

THE STATUS AND RIGHTS OF WOMEN MENTIONED IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

Women rights movement is not new to this era; it is a series of events that has been taken place in different parts of the world throughout the centuries. With the advancement of society, the discrimination against women has been reduced to a certain degree, but the violations of their rights are still observed in some countries. They are still seen as being the victims of hinder access to quality education, health care services, and occupation. On the other hand, a great burden has been seen among women in the so-called equal rights society. They are taking more than one role, the role of the bread winner in addition to their primary role of being the wife, mother, and daughter of the family. Furthermore, regarding treatment of women is one of the misunderstood issues about Islam which might be the fact that some media portrayed the negative image of Islam. It could also be partly due to our fellow Muslims' treatment towards women. Thus, this study aims to explore more about the rights of women, their roles, status, and responsibilities as stipulated by Islam. Since this paper is based on the non-empirical, literature based study, the revealed knowledge; Quran and the Sunnah are taken as the main source of discussions on the topics of women rights in Islam, and further added the knowledge of scholars in the related area. And the Islamic literature points out that there is no discrimination against women in Islam. Men and women are being created equal in the spiritual sense. Intelligence, education and knowledge of women are no inferior to those of men. Though, women are excused from performing certain responsibilities based on their nature, and biological build up, women have extra advantages in terms of economic rights. They have freedom of choices as men do regarding their carrier, marriage, and even divorce if it is with the valid reason. It is hoped that this paper helps to increase awareness, claim back their rights as women, prevent violence against women, and reduce misunderstanding about Islam.

Key Words: Women rights, Role, Status, Responsibilities, *Quran*, *Sunnah*

Introduction

Women rights movement is neither new nor a single event started in one part of the society. It has been known to occur everywhere around the globe throughout the centuries. Perhaps, it might start since the beginning of first woman, Hawah (pbuh), after the creations of the father of humans, Adam (pbuh), though there might not have any record of it in the history. The equality of rights of women and men was explicitly declared by the United Nations Organization after the second world-war in 1948.ⁱ The association of the French women's movement was founded in 1870.ⁱⁱ In contrast, the women rights have been clearly mentioned in Islam more than 14000 years ago since the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

With the advancement of society, it has been seen great changes in the life of women as "women life expectancy is more than man in every country of the world" (WHO, 2014) though there are still many instances of unequal treatments towards them such as access to education, health care services, and occupation. These can be seen in the studies such as: "estimated only 16 countries in the world will achieve reduced maternal mortality rate by 2015,"ⁱⁱⁱ "women earn lesser than men, hold more junior positions, and exit the occupation at a faster rate,"^{iv} "Husbands' alcohol use is associated with intimate partner violence (IPV) against women in India"^v, "in Bangladesh, the income of married women are controlled by their husbands and in some cases their mothers-in-law"^{vi}, and other instances of forced marriage, sexual harassment and domestic violence against women in many countries in the world.

On the other hand, women are taking extra roles such as those of the breadwinner to cover up the family expenses for increasingly inflated economy in addition to their primary role of wife, mother, sister and daughter of a family. In fact, both men and women have their rights and responsibilities, they are not necessary to compete, or overpower each other but to provide mutual support in benefitting the society. Thus, this paper aims to explore how women, the companion of men, achieve their prescribed status and permitted rights according to Islam compared with so-called women rights movements or the feminism. It is also hoped to identify the responsibilities, and the opportunities of women as stipulated by Islam. As the main literature source, the Qur'an and the traditions (*sunnah*), the sayings and teachings of the Prophet (*Ahadith*) are taken and further added the knowledge of the scholars in the related area.

Methodology: This study is based on the non-empirical, library based research. Since Muslims believe that the ultimate truth of knowledge lies in the hands of the Creator, the revealed knowledge is considered as the primary source of this study. Thus, the discussion on the topic of women rights in Islam, the main reference to rely on is none other than the Holy Qur'an, traditions (*Sunnah*) and sayings (*Ahadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who received Qur'an as a revelation from Allah (SWT). In regards to al-hadith, the four books namely "Sunan-An-Nasa, At-tirmidhi, SahihMuslim, and Al-Bukhari" are studied especially in the issues relating to women. The knowledge of the scholars in the related field is also further added to the study, based on the authors' perception on the subject matter, the findings are classified as the groups such as: the nature of creations of human, status of Muslim women in Islam as wife, mother, sister and daughter, rights of Muslim women in terms of education, occupation, religion, politics, and economic aspects, the responsibilities of women, and some misunderstood things about Islam such as Muslim women attires, and the polygamy are presented and discussed accordingly.

