauper, the poor and beggars.

Umme Mobud (R.A) was a traditional hospitable woman. She provided water, milk and meat to the traveler. From the dark ages till Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) spent thirteen years of his prophet hood, Umme Mobud was known to do social welfare for many years. (Nomani, Seerat-un-Nabi, V:4, p:168)

Umme Shareek (R.A) fed people and her home was known as “Guest house” (Mehmaan Khanaye Aam).

In the reign of caliphate Moatiz Billah (289), two sisters (Ali ibn: Jumhara tunishab alarab, p:160) in Magrabai Aqsa (western Aqsa) built universities and hostels for the first time by any woman in 3rd century.(Qazi Athar: Khair-ul-Quroon darsgahein)

One of the sister was Hazrat Umul Baneen Fatima Binte Mohammad Bin Abdullah founded the university named University of Qaroyeen and she bought site of university from her own money. (Ahmad, Lecture the Muslim world, P:185) the second sister was Hazrat Maryum Binte Mohammad Bin Abdullah Fahri founded University of Andulusia and also built hostels.(As above: P:187) She also built mosque which was named as Jamai-al- Undlas. (As Above: P:191)

In fact, when the Muslim women are mentioned, only the name of Hazrat Rabia (R.A) is taken by the author, the other names are not searched for, so the scholars do not know them.

If the history of Islam is studied, then there is a significant number of women who have been associated with social welfare and service. After the names of UMMAHATUL MOMINEEN, there are other names of Muslim women like Hazrat Mu'aaza Adwiyah. Mu'awaza binte Abdullah obtained the knowledge from UMMUL MOMINEEN, Hazrat Aisha (R.A), Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (R.A) and Hasham bin Aamir (R.A), honored to meet all these historical personalities and narrating hadeeth. (Zahbi, Serul Allaam Annabla, P:509)

Another important Muslim woman, Hazrat Um-ul-Muslim al-Khulaniya Taabiyah, a piety woman who used to twist and wind fibers was obedient of her husband. She was one of the women who willingly and whole heartedly fulfilled the social service and welfare for the sake of Allah. She left all the worldly matters when there was a matter of to spread Islam. She worked with her hands and considered it obsequious and submissive respect. Working is a worship. (Jaweez: Saftus Sawfa, V.4, P:178)
She made a huge contribution in the social welfare and spent all the money she earned for the sake of Allah.

Another famous name is BB Jamal Khatoon (R.A). She was the sister of Mir Qadri who was the famous Waliullah (Allah' s friend). She got Faiz from Qadri Tariqah (Sufi order). She was a true piety woman. BB was very happy to feed people. There were arranged anchor, which many people used to eat, when the food was ready, she herself started out to distribute food and used to say that no one should be hungry to eat from wherever they come, will be fulfilled.

Prince Darashukova writes in his book that once she cleaned 80 kg wheat and kept it in her house, the whole year wheat was used. She used to distribute this wheat among relatives, beggars and poor people. She continued to distribute this wheat for many years(Scinatulawalia: p:436,1975). The works and social services of BB is one of the best example of philanthropy and social welfare of Muslim women.

A woman which was commonly known in the women's age, has a name Hazrat HindbinteMehlab. Her theory was that the fraudulent hand always gets Allah's blessings.

Umm Abdullah Al Atki says:

"I used to visit Hind binte Mehlab , she used to paternoster (tasbih) on the beads when she got free from paternoster, then she bounced the pearls to us and asked us to divide it. "(Ibne Kaseer: Al-Badayat-un-Nahayee,V.8,P:250)

Hazrat SafiahbinteAbiUbayd spent his wealth immeasurable for the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Social service was her favorite habit. To spend in the way of Allah Almighty was

her passion. Undoubtedly, Safia Abi'Abid lifted her life as an ideal woman, an honorable mother and a merciful wife. (Kandhalvi: Hayat-e-Shabiyat, V.2, P:88)

Another prominent Muslim woman was UmulBanain. She was the true worshipper, Faqiha, and recited the Holy Quran and was the sister of Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Ibn al-Sa'd has mentioned in his book "Tabqaat" that those women who narrated the Hadith in the area of Syria, UMMUL Banin was one of them. (Ibn Kaseer: Al-Badayat-un-Nahayee, V.9, P:139)

Umul Banin made a slave free on every Friday and rode horses to attend Jihad. She fulfilled every social and spiritual matter wisely. She did not accept the amount or material presented on non-sharp manner. She was found generous and got generosity in the inheritance of his father Abdul Aziz. One of the most beautiful ways of depicting her social welfare is that she invited women to her home, dressed them well, gave them money and gave them clothes and distributed Dinar (money) among poor women. (Jawzee: Satus Sawfa, V.2, P:478)

In this way, she taught women to serve humanity and made them addicted to do social welfare. One of them also says:

“اف للبخل والله لو كان ثوباً ما بسته ولو كان طريقاً ما سلكته.”

