Economic AND Political Leadership Role OF Muslim Women In Global Context

Dr. Asma Manzoor[1] , Dr. Seema Manzoor[2] , Dr. Rummana Zaheer[3] , UmmeHani[4]

[1]*In-Charge, Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan*
[3]*Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan*
[4]*Teaching Assistant, Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan*

Corresponding Authors

1. *Dr. Asma Manzoor is In-Charge in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.*
2. *Dr. Seema Manzoor is Assistant Professor in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.*
3. *Dr. Rummana Zaheer is Associate Professor in the Department of Economics, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan.*

Abstract

In the Muslim world, female leadership is not a novel idea; in fact, there have been numerous Muslim female leaders throughout the history. In actuality, the barriers we discovered in the way of Muslim women leaders are entirely based on cultural beliefs and customs. Islam permits women to engage in all kinds of activities in which males are engaged in. No evidence shown religiously for restricting women, not even Quran prevents woman to participate in socio-economic domains. Normally males have historically been able to fill leadership positions in communities, whereas female leaders have traditionally been limited to private spheres and family-related concerns but this entire scenario is culturally conceived not religiously. Women should engage within political activities alongside their male counterparts in order to fulfill their important social and political roles. Segregation between men and women has historically existed in the public and private sectors of emerging societies. It is clear that women's engagement in politics and the economy is crucial for achieving the government's objectives in the rapidly evolving global economy. This study's qualitative technique will help to better understand Muslims' attitudes about Muslim women's engagement in the society effectively. This research also investigates how women become leaders in the Muslim world? As well as the particular demographic traits that influence how Muslim women are perceived as leaders?. The study's results also show how the public's perceptions are gendered towards Muslim women in leadership? And how demographic traits affect women's status?

Keywords: Political Leadership, Muslim Women, Islamic Vision, Demographic Characteristics.

Introduction

"Feminism is not just about women; it's about letting all

people live fuller lives."Jane Fonda

The idea of women leadership has never been taken seriously around the globe but interestingly we see regular debates regarding the account. It is very obvious that even in US, political system is categorized on gender basis. Hughes and Paxton (2007) offer an accessible indication of women in political representation historically and geographically and go into great detail on this complicated subject. Today, many political systems explicitly aspire to gender equality and claim to have equal representation of both sexes in politics, but this claim is still elusive and many challenges are acknowledged with several sexual characteristics and consequences.

The authors claim that although there is evident discrimination existing in most of the nations but now to certain extent they allow women to engage in politics legally, but there are still only few prominent women in the political arena. This situation raises a question of whether women affect legislative bodies' processes and its outcomes or not? Thus, Hughes and Paxton raised a broad-spectrum theory of gender neutrality to peek deep inside into a practice that creates significant gender imbalance due to the dominance of male politicians. They argued that unhealthy decision-making environment, and the inappropriate policies and decisions, favour certain groups over others and lead to unequal access to scarce resources. Therefore this study has emphasized on the struggle of women's political rights for example voting rights and etc. The primary focus of this article is on women's fight for the political and economic rights. In today's world there is a

useful discussion going on to combat challenges faced by women and focusing on social movement ideas as well, such as resource mobilization, and political opportunity, and they further argued that it is of key importance to realize that how women have struggled for recognition from being underprivileged to privileged and by delegating rights and power to women, their potential can be truly examined (Card, 1999).

Current study aims to investigate the socio-cultural influence of contributing factors in impacting the participation of women in leadership. Such as social and gender norms, education, and division of labour are the contributing factors responsible for hampering women's economic and political role. To bring change in current scenario, there are many aspects which should be considered very important to uplift the role of women in all domains of economy and politics as an alternate perspective like letting them participate in electoral role, gender quotas, and letting women compete men to claim their political position in the political arena on the basis of their experiences and skills. The political and economic role of women depends on the electoral system and country's constitution, culture, and further it is dependent on the gender orientation. In many global social circles the question arises that "whether female politicians are better leaders of male politicians?" and as a result the idea was conceived that women are key constituents of economy and political system. This debate has still given no solution and we still need to understand and realize women's worth in all walks of life and for that it is necessary to highlight the challenges faced by women and to seek available options for them or to create one. In western countries after the democracy in Latin America and fall of the Soviet Union women were allowed to advance

in politics and as economic contributor by adopting gender quota to overcome the stereotypical beliefs regarding women by examining gender disparities in formal and informal political engagements. Though we see many successful women in US and other western countries' political setup but still less attention is given to gender-based constitution, since it is a very complex matter therefore, it should be addressed appropriately to find out some concrete results. With growing global connections gender equality is now an aspiration for many political systems but we need to create balanced and gender oriented societies across the globe i.e. creating environment for equal political representation of both men and women in industrialized and developing nations. A gender balanced society will be more beneficial to maintain a socio-economic culture (Tessman, 2009).