Nature Of Creations: According to the Qur'an, man and woman are being created from the same source, thus both are the same in regards to the spiritual sense. "Fear your Guardian Lord, Who created you from a single person" (Qur'an 4:1)^{vii}, "made his mate of like nature" (Quran 7:189), (16:72), "He has made for you pairs from among yourselves" (Quran 42:11). There are many verses in the Qur'an which assumes to have the similar concept such as (Qur'an 23:12-14) and (22:5). The Quran itself is sent as guidance to the whole mankind, aiming for both men and women.

Allah (SWT) has created man and woman with different nature but unique qualities; man as a mean of approach, love and solicitation and woman as a source of attraction and being loved. This is one of the wise schemes and plans of creation.^{viii} Women are by nature more closely connected with compassion, and this natural sympathy is felt in many places. The self-sacrifice that goes with compassion wants nothing in return and expresses true sincerity, and so is of the greatest importance at this time. A mother will sacrifice her life to save her young from danger, as the demand of her nature and with true sincerity, shows that women are capable of great heroism.^{ix} Thus, equal status of women as men has been accepted as the fundamental human rights of every civilized society.

Status Of Women In Islam

According to the revelations of Qur'an, women are given and acknowledged their unequivocal rights in the seventh century, and made vicegerents of Allah (SWT) on earth, beside men. Different roles and responsibilities were assigned to women according to their positions as daughters, wives and mothers in the familial institution and as members of society and state.^x In accordance to this, the status of women discussed in this paper will be discussed based on their role in the family as wife, mother, daughter, and sister.

WOMAN AS A WIFE: The welfare of women starts before marriage in terms of seeking the right partner. The Prophet said; "If a suitor whose faith and conduct you are satisfied with comes to you, marry him your daughter. If you do not, there will be affliction on earth and gross corruption"^{xi}. Women are given the special qualities by Allah (SWT) that men cannot receive such as having pregnant, delivering and breastfeeding to their children. All men in the world comes from the womb of their mother except the first man, Prophet Adam (pbuh) who was created directly by Allah (SWT), and it seems that the word "women," itself is composed of the alphabet "w", and "o" before the words, "men". Only love, mutual respect, and understanding between husband and wife will bring peace to the family. A person you assume of with weakness might be better than you in the eyes of Creator, or you might get the results through your patience, which is described "if ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah (SWT) brings about through it a great deal of good" (Qur'an 4:19). It advices that husband should try to understand and forgive his wife even if she has weakness.

The status of women in Islam further can be observed under the title, women and their dignity in marriage and divorce.

Woman As A Mother: Islam lay emphasize on paying respect to parents, and dutiful to them, and obey them. It was instructed: "to be good to parents", and especially reminding about mother "in travail upon travail, did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning" (Qur'an 31:14, 46:15). Prophet said, "Paradise is at the feet of your mother" (An-Nasa) and guides us to be kind, and dutiful to mother (Vol 8, Bk 73, No 6, 9)^{xii}. In answering to questions by one of his companions, "Who most deserves (my) reverence? Prophet said: 'Your mother' and he repeats it for three times, then said, "Your father" (At-tirmidhi, vol-4, chapt 1: 1897).^{xiii} From this, one could be clearly observed that Islam place more favored to "mother" than "father".

Women As Daughters And Sisters: The Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) while the darkness of ignorance covered the Arabian Peninsula. At that time, women were treated as rubbish, sex objects, or being counted them as their livestock animals, sons were favored more than daughters, and daughters were buried alive. Regarding female infanticides, prohibited by Prophet saying that, "Allah (SWT) has forbidden you to bury your daughters alive" (Vol. 8, Book 73, No. 6),^{xiv} and similarly in the Qur'an, "When the female (infant) buried alive, is questioned - for what crime she was killed" (81:8-9), "bury it in the dust? What an evil (choice) they decide on" (16:59). All these practices and attitude towards women were forbidden by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) reminding them the punishments of hereafter.

