

Gender equality and islam

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



Gender Equality and Islam Islam believes that a woman is not merely subject to man rather she has her own separate and complete entity in all respects. She has an equal right to that of a man to nourish her religious faculties, serve her faith, acquire education, get a job, do business, own something and benefit herself from it and prove her creativity in an enterprise. She is master of herself in all respects. The religious aspect of this fact is described in the Quran as under: “ For muslim men and women, for believing men and women; for devout men and women; for men and women who are patient, for men and women who humble themselves; for men and women who give charity’ for men and women who fast; for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who remember Allah much- for them all has God prepared forgiveness and a great reward" (Al — Ahzab 33, verse 55) The characteristics mentioned in the above Quranic Verse are ten in number. These characteristics cover all aspects of Islam, Islamic conduct and behaviorism related to the rights of God and of human beings too. The above verse makes it clear that there is no distinction between a man and a woman in terms of worships of God, obedience to Him and the place in the life after death. In fact there is no distinction on the basis of gender. The Quran has laid down the following principle in connection with acquisition of wealth “ For men is a portion of what they earn and for women is a portion of what they earn “(Al-Nisa 4, Verse32) The Sura “ Al-Nisa" basically deals with matters relating to money and other issues that emerge out of the relationship of man and woman in different capacities in a family; Immediately after the above quoted verse an article from the law of legacy has been described and next comes the instructions about the mutual

contacts of a husband and a wife. Hence the context makes it clear that the above mentioned verse is related to the worldly life and that a woman has equal rights to that of a man like acquiring education, doing job or a business, deal of a property and even develop her personality. There are several other Quranic verses which make it clear that there is no distinction between man and a woman on any grounds except in the bearing of a responsibility (the detail would come in later pages). Both are human beings and both have rights and privileges. God says: " I will deny no man or woman among you the rewards of their labours. You are the offspring of one another" (Al-Imran 3: Verse: 195) Through Sura Al-Tawba, God has declared all Muslim men and women as friends, companions and helpers of each other. Thus women are, in no way inferior to men rather they are friends of men and are equal to them. (However, in terms of responsibilities there can be classification, like a doctor and a teacher, under special circumstances): " The true believers, both men and women, are equal friends to each other. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they attend to their prayers and pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Apostle. On these Allah will have mercy. He is Mighty, Wise. " (Al-Tawba 9, verse71) This is why during the prophetic period women used to acquire both religious and worldly education, do farming, take part in trade and industry and manage their wealth and property; About Aisha, the wife of the Holy Prophet, everyone knows that she has related and confirmed 2210 Hadiths (Prophet's sayings) (Sadarat-ul-Zahab: vol. 1) The books based on the compilations of the history of the days of the companions of the Apostle reveal the stories of innumerable females who had mastery over different fields of the religious

knowledge rather several eminent scholars attained the knowledge of Islam from them. It was a general practice during those days people used to seek guidance from the wives of the Apostle in the matters of religion. There were besides the wives of the Apostle, certain other women too who earned repute in this field. Rabi-Bint-I-Mauz was one such famous scholar and the outstanding scholars of Islam like Abdullah-bin-Abass and Abdullah Bin Umar had been her students. Several people have related certain Hadiths through her reference. These include Salman Bin Yasir, Abad Bin walid and Nafei-Bin-Umar etc. Fatima Bint-I-Qais had been the tutor of the prominent scholars like Ibn-e-Maseeb, Urwa Bin Zubair and Shabi. (Al-Astaayab-fil-Asam-ul-Sahab) Ayesha the daughter of Saad Bin Abi-Waqas was remarkable scholar and had educated Imam Malik, Ayub Sakhtiami and Hakam Bin Ataiba. (Tazeeb-ul-tazeeb Vol. 12) Imam Shafi, the eminent jurist learnt the knowledge of Hadith from the Syeda Nafisa, the grand daughter of Hasan, the grand son of the Apostle. (Wafyat-ul-Aayam-al-Ibn-khalkan Vol 2) Same was the case of the worldly knowledge and wisdom. For example among the female companions of the Apostle several were poetess like Khansa, Saudah, Safia, Atika, Muridya, Umm-I-Aiman and several others. In the field of medicine and surgery, Rafaza Aslamia, Umm-I-Mutea, umm-I-Kabsa, Hamne Bint-I- Jahsh, Umme-I-Athiya, Ummi Saleem and several other women won repute. (Tabqat-Ibne-Saeed, Asaba) It was a usual practice among women to get worldly knowledge during those days. If their number is not remarkable, it was due to lack of resources. Some ordinary women knew how to read and write and even could manage small accounts. (Tabqat Ibn-e-Saad Vol-8). Some wrote and reply letters. (Al-Adab-ul Musfi) During those days the