(Zahbe: Serul Allam Alnabla, V.4, P:343)

To be malice is quite a sorry figure. By god, if it was a cloth, I would not wear it, and if it was a way, I would never walk on it.

Hazrat Umul Banin had a belief that the reward of generosity would be given in heaven with other righteous deeds. Her view about generosity is that:

"By God! Helping others is my priority, it is like to eat the best in extreme hunger and cold water in extreme thirst. "

Fatma binte Abdul Malik, a name, is a respected and high-profile character in women. She got prominent name in social service and welfare.

Once a woman in Iraq came to Damascus for setting up a scholarship for her orphaned children and asked the address of Umar bin Abdul Aziz's house and went to Bibi Fatima. She was cooking the bread at that time. She crossed her. The woman looked at the wall of the house and surprised and said:

“I came here to avail the blessings of this house so I can make my home liveable but this house is going to be deserted and needs to get more blessings than mine”

Fatima answers:

"This house is deserted to settle the houses like you." Then the woman discovered the need and when Amirul-Mummunin came home, she introduced her with the appropriate words. He set scholarship for his orphan children. (Nadiwi: History of Islam)

The famous Muslim woman was DaiLadu (R.A) a true believer, piteous and quite godfearing woman. She felt attracted towards mysticism and became mystic in her dealings. Hazrat Sheikh Chishti, whose funeral is in Ajmer Sharif, joined his circle to join Chistia Alia (R.A). She was a fostermother of Shahabuddin Shahjahan who was the Mughal Emperor. (Hajjwari: Kashf-Al-Mahjood, p.246, 2010)

Dai Ladu had love for religion. Most of the time kept herself busy in the remembrance of Allah. When she came back to Lahore after taking the blessings of Allah after performing Hajj, then in 1361 dedicated to the establishment of a very precious mosque and religious madrasa. She gave one part of her wealth for running the matters of Madrasah so all the expenses of madrasa would be fulfilled easily. Dai Ladu was a rich woman. There were palaces in the area of Lahore. (As above: P:263)

BB Ume Ali (wife of Ahmed Khuzroya) although she was a girl of well off family. But everything was given to the poor and passing along with Ahmed Khuzroya, who had something to do with them. (Jami: Nafhatul Unas,P.862, 2014)

Then, gradually, it came to pass on that very stage of mysticism where Hazrat Baizid Bastami had to say that the person who wanted to adopt mysticism should learn from Ume Ali. She learned this respect through social welfare and service.

Similarly, another Muslim woman, Saedah Zahra Walihullah, was a self-sufficient but wise woman among the lovers of Allah, and was the largest woman among the dedicated and God fearing women. Hazrat Zulnoon Misri (R.A) explains:

I was wandering in some tents of Baitul Muqadas (the holy place) that the voice of someone was heard. I followed behind the sound. Suddenly I saw a woman who seems like a burnt wood. She put on the wool woven cloth and made a dark haired curtain. Hardworking made her weak and the pain and sorrow and the love threw her up. I greeted her. She also greeted me with my name, Zulunon! I asked how you know my name even though you have not seen me till today. Saying: Habib (Allah) made my head clear and made invisible things clear to me. (Nabani: Al-Almul-Muhaqqiq, V.2,P.160, 2013)

Similarly, another Muslim woman was Ms. Aisha binte Abi UsmanNissaPori, was a great believer, a God fearing and “Mustajabud dawaat” woman and was rich in wealth. Each of her prayer was accepted. (As Above:p.168-169)

Ms. Aisha binte Abdullah Bakria was known as “Jaidut Teer”. Imam Saqawi states that when a bird comes to her grave in pain and trouble, Allah heals him.

Conclusion:

Spiritual values and practical life can be compatible if we move forward the spiritual light of social welfare and philanthropy. By giving the world a gift of spiritual ideology of social welfare, we can make a human spiritual journey towards the Holy journey and make a connection with the Lord Almighty. The fact is that the circle of the service of humanity is so vast that every person can pay his right on this front. Islam creates passion that man lives in such a way that the well-being springs continue. Many Muslim women are mentioned in the

history of the nation, who serve as a believer in social welfare and service. Muslim women presented themselves as a humble person before the Lord Almighty. And they begged forgiveness from God with humility. The social welfare and service of Muslim women is a spiritual guidance for us, if we follow them, not only will we be called an ideal woman, but also in the Hereafter, our status will be very high.

The above-mentioned examples show the fact that these women served the people with dedication without expecting any reward from them. They did social welfare for the pleasure of Allah Almighty and only expected to get reward from Him.

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