At the same time, the rewards are promised regarding kind treatment of daughters. The Prophet said, "whoever is in charge of these daughters and treats them generously, then they will act as a shield for him from the (Hell) Fire" (Al-bukhari Vol. 8, Book 73, No. 24),^{xv} "Whoever has three daughters, or three sisters, or two daughters, or two sisters and he keeps good company with them and fears Allah (SWT) regarding them, then Paradise is for him" (At-tirmidhi-vol 4, chapter 13:1916).^{xvi}

Rights Of Women In Islam

The Qur'an clearly stated that, "women have rights similar to those of men" (Qur'an 2:228). The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on his final farewell message highlighted the similar concept with "you have rights over your wives and they have rights over you,"^{xxvii} and "the best of you are those who are best to their wives" (Ibn-Hanbal, No.7396). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) improved the position and status of women greatly. His basic principle was first to inculcate 'a respect for women'.^{xxviii} Thus, the gap between the theory of Islam and practices of Muslims is to be filled up, and women require having equal rights in marriage, education, politics, occupation, and economic sectors.

Women And Their Dignity In Marriage And Divorce: Islam encourages marriage, and the importance of building up the family saying "marriage is half of faith (*imman*)" (At-tirmidhi). Family as one of the social institutions is essential place for reproducing offspring and maintaining human generations, and also a place for providing love, social, emotional and financial security to its members. One needs to marry if they are affordable, "for it restrains eyes from casting (evil glances), and preserves one from immorality; but those who cannot should devote themselves to fasting for it is a means of controlling sexual desire (Al-Muslim, Book 8, No. 3231)^{xxix}. It is reasonable to conclude that the sexual abuse or violence against women is related with uncontrolled desires, and wrong sense of moralities.

In regards to marriage, there is no forced marriage in Islam and a woman has the rights to choose their partner. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) repeatedly warned that the prior consent of a woman, whose hand was sought in marriage, was a basic condition without which the proposed marriage could not, under the *shari'a*, take place or be regarded as valid.^{xx} The compulsory rules for Islamic marriage are proposal, acceptance, and the dowry which the women shall receive from her husband, and it is clear that these rules are in favored of the women. Furthermore, nobody is superior to the other in a marriage life, and both are responsible for their parts. It is the mutual contract between man and women so that they may find love, mercy and tranquility, as stated "Ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and has put love and mercy between your hearts" (Qur'an 30:21), "they are your garments, and ye are their garments" (Qur'an 2: 187).

In regards to divorce, it is generally forbidden in Islam. So that divorce will not be based on hasty decisions, and in favored of women, three months waiting period (*iddat*) are needed before divorce takes place (Sunan An-nasa, Vol.4; chapter 1: 3422),^{xxi} they may reconcile each other during that period, but reminding that "do not take them back to injure them, or to take undue advantage, and if any one does that, he wrongs his own soul (Qur'an 2:231)", and even if divorce "to separate with kindness" (Qur'an 2:229).

Divorce is allowed in case of necessity, but one needs to build on the legal ground. Divorce without good cause is a specific injury that is not allowed under the *Shari'ah*.^{xxii} The Muslim women have the rights to seek divorce with the valid reason which should be brought to the court. Regarding divorce matters, CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) stated that Muslim women in Malaysia have unequal opportunities in existing unsuccessful marriages. Women face more obstacles in terms of evidential requirements and delays when exercising their rights to divorce as compared to men. In addition to this, when men exercises *talaq* contrary to the legislative provisions, the methods of divorce available to women are said to be discriminatory in nature.^{xxiii} Though Islam is a perfect religion, some Muslims tarnish the name of it with their misconducts. There are still rooms for improvement regarding the treatment of women regarding their rights in divorce matters.

Women In Education And Profession: Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim, and there is no restriction for Muslim women to have access to education, or their carrier choices. Since women are also responsible for their actions before the creator, their education and seeking of knowledge is as important as that of the men. As members of the family, women have the right to be saved from hellfire by being educated to lead responsible lives.^{xxiv} The first revelation of the Qur'an started with asking humans to read (*Iqrah*), and women are also responsible to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave as men do. Nowadays, the women are increasingly having freedom of choices; the rights to involve in their interested area, jobs, and other social activities. The educated Muslim women are working in different professions, as teachers, educators, engineers, lawyers, even army and police sectors.