As we know Islam has a very rich history of women being entrepreneurs and having prominent political roles and the best example is of Hazrat Khadija (RA), bint Khuwaylid, the wife of the Holy Prophet (SAWW), she was credited as the best entrepreneur having political wisdom and leaving a mark for upcoming Muslim generations and she has set a landmark for Muslim women to become an ideal female not only by becoming politically and financially independent but also by becoming a kindhearted and down to earth person. Muslim women face many challenges due to changing global trends and it has been identified by several researchers that acquiring sustainable development will be possible only if women are considered equally important just as the goals themselves (Tomos, Kumar, & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2019).

Review Literature

The socio-economic and political role of Muslim women is seen as an issue of today's world, but the Islamic concept of women is hazed by the western media and scholars by labeling Islam as conservative religion and Islamic societies as stereotypical societies, but the picture is otherwise. The biasness has led them blinded to such extent that they do not look deep into and search true essence of Islam and Islamic societies. In Islam women are placed on high status as mothers, daughters, sisters and wife and they can play social and financial role for themselves, their families and for their society and nation as well, as Islam is the only religion that provides liberty to women and gives reasonable rights in terms of social and economic rights and etc. The rich Islamic history demonstrates that Muslim women have shown their skills and abilities in all walks of life. In west women are allowed to carry out socio-economic and political activities, but with religious and moral limitations and due to this their entire social and family system has collapsed, we see no respect for women and family system in the west. Therefore the ratio of hideous crimes against women, especially harassment and sexual crimes has increased and is increasing day by day, whereas on the other hand, Islam provides women complete respect and security in carrying out their domestic role and socio-economic and political activities. Rather than portraying disfigured Islamic society and distorting image of Islam, they should focus on the high socio-economic and political status of Muslim women and that too without being biased. Keeping the western point of view in mind the researchers should highlight the current political and economic scenario for women in today's world and must show the true essence of Islam by elaborating Islamic perspective (Kamran et al., 2022). Women have a pivotal role in the formation of society and according to the Islamic standpoint, men and women are equal and there is no distinction in between them, but their scope,

role, responsibilities are different in terms of physical strength and capacity. Only one who is pious and is superior in piety attains the high position in the eyes of Allah. The distortion we see in Islamic societies regarding religious beliefs and practices is basically due to the ignorance and lack of religious knowledge and on this basis, none can make allegations against the religion Islam, because Islam has never prohibited women from carrying out social or economic activities.

Conducive environment for women is a key factor to adapt changing trends of today's world. It is the duty of Islamic scholars to respond reasonably to unjustified allegations raised by western media and scholars in order to maintain the dignity of Muslim women (Shaikh, 2013). The history of Islam enlightens the Islamic glory by providing examples of women's participation in the socio-economic and political sectors. As both men and women have skills and ability to carry out their roles within the parameters of Islam. According to the Quran, "Whosoever performs good deeds, whether male or female and is a believer, we shall surely make him live a good life, and we will certainly reward them for the best of what they did" (XV1: 97)**.** The Quran stated that: "Surely ˹for˺ Muslim men and women, believing men and women,[1] devout men and women, truthful men and women, patient men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, men and women who guard their chastity, and men and women who remember Allah often—for ˹all of˺ them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward".(Al-Ahzab, 33 verse 35)

The half of the world's population is comprised of women, therefore the debate raised by the researchers that are men and women equally participating in politics?, this question seems inappropriate, because, they

should emphasize on solutions and focusing on assurance of women's participation in socio-economic and political role and that too worldwide not just specific to any region. The equal participation of women in politics is divided into three forms, which is substantive, formal and descriptive. The most common form of equal participation is formal participation, which means that women avail equal participatory rights like men. If women face any difficulties in participation then measures must be taken to eradicate them in order to eliminate any discrimination faced by women and they should be treated equally as men in all walks of life.

In the early 20th century women have fought for their voting rights and they are still struggling for suffrage rights in many countries. In 1946 UN General Assembly, resolution 56(1) was adopted on "Political Rights of Women" and recommended that women should be provided with all political rights as men. In the late 20th century, feminist politics theories started the debate on equal participation. The descriptive form of participation of women included constitutional rights, as half of the women's population depends on legislative and executive bodies. Further, discussing about the rights of women, the descriptive participation of women in politics emphasized that it is not enough to discuss only, it must be spread out as formal participation towards legal rights by including women in the political bodies. Phillips mentions that the political and economic rights distribution affects women's rights in political chambers also (Phillips 1995).

