
The Statut of Women in Islam

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Abstract

The study of the status of women in the Muslim religion is important because it sheds light on the understanding of some controversial verses. This leads us to an overview of the concept of "Islam and women in relation to its development". In this study, we will see the right of the woman to work, the honorable value of a mother in Islam, her right to education, to inheritance and the duty of the husband towards his wife. In this study, we have found that Islam, when properly practiced and interpreted, has never been a source of social discrimination. The Muslim religion is considered as one of the key factors of social inequalities to the detriment of women, an idea that is difficult to prove.

Keywords: Women; Islam; Koran; social inequality; development

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, social imbalance between the sexes is observed to varying degrees. Our study area is the Union of Comoros, a country where multiple women's rights are violated but we have seen that there are many countries where women suffer more than this archipelago. Generally speaking, before making a comparative study between the Comoros and some other countries, in the future work, we have taken ample time to see the true status of women according to Islam in order to avoid misinterpretations of the Koran, sources of domination of men over women.

Should we consider Islam as a discriminatory religion? If the feudal ideas that make us believe that women are inferior to men were to be relaxed, what would be the social model of the Comoros? Is there a country more discriminatory than the Comoros?

I. Materials and methods

Our survey was conducted in the three islands under the administration of the Comorian authority between June 2016 and December 2018. Our survey was financed by ourselves.

Our objective is to provide some denunciations allowing the religious and governmental authorities to react in time to change the mentalities.

Our study concerns the status of women in Islam. Specifically, this work aims to demonstrate the noble status of women granted by Islam and to denounce the prejudices as well as the erroneous interpretations of the Koran. Secondly, our investigation will provide information on our topic through surveys of religious leaders and some source documents. Finally, our study will host detailed data that could facilitate future work.

a) Data Collection Tool

During the survey, interviews were conducted using a pre-established questionnaire with notables, religious leaders and academics. The survey was designed to identify all the constraints and assets that could contribute to the improvement of women's living conditions.

b) Sampling

Our sample is made up of source persons, the first of whom are the religious leaders, with 13 people interviewed, followed by the notables, with 12 interviewees, and the academics, with 14 people. All the interviewees made up our sample.

We constituted 3 clusters according to their size, from the list established in the study area.

II. Results

Our study allowed us to obtain information on the value of women in Islam. It is noteworthy that 83% of our sample affirmed that Islam has honored women.

Almost 68% of our study reside in rural areas. This suggests that discrimination against women is much more visible in rural areas than in urban areas. The study also found a large number of widows and single women living in precarious conditions due to a lack of support from their children or the authorities.

There is a recurrent opposition between the value of women in Islam and their current status granted by tradition. Between modernity, the

particular and the universal or between equality between men and women and cultural diversity.

Finally, this study is based on demonstrating and denouncing the suffering of Comorian women in their society despite the stipulations of Islam.

III. Discussion

1. The Status of Women in Islam

The Muslim woman is not discriminated by her religion. On the contrary, she has been liberated and obtained certain rights favorable to her development.

The Muslim religion has never forbidden a woman to work. Some husbands dare to prevent their wives from working even if they have a higher education. In cases where women revolt for their right to work, their families always side with their husbands, citing non-existent Koranic verses. Islam allows women to work and earn a living:

« For men there is a share of what they have earned, and for women there is a share of what they have earned »¹.

The above verse from the Qur'an expresses the position of Islam regarding women's professional work. There are, however, legal conditions and restrictions that must be observed. Islam does not allow a woman to undertake a job that could harm her health, her physique, expose herself or undermine her values. It should be noted that the biological constitution of the woman and her psychological structure must be taken into account.

Some theologians tell us that a woman's main role is to take care of her matrimonial home including raising her children properly with the help and assistance of her husband, etc. If she can fulfill this role perfectly, she will be able to do so in a safe way. If she can fulfill this role perfectly, and work at the same time to increase the income of their households, she can unless her work requires her to transgress the boundaries established by Islamic Law, the Sharia. Originally, women had three important roles to play in society.

- ✓ She was a mother,
- ✓ She was a daughter,
- ✓ She was a wife.

Before Islam, none of these roles were properly recognized. This religion introduced essential changes. The predominant customs and practices that existed in the Arab world, the cradle of Islam, was the immoral exploitation of women with respect to her three roles. To this proceeding, we will see how

¹ *Quran, Sura 4, Verse 32*

Islam put an end to this oppression and blessed the woman with honor and recognition.

