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## Status of Women in Islam and the Present Indian Scenario

**ABSTRACT:** This paper, based on qualitative study, focuses on the status of women in Islam and the present Indian scenario. The status of women in Islam is very high, where they are considered equal to men; but the women of the minority community suffer from the dual handicap of being women and belonging to minority community in India. Muslim women are suffering, from both internal and external oppression. Muslim men practice what they themselves believe is Islamic and oppress their women, and refuse to entertain any thought of change. They degrade women and in most cases violate their rights by dictating them. Many Muslim women also believe that Islam enslaves them, because they have not listened to what is written in the Al-Qur'an. The Al-Qur'an liberates women and has given them equal status to men. Since the rural section of Indian society does not know what is written in the Al-Qur'an or Al-Hadith, they tend to follow the "imam" of their mosque, who himself comes from a poor family and in most cases has very limited knowledge of the theology and Islamic "shariah" or law. The present study is concerned with four different areas of women's life: (1) the private life, i.e. status in the family; (2) female education; (3) marriage and divorce; and (4), lastly, the practical life, i.e. employment and job opportunities. All these four areas are discussed the problems and concerns related to Muslim women in India, and what are their rights according to Islam. This study is a step in direction of eradicating misunderstanding and correcting the wrongs in prevalence.

**KEY WORD:** Status of Women in Islam; Muslim Women in India; Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith, Cultural Tradition; Eradicating Misunderstanding.

**ABSTRAKSI:** "Status Perempuan dalam Islam dan Skenario dari India Sekarang". Makalah ini, berdasarkan studi kualitatif, berfokus pada status perempuan dalam Islam dan skenario dari India sekarang. Status perempuan dalam Islam sangat tinggi, di mana mereka dianggap setara dengan laki-laki; namun perempuan dari komunitas minoritas menderita kegagalan ganda, karena menjadi perempuan dan termasuk dalam komunitas minoritas di India. Wanita Muslim menderita, baik oleh penindasan internal maupun eksternal. Pria Muslim mempraktekan apa yang mereka percayai sendiri tentang Islam dan menindas wanita, serta menolak untuk memikirkan perubahan apapun terhadap wanita. Mereka menurunkan derajat perempuan dan dalam kebanyakan kasus melanggar hak mereka dengan mendikte para wanita. Banyak wanita Muslim juga percaya bahwa Islam memperbudak mereka, karena mereka tidak mendengarkan apa yang tertulis dalam Al-Qur'an. Al-Qur'an membebaskan wanita dan memberi mereka status yang setara dengan pria. Karena sebagian masyarakat pedesaan India tidak tahu apa yang tertulis dalam Al-Qur'an atau Al-Hadits, mereka cenderung mengikuti "imam" masjid, yang berasal dari keluarga miskin dan dalam kebanyakan kasus sangat terbatas pengetahuan tentang teologi dan syariah Islam. Kajian ini berkaitan dengan empat bidang kehidupan perempuan yang berbeda: (1) kehidupan pribadi, yaitu status dalam keluarga; (2) pendidikan perempuan; (3) pernikahan dan perceraian; dan (4), terakhir, kehidupan praktis, yaitu pekerjaan dan peluang kerja. Semua empat bidang tersebut dibahas masalah dan hal-hal yang terkait dengan wanita Muslim di India, serta apa hak mereka menurut Islam. Penelitian ini merupakan langkah menuju pemberantasan kesalahpahaman dan koreksi terhadap kesalahan dalam kelaziman.

**KATA KUNCI:** Status Perempuan dalam Islam; Wanita Muslim di India; Al-Qur'an dan Al-Hadits, Tradisi Budaya; Memberantas Kesalahpahaman.

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## INTRODUCTION

Islam preaches and advocates equality for both men and women. There is no place for prejudice or any sort of discrimination on either basis, caste, creed or gender. However, it is a highly misunderstood religion and has become a target of all sorts of criticism, including the discriminatory approach towards women. Only those who know little about Islam are the ones passing judgement about the status of women under Islam (al-Qaradawy, 1998; Bano, 2003; and Galloway, 2014).

There is no discrimination for women under Islam in any area, whether it is household matters, social affairs, marital affairs, academic discipline, or even inheritance of property. A lesser known fact about women in Islam is that they enjoy the right to solicit, reject, and even abandon their husband as per their choice (Badawi, 1971; and Mutahhari, 1990).

