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Changing Japanese Society and religions

(an overview of feminism in Japan)

*** Dr Sher Ali**

*Assistant Professor, Deptt., Islamic Studies and Arabic, Government College
University, Faisal Abad*

**** Dr.Muhammad Arif Mateen**

Boston Islamic Centre, UK

ABSTRACT

Industrial advancements, economic growth, acceleration of urbanization and expanding process of modernization redefined the landmarks of everyday life across the globe with no exception of Japan. An explosion of new images of dynamic women, being key element of every society, was produced in this constant change. In magazines, media, including electronic and print, business, services, and religion and politics woman is a prominent icon of modern society. These new images of the feminine challenged previously existing widespread myths of a monolithic Japanese woman too.

Feminism, being a significant element in changing Japanese society, needs to be studied in the perspective of Japanese religiosity which will, certainly, be helpful in order to better understand the new modes of thinking and trends, modern challenges and the influential role of religions in contemporary Japan. This paper aims to answer the question how religious discourse in contemporary Japan tends to keep pace with the changing prototype of society, highlighting the dynamic role of women as mother, founders of New Religious Movements, leaders and teachers etc., in all spheres of life including media and politics.

It is hoped that this humble effort will help students of religion in Pakistan to some scholarly ways of looking at new paradigms of religious thinking in Japan focusing feminism.

Keywords: Feminism, Religions, Japan, New Religious Movements, Society

1.0 Introduction

Feminism is a bunch of various ideas and movements aimed at understanding the nature of gender inequality, defining, establishing and promoting the equal social, economic and political rights of women. There are many feminist ideas and

- Opportunities, Lahore: Innovative Educational Solutions, pp. 15-17
- 28- Al-Qur'an, 4: 124
- 29- Al Quran, 4:1
- 30- Al Quran, 49:13
- 31- Al Quran, 9:71
- 32- Al Quran, 33:35
- 33- Al-Quran, 4:32
- 34- Retrived June 16, 2017 from <https://quran.com/4/32>.
- 35- Afzal ur Rahman, (1986). Role of Muslim Women In Society, London, England: Seerah Foundation, p. 170.
- 36- Al Quran, 60:12
- 37- Afzal ur Rahman, Role of Muslim Women In Society, p. 158.
- 38- Al Quran, 28:22
- 39- Al Quran, 28:23
- 40- Al Quran, 28:24
- 41- Al Quran, 24:31
- 42- Al Quran, 24:30
- 43- Retrived May 23, 2017 from <https://islamicbankers.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/ilm-mashaqqah-al-yaqin-1.pdf>.
- 44- Al-Qur'an: 45:13.
- 45- Al-Qur'an, 31:20.
- 46- Abdul Malik Irfani, (n.d.) Islami Qanoon Key Kulyaat, Lahore, Pakistan: Qanooni Kutab Khana, pp. 44-45.
- 47- Al Quran, 28:22
- 48- Al Quran, 28:23
- 49- Al Quran, 28:24
- 50- Afzal ur Rahman, Role of Muslim Women In Society, p. 160.
- 51- Al Bukhari, Muhammad ibn ismaeel, The translation of the meaning of Sahih-al-Bukhari, Vol. 7, Book of An-Nikah, Hadith number 5237, p. 110.
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- 53- Al Bukhari, Muhammad ibn ismaeel, The translation of the meaning of Sahih-al-