The birth of a girl among the many tribes of Arabia, before Islam, it had become a custom to get rid of newborn girls as quickly as possible because according to their beliefs at the time, for the father, the birth of a girl was the arrival of a curse in the family. Fathers buried their daughters alive, without regret or remorse, watching her scream and beg helplessly for mercy and fatherly affection. Many girls suffered similar ends either at birth or some time later.

It was not until the advent of Islam, the teachings of the Qur'an and the guidance of the Mercy of the Universe, the Messenger of Allah Mohammed, that this type of crime was eradicated once and for all. Thus, Prophet Muhammad said:

God promised Paradise to the one who would raise his daughters according to Islamic teachings and marry them to pious husbands. Other similar teachings from the Glorious Qur'an and the example of the Messenger of Allah had such a positive impact on the social life of the people as a whole that the very concept of the so-called "curse" was morally abolished, and is called to this day "blessing" ².

In relation to this, we wonder about the origin of domestic violence. If some people think that the source is Islam, this hadith of the prophet Mohammed proves the contrary because the Muslim faith has liberated the girl from the corporal punishment she was suffering.

In the past, before Islam, the wife lived in a pitiful, miserable condition. She was considered a second-class citizen, underfed, overworked and treated worse than an animal. She was treated as a slave to relentlessly serve her husband, her children, and her husband's guests, day and night, with no time to rest.

Her drudgery and sweat were only ever rewarded with rags on her back and a few bites of food just to keep her body and soul alive. The wife was rescued by Islam which quickly freed her from this condition. "And live with them in peace. « *They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them* ».³

The Prophet of Islam said, « *The best of you is the one who is best with his family, and I am best with my family* »⁴.

The Qur'an helps to strengthen the marital relationship between the man and his wife to promote a peaceful and healthy atmosphere in the home. The situation of the wife is much the same as in the pre-Islamic period. We

² Hadith of the prophet Mohammed

³ Quran, Sura 4, Verse 19

⁴ Quran, Surat 2, Verse 187

have been questioning the origin of the discrimination against women which is not in line with the ideology of Islam or the recommendations of the international community.

2. The Value of a Mother in Islam

The value of a mother in Islam is very high. She is the most honored and respected personality in the Muslim religion. But her situation was not like this before Islam. In the pre-Islamic period, the mother was mistreated and dispossessed of her property during her matrimonial period by her husband and children. When she was widowed, she was often considered part of the inheritance and deprived of it. Sons-in-law, adopted sons were entitled or allowed to marry her or cohabit with her. She was considered a dispensable property that could be exchanged at will. With the advent of Islam, We placed the mother in a sacred and privileged position over the man as the Prophet Muhammad said: « *Paradise is under the feet of mothers* »⁵.

No such Hadith has ever said otherwise, that paradise is under the feet of the fathers. We find prophetic verses and traditions that encourage Muslims to respect and serve their parents especially their mothers. But where does the hostility of Comorian men towards women come from? I am afraid that Islam is the source of these inequalities. We find in the Koran a sura that speaks specifically about women while the opposite does not exist⁶. We can say that Islam has improved the status and honorability of women. Islam has given her rights that she had never enjoyed before. The right to compete with man in all spheres of life and to participate in the establishment of a healthy and pious atmosphere. When God gave man the chance to excel in piety and chastity, woman was also encouraged to do the same. Thus, the Qur'an said:

« Male and female Muslims, believing and believing, obedient and obedient, truthful men and women, enduring and enduring, fearful and fearful, givers and givers of alms, fasting and fasting women, guardians of their chastity and guardians, abundant invocers of God and invocers: God has prepared for them forgiveness and an immense reward »⁷.

This verse testifies that both men and women can perform pious acts and practice chastity with the intention of satisfying their sovereign lord in order to earn for their own good an honorable place in this world and in the hereafter.

⁵ Quran, Sura 4, Verse 21

⁶ Sura 4-verse 114

⁷ Sura 33-Verse 35

It is time to tell the Comorian political, religious and customary authorities that the arrival of Islam means justice, honorability and recognition of the woman as a human being. Women as well as men have equal rights, opportunities and must play a positive role in society. We can conclude that Islam has blessed the social status of the mother, the wife, and the daughter. The woman is born free and deserves to enjoy this freedom without breaking the religious rules.

We must understand that giving her unlimited rights or rights unsuited to her biological constitution could be detrimental to her faith and development. The control of his activities without submission could prevent him from dishonorable offences such as pornography, prostitution, rape, adultery, fornication, abortion and homosexuality among others which strike the world today especially in the so-called civilized societies. The Comorian authorities must reflect and treat women either according to the guidelines of the international community or according to the Koran, to the letter again and realize that Islam can provide a solution.