This article, based on the qualitative study and gender approach in the context of Islam in Indian society (Cozby, 2009; Creswell, 2009; and Galloway, 2014), tries to analysis the status, positions, and roles of women in Islam pertaining many aspects of *Muslimah* (Islamic mowen) and its world in Indian context, such as: role in a family; marriage and divorce; maintenance; inheritance; education; and employment matters.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Role in a Family.** It is pertaining the daughter, wife, and mother in Islam. The explanation about them are following here.

**First, Daughter.** During the pre-Islamic Arabia, the birth of a daughter was considered a matter of shame and disgrace; and in many cases, parents killed

them or buried them alive (Sulaimani, 1986; and Shehadeh & Maait, 2011). Our Prophet, Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) has given instructions that those who have the same regards for daughters as they have for sons will be rewarded by God on the Day of Judgement. Abu Saeed related that the Prophet Muhammad SAW said, by citing Abu Dawood and Tirmizi, “*Whoever brought up three daughters and treated them well, Heaven is for him*” (cited in Umari, 2001).

When the daughter attains the age of maturity, she has the right to choose her own spouse, and not the parents. The Prophet Muhammad SAW has said that a woman should not be married without her own authority and consent. However, after that, it is considered more appropriate that marriage with the chosen spouse should be solemnized by her parents or guardians (Badawi, 1971; and Ahmed, 2015).

In Indian society, the birth of a male child is preferred over a female child. It has been observed that female children are usually neglected and prejudiced, when compared by their parents to male children (Sekher & Hatti, 2005). At present, people like to hide the fact that they are actually disappointed over the birth if a daughter, because nobody wants to be known as a backward person. But, if the reactions of the people are observed when a daughter is born, then, we will find that the full-fledged celebrations that accompany the birth of a son are conspicuously absent (*cf* Jain, 1988; Sekher & Hatti, 2005; and Harris, 2009).

**Second, Wife.** A woman possesses an independent entity of her own in Islam and even after *nikah* or marriage, neither her personality gets dissolved in the personality of her husband, nor does she

become his servant. Though she holds some new responsibilities after marriage, she also becomes owner of some new rights at the same time. The way she cannot refuse her responsibilities, the same way her rights cannot be taken away from her (Umari, 2001; Nasir, 2009; and Arikewuyo, 2016).

It is obligatory for a man to perform these rights of his wife. While accepting the superiority of man in domestic life, women gain and enjoy the rights of maintenance, allowance, residence, education and training, and several other rights. If the man falls short of performing these rights, she can secure them through the law (Badawi, 1971; and Umari, 2001).

Despite being a recipient of a number of advantages after marriage, Muslim women in India are confined in the household and are treated no more like servants. In most cases, men don't fulfil their duties and responsibilities they have over their wives; and, therefore, end up committing atrocities against women. Women are supposed to be the perfect daughter in law; otherwise, they are subject to snide comments and violence (Jain, 1988; and Khan, 2008).

*Third, Mother.* God has commanded each and every individual to hold his/her parents in the highest esteem, both of them or whosoever might be living, when the individuals have grown to maturity (Gil'adi, 1992). A mother has been assigned the highest rank in Islam so much, so that the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) said, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: "*Your Heaven lies under the feet of your mother*" (cited in Farooq, 2013).

In the verses of the holy *Al-Qur'an*,

firstly there is a general command to honour and respect the parents, but then particular attention has been drawn to the rights of the mother, because she has borne greater suffering for the sake of her children. Hence, her rights have more priority over others rights (*cf* Bano, 2003; El-Hadary, 2008; and Abbasi, 2009).

For all the works of upbringing a child, like feeding, nursing, education, and training, the mother and father participate equally. But, it is only the mother who has to bear the pains of pregnancy and delivery individually. She has to suffer the pains for nine long months, to give birth after a long struggle, and she feeds her child out of her own blood; and also leads a life of full care and strict precautions in all these stages, which is not at all an easy task. The father does not have to undertake such hardships and, therefore, the benevolence and favours on mothers are far greater than those of the father (Badawi, 1971; and Umari, 2001).