- Entrepreneurship: Islamic Perspective.” p. 44.
- 14- Richard Cantillon was an Irish-French economist. At his early age he become a successful banker and marchant.
 - 15- Jean-Baptiste Say was a French economist and businessman. He had classically liberal views and argued in favor of competition, free trade, and lifting restraints on business.
 - 16- Robert D Hisrich, Michael P Peters, and Dean A Shepherd, (2002). Entrepreneurship (New York, America: McGraw Hill, pp. 10-11.
 - 17- Arthur Harrison Cole was born November 21, 1889 in Haverhill, MA. In 1933, he became Professor of Business Economics at Harvard Business School. In 1929, Arthur Cole was appointed financial supervisor of the International Scientific Committee on Price History. Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, which supported the study of social and economic problems, the Committee researched commodity prices of leading European countries and the United States prior to 1861. He died November 10, 1974.
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- 3- Al Quran, 4:124
- 4- Maruf Ullah, Taskeena binta Mahmud, and FatemaYousuf, "Women entrepreneurship: Islamic perspective," 45.
- 5- Al Quran, 4:32
- 6- Retrived July 10, 2016 from <http://khasnsabeen6.blogspot.com/>
- 7- Anis Ahmad. (1996). Women and Social Justice: An Islamic Paradigm, 1st ed edition, (Institute of Policy Studies, Pakistan.
- 8- Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.
- 9- Maruf Ullah,Taskina Binta Mahmud and Fatima Yousaf. "Women Entrepreneurship: Islamic Perspective." p. 43.
- 10- Retrived December 29, 2016 from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/entrepreneurship.html#ixzz3xv9ci0nt>
- 11- Retrived January 10, 2016 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/entrepreneurship>
- 12- Peter Drucker is an Austrian born American Business consultant who laid philosophical foundations for Modern Business Corporation.
- 13- Maruf Ullah,Taskina Binta Mahmud and Fatima Yousaf. "Women

words: "I have not seen anyone (man or woman) who has more scholarly knowledge of the Quran, the obligatory duties, what is lawful and what is unlawful(halal and haram), poetry and literature, and the history of Arabs and their genealogy, than Aishah".⁶⁶ This clearly speaks of how liberated were Muslim women of that era. Hazrat Asma was known for her knowledge and she was educated by Aisha (R.A)⁶⁷

This can be done by exploring these exemplary figures through a study of hadith literature and Islamic history. It is observed that religion has always played a vital role in shaping the lives, thinking and attitude of people living in a society. It is a powerful force through which people living in a society can be motivated to adopt higher social norms and good ethical standards. It also helps in regularizing laws for a harmonious living.

Mind set of the society is a result of various factors. Religion, education, media, economic conditions and laws. There might be many more factors adding to the mindset of a community but understanding of religion and shaping one's life in accordance with it has been an overriding factor in Pakistani society. This calls for a correct and positive understanding of Islam in Pakistani society and knowing Islamic history fully well. This draws a strong connection between and a nexus between Religion and Society.

Islam gives equal rights to both men and women and there is no discrimination between them. Islam give women's rights that they can earn money for the betterment of family as well as for society. In Islamic history there are so many examples that show women's involvement in social and business entrepreneurial activities. Many Sahabiyat took part in different field and fulfilled their needs. Hazrat Khadija (R.A) was the successful business woman and it shows that women can engage in economic or other regarding activities within the prescribed limitations by Islam. Holy Quran talks about many times that men and women both are equal and a supporter of each other so there is no discrimination between them.

Islamic society is full of those examples in which women took part in different fields, like commerce, Education, Jihad etc. There are numerous verses of Holy Quran which are supportive towards equitable role of men and women in society. Although Islamic social norms place the primary role of livelihood on men's shoulders, it does not prohibit women from earning id they can manage both responsibilities well.

and risk bearing tasks and taking risk is directly linked with the Islamic point of view in doing business.

Islam emphasizes on equality of men and women, Quran always addresses both men and women equally and this is clear proof that there is no discrimination. This has been evident through the verses quoted above. Within Islamic framework there are some priority roles assigned to men and women. Men are expected to be a bread winner of the family thus the obligation of earning money and giving provisions to family is rest on men's shoulder whereas on the other hand Muslim women are expected to look after the internal domain of the house and looking after the children. This is simply a division of work load in an Islamic setup. However, there are segments of women in a society who are not married or widowed or divorced who have to earn a living for themselves or their children willingly or unwillingly. They can engage themselves in entrepreneurial activities to earn a respectable livelihood for themselves.

There are also such women living in society who are unable to bear children due to biological reasoning such women have not much engagement at home and they have enough time to engage in social work, entrepreneurial activities or earning through jobs and thus become productive part of society. Islam also gives Muslim women to acquire property or business in her name by way of inheritance through her father, husband and brother. This clearly shows that Islam does not put any restriction on women to own a business enterprise or property. Primary responsibility of women under Islamic Sharia is to take care of her home, husband and children. Islamic social set up does not allow her to neglect her primary responsibilities and engage in activities outside her home.