The adherent of descriptive participation spreading their ideas to the formal participation of women as women can pursue to start their career in political arena as legislators, and then only women can enjoy

equal benefits as men in the economic and political arena. The existence of women in political arena is also important and it is a symbolic participation which is the part of substantive form of participation in politics. It focuses on the presence of women in politics, i.e. developing the "feeling of being fairly and effectively represented" (Pitkin, 1967: Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005). If women are part of political parties then they can demonstrate their leadership qualities as an individual in the political affairs (Clayton & O'Brien & Piscopo, 2019). Women genuinely focus on solving issues and that too on gender bases, they are more interested in finding solutions as a person rather than just being women (Celis and Childs 2011). The example of Vicky Hartzlar, a US Republican from Montana, expressed that resolving women's issues is more important rather than just having discussions (Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carrol 2018, 43-44). Many researchers have identified that some men and women political leaders show biasness against opposite gender and shows their personal interests (Frederick, 2009: Swers, 1998). Viewing the above mentioned facts, Dugan has mentioned that there are many women leaders who are not biased at all and in the Muslim world, for example Benazir Bhutto has an unforgettable enigmatic personality and she had made remarkable achievements in politics world and Dugan considers her as one of the finest and transformational politician of Pakistan (Dugan, 2008). Also, Zakaria (2015) described Benazir Bhutto as, "intelligent, erudite, and intensely charismatic" and popular Pakistani leader. Similarly long before that we see Muslim women's involvement in the Pakistan's movement and also after the birth of Pakistan. Among which Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah and Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan are two most prominent names among all prominent political female icons in Pakistan.

Since 1970s, women's importance and role in development gained significant attention. The definition, redefinition, and positioning of women's roles in development have all benefited from the contributions of various feminism streams. The idea underpinning development practices involving women has experienced significant theoretical alterations, and is deeply rooted in the modernization theory, which analyses the factors leading to social progress and the development of societies. However, in general, the ideology advocates for gender equality and female emancipation in order to advance the economic, collective, and opinionated comfort of feminists. Interventions to address issues have been successful in increasing women's roles as contributors to economic growth since the 1970s, with a focus on the inclusion of women from the development process (Summerfield, 2006: Schuler & Boender, 2002: Malhotra, Jaquette and Rathgeber, 1990). The discussion's main points were centered on identifying the institutions that prevent women from advancing and the necessity for focused efforts on ignored areas like, education, health, discrimination, inequality, economic imbalance and strategies, environmental effects, and other issues (Samani 2010). Although the ideas and practices of gender-focused development are aimed at non-industrialized nations, the underlying assumptions of gender inequality and women's empowerment are also applicable to the developed world as well. In 1985, Nairobi, conference on women (Third World Conference) initiated that women should be used as a model in the economic development. In the period of 1975 to 1985, United Nation declared it as Women's Decade: Equality,

Development, and Peace. This strategy acknowledged the need to strengthen women's standing as both contributors and recipients of development in order to ensure that they may participate equally in the economy. The participation of women in development may help to reach the higher places, despite the fact that it was also acknowledged that particular nations may adapt to various changing situations while maintaining national priorities (UN 1985). In order to gain equality for men and women UN aimed to establish gender equality in all areas of politics, economic, and social life. Since the Brundtland Report's "Our Common Future" in 1987, sustainable development has grown to be a significant global policy as a priority. The idea of a "common future" stressed how our shared planet, which is threatened by severe environmental and societal issues like climate change, is something we all live on. Women's social standing, reproductive habits, health, right to own land, capacity to contribute in decision-making, and access to education continue to be issues that need to be addressed (Bugge et al., 2008).

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative methodology that will provide a better understanding of eastern and western attitude towards the participation of women globally. It will also focus on distinctive demographic characteristics influencing the participation of Muslim women leadership in political arena. The findings of the study indicate the gendered attitudes of the people towards Muslim women leaders; in addition it highlights the demographic factors influencing Muslim women leaders and their struggle in making their way. The methodology allows us to collect the data to have empirical evidence regarding the subject. The study is based on qualitative research

exploring political leadership and Muslim global thought. Content analysis and library research methods have been adopted to analyze the literature review from the research journals, previous researches, and published sources on the subject. Since the qualitative studies provide in-depth analysis of the issues, therefore the researchers have chosen it as a tool of getting insight of the subject based on library research and content analysis through key word searches, subject searches, scholarly articles and books, citation searches and through bibliographies and also looked into browsing systematically from reliable sources.

