

Arab culture



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Status of Women in Arab Culture As for most cultures, women have been given a supreme position as mother, wife, and sister. In some countries like India, woman is even considered as goddess. But it was not the case with all cultures. There were some cultures that forbade even mere human consideration to women. The status of women in Arab culture has been controversial since the ancient period and throughout history. Women's subjugation can be mainly attributed to the iron grip of religions for which Arabia was not an exception. In addition to religion, the tradition that existed in the region also acted as a vital factor in assigning women a second position in the society and family. This essay tends to probe into how the status of women is determined in Arab culture.

It is frequently argued that religion in Arabia treated women as inferior to men. The proponents of this view point out that women were denied leadership roles, and they were told to be submissive in every sphere of social life. The extremist religious doctrines and ideologies were implemented to control them in society as well as in their families. The religion from the ancient period onwards prevents women from entering the main place of worship where men folks are free to enter and worship. For instance, as Baden points out, the Shariah law of Islam, through personal status laws, continues to govern the area relating to marriage and family life in most Muslim countries. As the holy Quran has given different social roles to men and women, women's role is restricted to the household affairs alone. Theoretically, women are allowed to engage themselves in other activities only if it does not conflict with their family obligations (3-10). But this cannot be taken for face value as women today are as competent as men in all aspects even as bread winners. However, the conservative Muslim laws and <https://assignbuster.com/arab-culture/>

the provisions of the holy Quran are expected to be observed by normal Muslims. So, a sudden change cannot be expected.

Traditionally the Arab Muslim women are married at their younger age to a man of their father's choice. In most cases the grooms are older than the father of the bride. Here, the girl has no voice to resist the decision of her father. In countries like Kuwait, even today, women do not have the right for adult franchise. In some other countries including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, there prevails a law that states the inheritance of women must be less than that of men. The law in Morocco excuses the murderer or injury to a wife who is caught in the act of committing adultery. Still the same law provides to punish women for harming men under the same circumstances. It is a clear indication of treating women as second class citizens in the same geographic territory and culture. Though women had a little restrictions relating to their dressings and behavior in the society, they had a supreme position in their homes as mothers. The Islam tradition was such that women were given care and respect as the co authority in the family.

However, the conditions and practices in Arab countries are ages old. It is impossible to alter them overnight with a presidential promulgation or an enactment of law. As it has got everything to do with religion, the condition of women in the Arab world would change only if they take an intensive decision with the help of religious authorities.

Works Cited

Baden, Sally. "The position of women in Islamic countries: Possibilities, constraints and strategies for change." *Bridge: Development – gender*. Institute of Development Studies. (September 1992): 1-42.