Women are also involved in medical and related field as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists as per described, "Muslims are commanded to respect all human beings and show humility, kindness, mercy to everyone from the elderly, the young and weak and all of Allah's (SWT) creations, including the environment".^{xxv} A glance back to the Islamic history, "Rufaidah bint sa'ad" could be regarded as the first female professional nurse since she trained the nurses to care the injured soldiers, and she treat the sick in her tent outside the Medina mosque. Khadijah, wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself, is being known as a successful business woman, and recognized as the first person who believed and converted to Islam. Similarly, another wife of Prophet, Ayshah, is also famous as the scholar and great sources of most of the *alhadith* in Islamic literature. There have been lots of intelligent, educated, professional women who made enormous contributions throughout the human history.

Women In Politics: Throughout the Islamic history, there are instances that women have been participated in the major areas as policy making, politics, and even in the battle field. "Prophet did permit them to nurse the injured and supply provisions to the *mujahidin* at some battles".^{xxvi} Islam views the roles of both men and women in society as equal partners who complement each other.^{xxvii} Some Muslim countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kosovo, Senegal, Turkey, Mali, Mauritius have or having history of women leaders and presidents. "Women's participation in socio-political activities should not be considered as competing with, or interrupting, men's role in society, but complementing it by performing works that could not be accomplished by them".^{xxviii} Globally, women are underrepresented in politics, women make up half of the population of every country in the world, but the worldwide average percentage of women in national parliaments is only 20% (Paxton & Hughes,

2014). In Malaysia, the percentage of women Members of Parliament (MPs) of 9.8 percent in 2000 is still below the average figure of 14.1 percent for Asian countries.^{xxxix} Globally, Muslim women participation in management and political areas are still lesser than the expected percentage, and women need to empower more in this area.

Women And Religion: There is no difference between man and woman in regards to religion, belief, and the practices in Islam. The five pillars of Islam: belief (declaration of faith), *salah* (prayer), *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), *zakah* (alms giving to the needy), *sawn* (fasting during the month of Ramadan) are considered mandatory for both male and female believers (Al-Bukhari, 2:7),^{xxx} though, certain conditions are given for women to be exempted from these duties.

Women during menstruation and post-partum periods are excused from conducting the daily prayers, and the mandatory fasting. Similarly, pregnant and lactating women are allowed not to carry out the obligatory fasting if they are worried about their health, and their babies. The missed days for prayers are not necessary to be compensated, but those of the obligatory fasting is to be replaced later when they regain their health, or if unable to do so, by feeding the poor person. Moreover, Friday congregational prayer is not made compulsory for women out of considerations to them. However, women are recognized as the Islamic scholars, and preachers in some countries based on their knowledge and capacity. It is observed that women are equally responsible as men to perform the religious duties stipulated by Islam though certain exceptions are given to them based on their nature and physiological functions.

In Islam, regardless of male or female, they will get the rewards and punishments based on their deeds. Regarding good deeds, and the reward of it, the Qur'an stated, "*never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be male or female*" (3:195), "*If any do good deeds of righteousness- Be they male or female-and have faith, they will enter Heaven*" (4:124), "*We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions*" (16:97), "*For Muslim men and women – who are believing, devout, and true, who are patient and constant, who humble, who give in charity, who fast, who guard their chastity, and who engage much in Allah's (SWT) remembrance, for them has Allah (SWT) prepared forgiveness and great reward*" (33:35), "*enter ye the Garden, Ye and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing*" (43:70), and similarly in the Qur'an 36:6, 56:35,36. From this, it is assumed to apply the similar theory of whoever bad deeds they commit; man or woman, they will receive the consequences of it, as "*Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds*" (Qur'an 74:38).

Economic Rights Of Women: In regards to economic rights, it is seen that Islamic law favored women more than the men. At the time of marriage, women are the one who receive the dowry from men, and the expense for wedding is to be incurred by the bride or his family. If a woman and her family willing to excuse or share the expenses with good will, there is no restriction in that. The household expenses are the responsibilities of their husbands. Moreover, in case of divorce, a woman has the right to claim for custody of young children, and their allowances.

The Qur'an described that the property women own before marriage, and the income earned during their marriage through investment or work, are also the sole properties of them "*whatever women earn, they have a share in that*" (Quran 4:32), "*you are forbidden to inherit women against their will*" (Qur'an 4:19). Women also got the inherited rights as a mother, daughter, and sisters when distributing the property, "*Mu'adh gave the daughter one-half of the property and gave the sister the other half*" (Al-Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 80, Number 726)^{xxxi}. Nonetheless, there should be no reason to argue if women are willing to contribute to society with their knowledge, expertise, spend their money, and assist their family for economic security.