We will demonstrate that the Muslim religion is not the source of social inequalities to the detriment of women in Muslim countries in general and Comoros in particular. In the pre-Islamic period, women were subjected to torture and ill-treatment, which we will demonstrate by comparing each stage of this passage.

Islam allows the woman as well as the man to enjoy the right to make transactions, the right to sell, to buy, to own movable and immovable property because God said in the Koran that he created us from a male and a female, and the only criteria that make one person prevail over another is the salutary work and piety.

God said: *« O men! We have created you from a male and a female, and We have made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. The most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Allah is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise »*⁸.

According to this Qur'anic verse, God has never separated men and women in any situation. The best of us before the Lord is the one who respects the law and the obligations of Allah.

The rate of illiteracy among women is alarming and according to some of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Said Al Khoudri, relates that a woman came to the Prophet and said : **« O Messenger of Allah! The men have reserved your hadiths for themselves. So leave for us one of your days to teach us what Allah has taught you »**⁹.

He said, "Meet on such a day. So they gathered and the Prophet came to them and taught them what Allah had taught him. Then he said to them:

⁸ Sura 49-Verse 13

⁹ Sura 49-Verse 13

« Each of you who will be preceded to the next world by three of her children will find in them a screen against the Fire. One of them asked him: What if there are only two of them? He said, "Even if there are only two »¹⁰.

The Messenger of God had always favored the education of girls. One of the Prophet Muhammad's wives, Aisha, was among the companions of the Prophet who reported many true hadiths. If we want to take the case of our country, the Comoros, almost all the children of all sexes attend the Koranic school without ever reaching the status of the teacher even if she has the required knowledge.

The first verse of the Koran, revealed to the prophet of Islam was IKRA-OU which literally means to read, to learn. Without specifying the type of teaching. According to a religious leader in a mosque in Fassi, he explained to us that all teaching is favorable before the lord and the one who is in the way of learning is better than the one who made the Hajj¹¹, or the Jihad and will have a house of gold and diamond in paradise and why the Comorian parents do not educate their children or make them go out for an early marriage in favor of the traditions, the big marriage for example. By definition jihad, masculine noun, according to the Koran, effort that every Muslim must lead against the evil inclinations of his soul (major jihad) and effort that he must lead by arms or by persuasion to defend and propagate Islam (minor jihad). As far as gender is concerned, the Qur'an is an aspect of valuing women. Several in law in the Quran, mentioned the value and place of women in Islam. We can start with this: "Allah (Exalted) created the woman from a rib of the man (...) and He (Allah) made men and women spread out". God said:

« O men! Fear your Lord who created you from a single being, and created from it his wife, and from these two made many men and women spread (on the earth). Fear Allah, in Whose name ye call upon one another, and fear to break the bonds of blood. Surely Allah is watching you perfectly »¹².

This verse is a message that the Lord, God Almighty, gives to human beings. He (God) created man and woman to spread humanity and forbids any breakage. Despite the stipulations of the Qur'an, abusive breakups of marriage and blood ties are commonplace. Thus, we can say that divorce without a valid reason, family conflicts and blood ties breakings are not acceptable before God.

¹⁰ Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad reported by Al Bukhari and Moslim

¹¹ By definition hajj is a masculine noun meaning a Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

¹² *Sura 4-Verse 1*

3. Women's right to inheritance before Islam

The right of inheritance of women before Islam was problematic. Only men had this right to the totality of the property of the decedent. It is from the Muslim religion that the woman had the right to inheritance as predicted in the Quran. God said:

To the men shall belong a share of what the father and mother and the relatives have left, and to the women a share of what the father and mother and the relatives have left, whether it be a little or a lot: a fixed share. We also know that the man's share of the inheritance is greater than the woman's according to the Qur'an.

Allah has said in the Holy Book: "This is what Allah enjoins on you concerning your children: to the son, a share equivalent to that of two daughters.

The Qur'an commands the man to take care of his wife and family financially and morally. He must give her a dowry and protect her among other things. This does not mean that the man dominates the woman. Thus, Ibn Abbas said:

In the past, the property of the deceased passed to his sons. Then Allah abrogated what he wanted to abrogate from all this, he gave the man the equivalent of the share of two women, the father and mother of the deceased are entitled to one-sixth or one-third of the estate each, the wife is entitled to one-fourth or one-eighth, the husband is entitled to one-half or one-quarter.

The husband's duty in the home and outside the home is to behave well towards his wife.