Theoretical Background

Gradual changes in women's life have been viewed at global level in past decades (Bryant, 2003; Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Damji & Lee, 1995; Loo & Thorpe, 1998). In today's world importance of women's rights have been recognized and much attention is given in this regard to formulate laws and legislations to create equality n true sense, but more efforts are needed to pace up the process. Many researchers like Tolson have conceived that Islamic societies focus on gender rights and equality for everyone, therefore the constitutions should be made according to the Islamic Shariah (Tolson, 2003). According to Tolson, we see prominent names of many women working effectively in political system and many Muslim women leaders have shown great zeal in fulfilling their roles today and many examples are seen in the past as well. Women today are making efforts on the basis of Islamic law to break the stereotypical social trends across the globe; especially the Muslim women are taking initiative to break the ice and are combating the typical social mindset not only in eastern but also in the western society. An Islamic scholar Hidayet Tuksal studied in Ankara University in a theological

faculty in 1980s, she studies the Hadith and Sunnah very closely to establish true understanding regarding Holy Prophet (SAWW) life. She incorporated her research findings in her doctoral thesis and a book, saying that Islam does not consider women as second grade human, in fact Islam believes in equality in terms of rights, roles and responsibilities and infact, women hold great respect in Islamic societies. Tuksal is a Muslim feminist and she has a standpoint of educating women so that they can attain their rights, she even persuades women from small towns and remote areas to raise voice for their rights. Feminists and social activists continuously make efforts to raise gender equality awareness. They emphasize on collaborative efforts of public and private partnership along with secular feminists and Islamic centers run by the state to highlight the importance of women's rights. They added that guidance should be taken from Islamic sources of knowledge. Muslim women hold high status and positions even in west for instance, they are part of executive committees on Islamic centers in USA and they play a vital role in Muslin women's development and in enlightenment and expansion of Islam according to the Quran and Sunnah, but on the other hand in some cultures women are restricted to take part in any such activities (Lampman, 2001).

The South Asian region has a rich history regarding women political leadership. In early 13th century Mughal Empire had a queen named Razia Sultana, born in 1205, Budaun, India and she was a daughter of Shams ud din Altamash of the Mamluk dynasty. She was well educated and held pride as the only woman who was crowned at the Delhi courts as sovereign. She was a woman of substance, brave, intellect and had a great common sense (Commire & Klezmen, 2007). South Asian

region has a rich history and there are numerous names of women who held high positions in political domain for example, former female governor of Pakistan, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan served as ambassador to the Netherlands (1954-56), to Tunisia (1961-64), and Italy (1961-66). She was the widow of Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, who was assassinated in 1951 (Christensen, 2008). Similarly sister of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mohturma Fatima Jinnah known as Madar-e-Millat, she was born in 1893 in Karachi and was dentist by profession, she was one of the finest leaders in the history of Sub-continent. She established home industries for refugees in Karachi and established collage and educational institutions for women. In 1964, she fought for presidential ship with Ayub Khan but unfortunately she lost it (Commire & Kelzmer, 2007). In our neighbouring country Bangladesh we see many prominent Muslim women leaders, such as Khalida Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wazed, both are the former prime minister of Bangladesh. In Indonesia, Megawati Sukarnoputri was of very high political stature and Wan Azizah Wan Ismael, was a great opposition leader in Malaysia. In Pakistan among all women leaders, we see Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, she was a very brave, intelligent woman with a great political vision (Thompson, 2007).

Conclusion

Nations cannot progress without assuring women's participation in all sectors of development. Hence, Islam idealizes empowerment of women a must condition for healthy and prosperous society. But the socially constructed parameters have made it very fragile to implement laws within a patriarchal setup. According to research, women are underrepresented in leadership

positions. The researches show that "unconscious or semi-conscious" presuppositions about leadership-related masculinity are held by the majority of males, to a lesser extent by women. Women in leadership are becoming more accepted. This study looked at how culture is made up of a person's beliefs, actions, attitudes, and conventions and how culture can be redesigned. As attitudes are a reflection of one's feelings and they shape the social mindset. This study helped to have better understanding about attitude towards women, and how people view well-known Muslim female leaders' leadership style. The results of this study show that the people have strong attitude regarding gender differences and that there are various levels of comprehension and approaches of applying Islam to particular ideas, ideologies, and practices. Themes from this phenomenological study has also indicated the significance of better understanding Islam as a religion in order to educate Muslims, non-Muslims, government organizations, and non-governmental organizations about the advantages of gender equality within Islam as how it is practiced. According to the research, there are different approaches to enhance Muslim women's lives through education, career prospects, and political engagement. By reexamining and reinterpreting religious Qur'anic texts via an Islamic theoretical (Kalam) framework, the findings of this phenomenological research study may help raise awareness of Muslim women's efforts to continue in attaining gender equality. This study may help bridge the gap in the literature addressing Muslim women and their struggle to attain gender equality through Islam and channelizing their lives in public and private domains.