As a mother, a woman has to play a number of roles, but being a Muslim woman in India, she has been given the responsibility of the entire household, her husband, her in-laws, and her children. In some cases, men do not participate in household activities and especially in raising children, because consider it to be the responsibility of the mother only; which is not true in the Islamic context, where both mother and the father have to participate equally (Jain, 1988; Bano, 2003; and Hays, 2008).

**Marriage and Divorce.** Islam recommends marriage, because it helps men and women to lead a life of chastity that is, it secures them from promiscuous sexual indulgence. It also prevents the formation of secret sex relations. These

values are the cornerstones of marriage and Islam's conception of women's rights in marriage flows logically from them (Offenhauer, 2005; and Abbasi, 2009).

Marriage in Islam is considered as an important and sacred union between a man and woman that fulfils half of one's religious obligations (Bano, 2003; and Devi, 2015). A well-known passage in the *Al-Qur'an* (30:21) discusses marriage, as follows:

Among His signs is that He created for you spouses from yourselves, so that you might find repose with them. And He has placed between you affection and mercy. In that there are certainly signs for people who reflect (cited in Naseef, 1999).

Marriage in Islam, according to *Al-Qur'an* (4:1) and *Al-Qur'an* (7:189), is often referred to describing the love and mutual rights that exist between men and women (cited in al-Hibri, 1997). Also, there is a strong emphasis on mutual love and respect between a husband and wife. Men are also specifically commanded to treat their wives with kindness and respect (Badawi, 1971; and al-Hibri, 1997). The Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), according to Abu Dawoud, was reported to have said: "*The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manners and kindest to his wife*" (cited in Beekun, 2014).

Marriage is also viewed as an act of worship to God or Allah. Islam views emotional and sexual expression between a husband and wife as a form of worship. Sexual relations are not solely for procreation, but are viewed as a way for a couple to connect, strengthen their relationship, and help relieve everyday stresses. As a result, celibacy is forbidden

for men or women, even if either happens to be an Islamic scholar or religious leader, such as *Shaykh*, *Imam*, etc. (al-Ati, 1997). Fidelity is also highly stressed in Islam, based on *Al-Qur'an*, 25:68 (cited in Reynolds ed., 2008). Spouses are expected to be loyal and faithful to one another, and seek emotional and sexual pleasure within the bonds of marriage (al-Ati, 1997; Reynolds ed., 2008; and Nasir, 2009).

It has been mentioned in various sections of the holy *Al-Qur'an*, how women are supposed to be treated after marriage, but Indian Muslim men fail to follow these messages (al-Qaradawy, 1998). If we take a keen look, we will find that in most of the poor Muslim families, men are addicted to liquor. There is regular wife-beating and harassment of women because of this. This phenomenon, however, is not only confined to Muslim women as violence against women exists in the whole country (Jain, 1988; Hajjar, 2004; and Ennaji & Sadiq, 2011).

**First, Marriage.** There are certain requirements for marriage in Islam. Firstly, a couple must mutually consent to the marriage, i.e. there should be a free choice given to both men and women. A clear proposal and acceptance is an important requirement. Secondly, a woman must have a legal guardian present during the process of marriage. And, lastly, there are no requirements regarding who can propose marriage (Badawi, 1971; and Mallik, 2008).

One historical event, which reflects this principle, is the proposal of Khadija binti Khuwaylid to Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him). Khadija was the Prophet Muhammad's employer, and through working with him, she grew to respect

his honesty and integrity, and proposed marriage to him. She was 15 years older than the Prophet Muhammad, and in a much better financial position at the time of the proposal. He accepted her proposal and their marriage is known for the love and compassion they had for one another (Lings, 1983; and al-Jibouri, 2017).

This instance tells us that Muslim men and women have the ability to marry whomever they choose, and also throws light upon the fact that marriages arranged without the consent or involvement of Muslim women is completely contrary to the Islamic tradition (Lings, 1983; and Nasir, 2009).

A lot of these marriage requirements are not fulfilled in India. As we know, there is a common practice of child marriage in Muslim families. Most of the girls are married immediately after reaching the age of puberty. It has also been observed that girls aren't given higher education, because of the fear that acquiring education would mean postponement of marriage or no marriage at all (Jain, 1988; Desai & Andrist, 2010; and Raj *et al.*, 2010).