God has said:

And behave properly towards them i.e. say good words to them, treat them according to the right usage, take care of yourself to please them, as we want them to do for us for Allah (Exalted) has again said in the Quran: (...) As for them, they have rights equal to their obligations, in accordance with propriety.

The Prophet of Islam said to reinforce the words of the Qur'an, mentioned above. The Messenger of Allah said: "The best of you are the best with your wives, and I am the best of you with mine.

The husband should treat his wife well even in case there is dislike towards her. Thus, God Almighty has said: "(...) If you have dislike for them during the life together, you may have dislike for something in which Allah has deposited a great good.

This means that the man should have patience, restraint despite the dislike she may inspire, for this would bring the husband much good in this world and in the Hereafter. As Ibn Abbas said, "*This is the man who treats his wife well (in spite of dislike) and then she gives birth to a child in which Allah accommodates much good.*"

The Messenger of Allah said, « *Let not a believer hate a believer. If he dislikes one side of her, she will please him with another* »

In the Farewell Pilgrimage preaching, the Prophet said: "Recommend that you do good to women, Allah has entrusted them to you in trust and allowed you to approach them."

The Qur'an forbids men to marry certain women with whom we are related by blood and milk this is an aspect of and valuing of women unlike the situation before Islam.

God has said:

Forbidden to you are your mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts and maternal aunts, daughters of a brother and daughters of a sister, mothers who breastfed you, milk sisters, mothers of your wives, daughters-in-law under your guardianship, and offspring of women with whom you consummated the marriage; if the marriage was not consummated, this is not a sin on your part; wives of your sons born of your loins; as well as two sisters joined together, with the exception of the past. For truly Allah is Master of forgiveness and Merciful.

In Islam, the fight against social inequality has several aspects: spiritual, economic, social, legal and political. The Qur'an clearly shows that every human being, man and woman, are of the same spiritual and human nature. Both have been given the "divine breath" which has given them dignity and made them God's stewards on earth. Pregnancy and childbirth are not sanctions given by God but rather as additional reasons to love and appreciate Him.

Everyone has duties and responsibilities to fulfill. Nowhere in the Quran does it say that "men are superior to women" unless the verse is misinterpreted or explained in bad faith. According to the Qur'an, the best of us is the one who is upright towards the path of Allah regardless of gender, race, color and wealth.

4. Women's rights before and after marriage

Islamic law or sharia grants women rights before and after marriage. The woman is an actor in the development of a nation. She receives greater financial security than the man. She is entitled to the full amount of the dowry and her wedding gift. The woman has the sole usufruct of her labor while the man has the duty to maintain and provide for the various needs of his family.

The Qur'an reproaches the attitude of some parents who tend to favor their sons over their daughters. It prescribes the duty to help and show kindness and justice to girls. The education of girls is not only a fundamental right but a duty for every Muslim man and woman. Contrary to the Comorian society, the girl has the right to accept or refuse a marriage proposal. Forced,

non-consensual marriage is invalid according to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings upon him.

5. Controversial Verses

(...) Men are above women

In reality the Qur'an never said that men are above women. In the same verse of the chapter AN-NISSAA (women), the Qur'an reveals us these. This is the interpretation of

Men are in charge and control of women because of the advantages that God has given them over them, and also because of the expenses they incur for their maintenance. On the other hand, virtuous wives always remain faithful to their husbands during their absence and preserve their honor in accordance with the order God has prescribed. For those who are insubordinate, first admonish them, then ignore them in your marital bed and, if necessary, correct them. But as soon as they become reasonable again, do not quarrel with them. God is the Sovereign Master.

This interpretation is in line with the one given in a speech of the late President Ali Soilihi of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros in 1977, I quote: "Women are never placed below men but on the contrary, they are equal in rights and each one has his duties towards the other. This verse says that the man must stand before the woman that is to say that the man must assist her, feed her, clothe her, give her a roof, care for her etc...".

Conclusion

All human beings are equal in right and duty before the law. There are no specific courts or laws for men and others for women in Islam. The judge of the Islamic courts must consider the plaintiffs on an equal footing and each one will be treated according to the facts he is accused of and the procedures established by the holy book.

Ultimately, in Islam, everyone is responsible for their actions and will have to answer to God. The way some men treat women is neither allowed by Islam nor by other sources of law. Manipulation of the population through misinterpretation of the Qur'an either through ignorance or bad faith is one of the sources: "The most perfect of the believers is the one who has the best conduct. The best of you are those who are the best with their wives". This quote from the Prophet is one of the eloquent examples to defend the idea that Islam is not the origin of social inequalities to the detriment of women.

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