Responsibilities And Opportunities Of Women

Rights always come with responsibilities, thus, claiming back the rights of women will not be possible without mentioning their responsibility. In Islam, "*a woman's role on earth is not limited only to childbirth but she is required to do as many good deeds as any other man is required to do*". The Qur'an has guided both men and women to follow the role model women as "*the Virgin Mary and the Pharaoh's wife (pbut)*"^{xxxii} (66:11-13).

Women should be the great source of assistance for their husbands' physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. They are "*the ones with most need for someone to stand beside men and fill their life with love, comfort, understanding and support*".^{xxxiii} Since "*no man of sense builds love and affection for his wife on her fleeting, superficial beauty, he should build his love on her fine conduct, the most permanent and best of beauty. For his wife is not merely a temporary helper and companion in this worldly life, but an eternal and lovable companion for everlasting life*".^{xxxiv} Thus, the responsibilities of women also include maintaining their modesty, dignity and honesty.

Hijab And Attires: In Islam, the women are not necessary to wear a particular style of dress, but to wear any clothes of comfortable as long as they cover the *awrah* and maintain their modesty. Some criticizes that Muslim women are being oppressed by wearing *hijab* and covering their beauty. Nonetheless, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder, and women could be as amazing as they are with their concealed beauty. Additionally, women should never be the victims of sexual harassment or abuse regardless of *hijab* or not. But, some research findings said that the girls with *hijab* are less likely to get harassment compared to those without *hijab*, and wearing clothes which revealed their body.

However, it is known that Muslim women's attire has been a reason of conflict in some societies. There were calls from some of the non-Muslim for the veil to be banned by law, with the reason of terrorists dressing as women.^{xxxv} In fact, covering the whole face except eyes (*Niqab*) is not compulsory for Muslim girls, it is even forbidden in some Muslim areas out of safety for both parties. Islam give emphasis to the dignity of women, the Qur'an (24:31) said, "*Draw their veils over neck, not to reveal their adornments,*" and also to men "*to lower their gaze*" since intentional look would provoke the irrational thoughts. Islam wants us

to keep our spiritual purity in addition to maintaining physical cleanliness with ablution or *wudu* (washing the visible body parts) or *gusul* (washing the entire body) with water (Qur'an *Al-Maidah* 5:6) before conducting the prayer (*salah*) five times a day.

Polygamy: The practice of polygamy has been seen in different cultures, race, and religion of human civilization. "Four wives issues" in Islam has always been a topic of discussion, though, it is not the practice made compulsory for Muslims. In fact, Islam is the only religion explicitly mentions "to marry only one", with the reason of "that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice" (Qur'an 4:2). In case of necessary, out of considerations for the women of society (especially widowers), a man may practice polygamy. The Prophet said "The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person, is like a warrior fighting for Allah's (SWT) cause or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all the night" (Al-bukhari, Vol 8, Bk 73, No 35-36).^{xxxvi}

Besides, female population is greatly outnumbered the male globally. It is said that even if every man got married to one woman, there would still be more than thirty million females in USA who would not be able to get husbands (considering that America has twenty-five million gays). There would be more than four millions females in Great Britain, five million females in Germany and nine million females in Russia alone who would not be able to find a husband.^{xxxvii} It is amazing to observe that Islam considers the social aspects of women since over 14000 years ago.

Nonetheless, certain conditions are given for polygamy such as equal treatment among wives, and financial affordability. "Whoever has two wives and is inclined to favor one of them over the other, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with half of his body leaning" (Sunan An-nasa, Chp 2:3394).^{xxxviii} In fact, these two conditions make it difficult for men to practice polygamy. There is little chance for an ordinary man to be able to treat his wives equally, without giving favors one over another, or hurting their feelings. Even building up one family in peace, and harmony is demanding nowadays, it is very unlikely for a man to make this choice who have God consciousness (*thakawah*) and who worries that they are not being able to fulfill these responsibilities.

Limitations: One of the limitations of this study is that the discussion is not based on all the *al-hadith* books of Islam, though four books namely "Sunan-An-Nasa, At-tirmidhi, SahihMuslim, and Al-Bukhari" are taken. Further studies such as; women rights in education, politics, carrier choices, economic, and heritage rights should be explored more details from the perspectives of Islam. The prospective study is needed to identify the status of women by describing the exemplary women of the Islamic history as a role model to follow for the younger generations. Though, Islam laid perfect guidelines regarding women treatment, some Muslims distort the primary teachings by interpreting based on their social and cultural elements. Both Muslim men and women are responsible endeavor to fill the theory and practice gap regarding women treatment in Islam, and women themselves require raising awareness about their status and rights.