The fact that a woman's consent, an essential requirement of marriage in Islam, is the most neglected one. Whether its child marriage or not, women in most parts of the country are married off without their consent. There are cases where minor girls are married to elderly men against their will or sold off for money. In some situations, it is found that not only the girls consent isn't taken, but it is regarded as scandalous if she expresses her preference for a man (Turner, 2013; and Mtshali, 2014).

Once a girl approached the Prophet Muhammad SAW stating that her father had forced her into marriage. The Prophet

Muhammad SAW gave her the choice to either accept the marriage or invalidate it immediately, due to the duress involved (Dhorat, 1996; and Welchman, 2007). This instance highlights the importance of a woman's consent in marriage. It is seen that Islam provides many rights to women regarding marital issues, but cultural traditions in India greatly influence the proposal and acceptance process beyond the Islamic requirements, and end up directly contradicting the Islamic practices (Galloway, 2014).

Women are also entitled to a dowry (*mahr*) that is negotiated at the same time as the marriage contract. This dowry is specifically a gift for the bride, which shows love and devotion to her. The *mahr* is the dowry given to the bride at the time of marriage, before consummation takes place. Since it is a gift, she is not required to share this dowry and is free to do what she wishes with it. The dowry gift is often shaped by cultural traditions, since there are no requirements regarding the type of gift that has to be given (Imam, Fijabi & Akilu-Atta, 2005; and Devi, 2015).

In some cultures, cash payments are encouraged; while others traditionally give one of the groom's family heirlooms to the bride. The families involved usually discuss the dowry amount and their individual expectations. At times, the bride is also asked her opinion to make sure she receives a gift she enjoys (Badawi, 1971; and Monger, 2004).

In our society, it is found that Muslim men while fixing up the dowry at the time of marriage fix them up at a very low rate and in most of the cases don't have the intention of paying it unless it comes to the question of divorce, which is obviously un-Islamic. Also because of the influence

of Hinduism, the practice of claiming *mahr* from the husband has become a disgrace; and when they do claim it, they receive only a paltry amount (*cf* Jain, 1988; Arens, 2011; and Devi, 2015).

**Second, Divorce.** Divorce existed before Islam, but the advent of Islam, the divorce process became much more favourable to women, because her property is not divided. Whatever a woman earns or is given before and during the course of the marriage remains her property, if the marriage ends. In this way, women are protected from men taking advantage of their property or wealth through marriage. On the other hand, the man's property is divided if a divorce has to take place according to the couple's marriage contract. A woman is entitled to complete support and maintenance from her former husband if needed, according to *Al-Qur'an*, 2:231 (cited in al-Hibri, 2001).

Islam also instituted a three-month waiting period for women called *iddah*, after the announcement of divorce. During this three-month period, women are not permitted to re-marry, according to *Al-Quran*, 2:228 (cited in Mohammadi, Amirkhanloo & Mohammadi, 2013). The basic reason for *iddah* is to know whether the woman was pregnant before she remarried, so the proper father could be ascertained. This also helps in determining the child's identity and lineage (Badawi, 1971; and Mohammadi, Amirkhanloo & Mohammadi, 2013). Also the couple is allowed to attempt reconciliation during the waiting period, based on *Al-Qur'an*, 2:228 (cited in Mubarak, 2014).

It is also important to keep in mind that although divorce is permitted in Islam, it is not encouraged. The Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu*

*Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him), according to Abu Dawoud, stated of all the permitted acts divorce is most displeasing to God or Allah (cited in Ali, 2013). The *Al-Qur'an* further states, as following here:

Live with them (your wives) on a footing of kindness and equity. If you dislike them it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed a great deal of good (cited in Ali, 2013).

For Muslims, divorce is viewed as a last result, and many Muslims seek counselling and extensive assistance to avoid it. If someone wants to carry out a divorce, it is likely been a very long and difficult personal decision (Kamarudin, 1993; and Abbasi, 2009).

Among Indian Muslim women, divorce is something which is rare, because evidence shows that it is socially disapproved among most groups, and results in loss of social prestige not only for the parties involved, but for the families as well (Jain, 1988; and Khan, 2008).

**Maintenance.** It is the duty of the husband to spend money for the maintenance of his wife and family. However, it must also be noted that the holy *Al-Qur'an* did not lay down any specific amount for this purpose; nor has our Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) said anything about it (cited in Elsaman & Arafa, 2012).