References

AL-Quran, Surah:XVI, Verse 97.

AL-Quran, Surah:33, Verse 35.

Bryant, S. E. (2003). The Role of Transformational and Transactional Leadership in Creating, Sharing and Exploiting Organizational Knowledge. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 9(4), 32–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190300900403

Bugge H. C. Voigt C. & Norges forskningsråd. (2008). Sustainable development in international and national law : what did the brundtland report do to legal thinking and legal development and where can we go from here? Europa Law Pub. Retrieved August 13 2023 from https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=471116.

Celis, K., & Childs, S. (2011). The Substantive Representation of Women: What to Do with Conservative Claims? Political Studies, 60(1), 213–225. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00904.x

Cinamon, R. G., & Rich, Y. (2002). Gender differences in the importance of work and family roles: Implications for work-family conflict. Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 47(11-12), 531–541. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022021804846

Clayton, A., O'Brien, D. Z., & Piscopo, J. M. (2019). All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy. American Journal of Political Science, 63(1), 113–129. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45132466

Card, C. (1999). On Feminist Ethics and Politics. Feminist Ethics (Hardcover).

Commire, A., & Kelzmer, D. (Eds). (2007). Dictionary of Women Worldwide: 25,000 women through the Ages (Vols 2 & 3). Detroit, MI: York.

Damji, T., & Lee, C. M. (1995). Gender Role Identity and Perceptions of Ismaili Muslim Men and Women. The Journal of Social Psychology, 135(2), 215–223. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1995.9711425

Deth J. W. van. (1997). Private groups and public life : social participation voluntary associations and political involvement in representative democracies. Routledge.

Dittmar, K., Sanbonmatsu, K., & Carroll, S. J. (2018). A Seat at the Table. Oxford University Press.

Dugan, H. (2008). Scent of a Woman: Performing the Politics of Smell in Late Medieval and Early Modern England. Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 38(2), 229–252. https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2007-025

Frederick, S., Novemsky, N., Wang, J., Dhar, R., & Nowlis, S. (2009). Opportunity Cost Neglect. Journal of Consumer Research, 36(4), 553–561. https://doi.org/10.1086/599764

Hughes, M. M., Paxton, P., & Krook, M. L. (2017). Gender Quotas for Legislatures and Corporate Boards. Annual Review of Sociology, 43(1), 331–352. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053324

Kamran, MAlik et al. (2022). Socio-Economic Role Of Women In Islamic Perspective: A Critical Review, Webology, Vol. 19(3),pp.3695-3704.

Lampman, J. (2001). Muslim convert takes on leadership role. Christian Science Monitor, p. 94.

Loo, R., Thorpe, K. Attitudes Toward Women's Roles in Society: A Replication After 20 Years. Sex Roles **39**, 903–912 (1998). https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018832823010

Pitkin, H. (1967). The concept of representation. University Of California Press.

Schwindt-Bayer, L. A., & Mishler, W. (2005). An Integrated Model of Women's Representation. The Journal of Politics, 67(2), 407–428. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2005.00323.x

Shaikh S. (2013). Feminism epistemology and experience: Critically (en)gendering the Study of Islam. Journal for Islamic Studies, vol. 33, pp.14-47.

Swers, M. L. (1998). Are Women More Likely to Vote for Women's Issue Bills than Their Male Colleagues? Legislative Studies Quarterly, 23(3), 435. https://doi.org/10.2307/440362

Tessman L. (2009). Feminist ethics and social and political philosophy: theorizing the non-ideal. Springer.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6841-6

Thompson, M. R. (2007). Female leadership of democratic transitions in Asia. Pacific Affair, 75, 535–555.

Tomos F. Kumar N. Clifton N. & Hyams-Ssekasi D. (2019). Women entrepreneurs and strategic decision making in the global economy. IGI Global, p.146. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7479-8

Zakaria, R. (2015). Women and Islamic Militancy. Dissent, 62(1), 118–125. https://doi.org/10.1353/dss.2015.0011