women used to do farming and looked after their fields. In Bokhari (the collection of Hadith) Sahl Bin Saad relates the story of a female companion of the Apostle who owned fields and gardens. She cultivated a vegetable named " Salq" near the bank of a stream and used to serve Sahl Bin Saad and others with Salq and Maize when they visited every Friday. (Bokhari) The most authenticated books on Hadith like Bokhari, Muslim, Abu-Daud and Ibni Mauja quote the statement of Jabir Bin Abdullah who narrates about her maternal aunt. She was divorced and was going through Iddat (the three months waiting period after divorce during which a woman can't marry). She desired to sell out the fruit of her garden for her living. She consulted the Apostle who advised her to do so as in that case she would be able to give charity and do something for her redemption. This makes clear that the women, during the prophetic period used to do farming and trade. According to Bokhari, Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakar, the first pious Caliph and the wife of Zubair used to assist her husband in farming on the fields almost two miles far from her home. Those days the women could freely take part in the trade and business activities. The most respectable woman in Muslim Ummah Khadija was a trader. Many female companions of the Apostle like Khaula. Al-khamia, Saqafia and Bint-I-Mukarrama used to trade in perfume. (Asaba-Fi-Tameez-ul-Sahaba Vol-4) Several events related in ' Tabqat Ibn-I-Saad' exhibit the fact muslim women during the Prophetic period used to take part in agriculture, trade and industry even without the assistance of their husbands. The wife of Abdullah Bin Masud was a good craftswoman. Once she told the Apostle that she was adept in different crafts and sold out her prepared goods. She inquired if she could spend her money on her

husband and children as they have no other source of income. The Apostle told her that she would get a reward from God if she did that. It is also quoted in Al-Asaba Fil Tameez-al Sahabe Vol4) Once a woman named Khaula Bint-e-Saalba had a dispute with her husband. Both of them presented their case before the Apostle who advised the husband to keep himself away from her until the revelation of an instruction from God. At this Khula told the Prophet of God that her husband would't be able to survive in that case as he was dependent upon her for his living. A woman named Qaila told the Apostle that she was a trader and sought his guidance in the trade matters. Another woman, Amira narrates that once she went to the market along with her maid servant and bought a fish. Ali, the fourth Caliph of Islam was also there who bought that fish from her. There are many such incidents related in ' Tabqat Ibn-I-Saad Vol 8. The most authentic book on this subject. Souda, the Prophet's wife was adept in the art of tanning. It is quoted in Bukhari that once her sheep died, she put its skin off, got it tanned and softened it with dates. During that period women performed several tasks collectively as well. The Bokhari kitab-ul-istehsan unfolds that once many women visited the Apostle and requested him to allocate one day in a week for their religious training. The Prophet thus accepted their request. Asma Bint-I-Zahid was good at rhetoric. Once women designated her their representative and sent to the Apostle to make some queries (Al-istaab Fi-Al-Sahab) Women were entrusted with certain responsible positions as well and they proved their worth. For example Umar, the second Caliph of Islam appointed Shafa Bint-e- Abdullah as the Price control officer.