According to S. Abul A'la Maududi (1983), as cited also by Muhammad Zaheer Abbas & Shamreeza Riaz (2013), husbands have been considered the protectors and maintainers of their wives for certain specific reasons (Maududi, 1983; and Abbas & Riaz, 2013). In any social structure, there must be someone

who should be able to organize and manage it. In a family structure, it is the husband who has been assigned this responsibility. They are supposed to deal with their wives with affection and respect. God has said that if anyone of you does not like your wife, even then you must be kind to her and deal with her with equity, because it is possible that you dislike her and God might bring a lot of good to you through her (*cf* Maududi, 1983; Stefon ed., 2010; and Abbas & Riaz, 2013).

The rights and duties of husband and wife are absolutely essential, and should be exercised with moderation and must not exceed the limit under any circumstances. According to some jurists, a husband has no right to force his wife to do household work (Badawi, 1971; and Maududi, 2009). She has no obligation for such work as it is not required by the legal contract. Housework is only recommended for the happiness of the family and for perpetuation of family (Abbasi, 2009; and Maududi, 2009).

In Indian Muslims, sometimes, women have to become the head of the house, because their husbands are either lazy or irresponsible. Women in such situations have to take charge to earn money for their family and take care of the house as well. It has been found that the women of high income families are mostly confined to domestic work, and women of low income families have to supplement the families' income by working for wages (Jain, 1988; and Aggarwal, 2017).

**Inheritance.** Allah, the Exalted, stated in the glorious *Al-Qur'an* (4:11) that Allah commands you as regards to your children's (inheritance); to the male, a portion equal to that of two females (cited in Maududi, 1983; and Kounsar,

2017). The general rule is that the female share is half the males. This rule if taken in isolation concerning men and women may seem unfair. If we want to understand the reason behind this rule, we must take into account the fact that the financial obligations of men in Islam far exceed those of women (Nasir, 2009; and Kounsar, 2017).

Women in Islam receive assets mainly from three sources: inheritance, *mahr* or dowry, and maintenance (Abbasi, 2009; and Arikewuyo, 2016). On the other hand, male receives double on first source inheritance but then, after marriage, they need to give *mahr* (dowry) to and maintenance to their wives, and then their own children. This gift (*mahr*) is solely considered her property and neither the groom nor the bride's family have any share in it, and it remains hers even if she is later divorced. The bride has no such obligations towards the groom (Devi, 2015; and Arikewuyo, 2016).

This shows that there is an assurance of economic security from the husband towards wife. Moreover, the Muslim husband is also charged with the responsibility of the maintenance of his wife and children. The wife's property and earnings are under her full control, because maintenance of children isn't her responsibility. No matter how much money the wife has, she should not act as a co-provider for the family, unless she herself voluntarily chooses to do so (Badawi, 1971; Devi, 2015; and Arikewuyo, 2016).

Women are financially secure and provided for in all phases of their lives. If she is a wife, her husband is the provider; if she is a mother, it is her son; if she is a daughter, it is her father; if she is a

sister; it is her brother, and so on. In this circumstances if the female isn't given any inheritance, it would be unjust to her because she is related to the deceased. Likewise, if equal share to the man is given to her, then it would be unjust to him. So, to avoid doing injustice to either side, Islam has given the man a larger portion of the inherited property to help him, in order to meet his family needs and social responsibilities. At the same time, Islam has not completely neglected her, but has given her a portion to satisfy her personal needs, which indicates that Islam in this respect is being more kind to her than to him (Brand, 1998; Devi, 2015; and Arikewuyo, 2016).

Muslim women in India are not allowed to enjoy their rights of inheritance and even when they demand their share, only a pittance is given to them. Many a times they are not even aware of a right of a share in the husband's property and even if they do, they don't know the exact amount of that share (Jain, 1988; and Singh, 2013). It has also been observed that the brothers deny giving their share of property after the father's death and the women are unwilling to pressurise them or take any legal action against them in order to get their share in the father's property (Singh, 2013).