Discussions And Conclusions

From all the reasons presented above, both Muslim men and women are equal in status in terms of their rights, though both have different opportunities and responsibilities. Men and women are being created from the same source, thus, both are accountable for their actions. Women are highly respected in terms of their role in family as mother, daughters, wife, and sisters, and the rewards and punishments are given regarding their treatment. In Islam, women have the full rights in areas of education, economic, politics, religious practices and carrier choices. Moreover, they have the rights in choosing their partner, asking for divorce, child custody and their financial allowances. In regards to polygamy, two conditions are given which make it difficult for a man to practice. Islam encourages marrying "only one", but the polygamy allowed with exception is in-fact to protect the women from being illegal marriage, sexual objects and sexually transmitted diseases.

Women rights as human rights movement was only started in Western countries from 18th and more actively in 19th century. One study conducted by Alotaibi (2016) concluded that Islam is a feminist religion which favour and empower women^{xxxix}. Muslim women secured their rights and freedoms over 1400 years ago with the arrival of Islam. "It is proved without doubt that Islam is neither backward nor repressive in respect of its treatment of women".^{xl} And "No other religious book and no other reformer has done one tenth of what the Holy Qur'an or the Holy Prophet Muhammad has done to raise the position of women (Maulana Muhammad Ali).^{xli} The women just have to claim back their rights which have already been there before, neither overburdening themselves, nor neglecting their roles as caregiver, and supporter of a family.

Though the women rights have clearly laid down in Islam, a big gap between theory and practice are giving rise to many problems. Islam makes the pursuit of education obligatory; however in most of the Muslim societies, girls are not encouraged to continue their higher education. On the other hand some Muslim families are so westernized that their women look at the house chores and childrearing as insignificant and trivial work. In both cases, either due to no education or to secularized education, Muslim societies face problems with women who increasingly becoming victims of these problems.^{xlii} Thus, contemporary Islam demands the revival of the prominent position of women in both theory and practice.^{xliii}

Some tend to interpret the religious teachings from their understanding or cultures which is supported by the findings of the study done in Kuwait "the driving force of women's status is as much cultural and political, as religious"^{xliv}. One Qur'anic verse mentions that "men have a degree over women" (2:228). It is easy to take note that Allah (SWT) created the universe with great disciplines and order: the earth and sky in balance, moon and sun on their specific pathways, humans in the best forms, and without disciplines everything will be in a chaos. From the sociology point of view, even a small group needs a leader or facilitator to conduct things smoothly for achieving their group purpose. It tends to reason that marriage requires to be based on certain rules for the best benefits of it. Men as in-charge of family is just mentioning about their responsibility, and not about their dominance towards women.

In terms of heritage, “man get more than women”, and women get half of men. The reason is given that a son needs more money since one day he becomes a husband and has to support his new family. When daughter gets married her husband needs to support her and she needs only a portion or half of what the males in the family need.^{xlv}Hence, it is said to be fair because men have financial responsibilities over their family, while women are not. In fact, Islam favored women more than man in this instance: the dowry, the property rights, and no financial responsibility over family.

Women regardless of skin color, race or culture, should never be neglected and abused. Domestic violence or rape violates women’s freedom of movement and their right to security. “The best way to respect cultural diversity and advocate for women’s rights is to focus on those practices of concern to women in their own countries and to support their efforts to do accordingly”.^{xlvi} For this, the rights and equality of women from the Qur’an and Sunnah source should be promoted to improve public awareness, prevent discrimination, and abuse against women.

The treatment of women in Islam portrayed in media is proved to be totally wrong since Islam provides the perfect guidelines for the best treatment of women. Certain issues such as polygamy, Muslim women attires have still been a topic of discussions. Nonetheless, misunderstanding against Islam is partly due to the misconduct of some Muslims against their women. There are still rooms for improvement of women in every filed; politics, education, health care, carrier choices, inheritance and family affairs. It is necessary for both men and women to have God consciousness (*thakawa*), and to be aware that they need to testify for their actions on the resurrection day. Since Islam provides the best theory regarding women, their rights, status, and responsibilities, it is the duties of both men and women believers endeavour to put effort in filling up the gap between this theory and practice for this life and hereafter.

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