**Education.** A basic principle in Islam is that when a commandment is revealed, even if the masculine form of word is used the female gender, is also included in this commandment. If this principle is rejected then the basic pillars of Islam, such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and alms-due will have no importance for women. So, God Almighty and the Holy Prophets (blessings and peace be upon him) use the masculine form of sentence

to describe the commandments, which women are also bound to act and follow them (Maududi, 1983).

If the doors of acquiring knowledge are closed for women or unjustified restrictions are imposed upon this acquisition, which religion will they follow? How will they know the nature of the verses that have been revealed to them? How will they know what Allah Almighty wished them to know through the Holy Prophets (blessings and peace be upon him)? How are they to teach the fundamentals of the Islam to their children, if they have no knowledge of it themselves?

It is clear from the holy *Al-Qur'an* and *Al-Hadiths* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad) that the acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for women, the same way as in the case of men. The Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) also shows that he himself made special arrangements for the education and training of women (Badawi, 1971; Lings, 1983; Maududi, 1983; and Abbasi, 2009).

Among Indian Muslim women, it has been found that although there is no hostility towards female education, but there is objection to higher education. But the situation is not so favourable in rural India, where girls aren't allowed to attain even basic education, because they have to take care of the house. Religious education imparted to them has no effect on their acquisition as they only memorize the Arabic text of the holy *Al-Qur'an*, without fully understanding the meaning of the verses. So, the basic religious education which could discipline the mind and sharpen the understanding of religious percept

remains neglected for the girl child (Jain, 1988; Ali, 2000; and Galloway, 2014).

Even though it is recognized that education of women is essential for raising the status of women in India, nothing worthwhile has been done in our country. In spite of the efforts made by the government to improve the enrolment of girl and provision of adult education for women, their educational status remains far from satisfactory (*cf* Ali, 2000; Parveen, 2008; Nasir, 2009; and Galloway, 2014).

**Employment.** In the early history of Islam, examples of notable female Muslims who fought during the Muslim conquests and civil wars as soldiers or generals included Nusaybah binti Ka'ab a.k.a. Umm Amarah, Aisha, Kahula, and Wafeira. Khadijah, the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him)'s first wife, a merchant before and after converting to Islam, indicates that Muslim women may undertake employment outside their homes (Lings, 1983; Maududi, 1983; Abbasi, 2009; and Nasir, 2009).

Women are allowed to work in Islam, but they have to follow certain conditions, such as if a woman is in financial need and her employment does not cause her to neglect her duties, such as playing the role as a mother and wife. It has been claimed that it is the responsibility of the Muslim community to organize work for women, so that she can do so in a Muslim cultural atmosphere, where her rights are respected. The Islamic law, however, permits women to work in Islamic conditions, such as the work not requiring the woman to violate Islamic law, and that she maintain her modesty, while she performs any work outside her

home (Badawi, 1971; al-Qaradawy, 1998; Brand, 1998; and Nasir, 2009).

As we can see today, among Indian Muslims, women and girls are freely entering professions and in different jobs, but these educated women suffer from gender inequality and exploitation at the hands of the employers; and in some situations, they have to sacrifice even the limited opportunities before them. It has also been found that most women who are working outside their homes as doctors, teachers or clerks, their families who send them such as parents/husbands want them to have little interaction with men at the place of work. Since the Muslim community as a whole is a backward community, both central and state governments will have to make special efforts to see that the right due to them must not be ignored (Jain, 1988; al-Qaradawy, 1998; Parveen, 2008; Nasir, 2009; and Galloway, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the above discussion that there is a wide disparity between the status of women in Islam, as determined in the holy *Al-Qur'an* on one hand, and the actual conditions of Muslim women in our country, India, on the other. First of all, the government must fulfil the constitutional obligations of free and compulsory education to all boys and girls. Both the central and state governments must cooperate to raise the educational standards and status of women.

The Muslim organisations must prepare books for teaching the religious education in Islam in different stages of schools and colleges. Their readings must be made compulsory for both boys and girls. It will be a pity of the younger

Muslim generation is not encouraged to learn about Islam, and more than simply reading the holy *Al-Qur'an* in Arabic language, but also understanding its meaning. In a secular country like ours, every religion should be given a right to train their boys and girls at various levels of education.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>**Statement:** Herewith, we declare that this paper is our own original work; it is not product of plagiarism and not yet also be reviewed as well as be published by other scholarly journals.

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