We also come to know through examples from Islamic history that there is no restriction regarding the normal economic affairs but a woman must observe certain limitations. It is obligatory on her that during that time when she is from outside home she must wear hijab. Within the limitations which are prescribed by Sharia for women, they can start and continue their entrepreneurial activities. There are so many examples of women entrepreneurs from Islamic history. The incidence of Jabir's aunt was divorced and she was in period of iddat and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) give permission in these words: "O women, You have been allowed by Allah to go out for your needs."⁶⁴ Similarly Hazrat Abu Bakr's daughter Hazrat Asma (R.A) discusses her early time when she was married with Hazrat Zubair (R.A). Once she was coming by holding the seeds of dates over her head. Similarly women of Medina used to engage in agricultural work.⁶⁵

Urwa ibn Zubair (R.A) talks about the knowledge of Hazrat Aisha (R.A) in these

with him said, "O chief of the believers! Give it to the daughter of Allah's Messenger who is with you," and by that, they meant Umm Kulthüm, the daughter of 'Ali. 'Umar said, "Umm Salit has got more right than she." Umm Salit was amongst those Ansart women who had given the Baia (pledge) to Allah's Messenger. 'Umar added, "She (Umm Salit) used to carry the filled water skins for us on the day (of the battle) of Uhud."

Through all these Ahadith we come to know that in battlefield Muslim women performed such services which are given bellow:

- Look after the wounded
- Bandaged the wounded
- Made arrangements for wounded and sick people to reach at safe places
- Handled the dead bodies.

For looking after the sick and wounded people women were considered most suitable due to their polite nature and in these matters they have more interest than men.

So non prohibition in Islam for women to work for a livelihood gives space to such Muslim women. Thus they can engage themselves in entrepreneurial activities to earn a respectable livelihood for themselves. There are also such women living in society who are not blessed with children or they have passed their marriageable age and did not marry. Such women do not have much responsibilities at home, therefore they can contribute their time and potential for the betterment of society by engaging in social entrepreneurship. Such women also do not have male supporters in their families and they need to earn their livelihoods and thus resort to business entrepreneurship. They have enough time to engage in social work, entrepreneurial activities or earning through jobs and thus become productive part of society. Islam also gives Muslim women rights to acquire property or business in her name by way of inheritance through her father, husband and brother. This clearly shows that Islam does not put any restriction on women to own a business enterprise or property.

Conclusion

The term "entrepreneur" was first used in 1723⁶³. The concept of entrepreneurship is used for making something which is new and to use such kind of new ways which produce something that already exists. Entrepreneur is a person who accepts modernization and fully transforms the modernization into the economic field. A number of scholars describe the concept of entrepreneurship in the sense of innovation

daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) who was also expert in this field but from where she learnt about the medical? She replied that whenever Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) feels illness the delegations come from abroad and when suggest any medication she memorized it.⁵⁵ Hazrat Umm Salamah (R.A)⁵⁶ was the great jurist of her time and she had a maid named Umm ul Hasan who was much talented and had great talents of God gifted. She was preaching and giving dawah of Islam on regular basis.⁵⁷

Women and Jihad

In Islamic society Jihad is not obligatory on women but in case of need she can go in battlefield look after the injured, can provide food, water and other things to them which were needed.⁵⁸ Jihad comes under social entrepreneurship because the main objective of social entrepreneurship is to give facilities and work for the betterment of society. Muslim women took part in jihad, provided water and gave services to injured as they had knowledge about the medical field so they worked for the betterment of the society.

In the battle of Uhad Hazrat Ayesha (R.A) and Umm e Saleem (R.A) quickly laid down the water bags on their backs and give it to the Muslims. Hazrat Fatima (R.A) was washing Prophet's wound. She burns the mat and fills his sore with its ashes to stop bleeding.⁵⁹

عَنِ الزُّبَيْعِ بْنِ مُعَوِّزٍ، قَالَتْ كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَشْقِي، وَنُدْأُوِي الْجُرْحَى، وَنُرَدُّ الْقَتْلَى إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ.⁶⁰

Ar-Rubayyi 'bint Mu'auwidh narrated that in battle of Uhad we have duty to give water to the people, bandaged the injured and those who were killed their dead bodies were brought to Medina.

It was reported from Anas, who said: "The messenger of Allah used to take Umm Sulaim and few other women from the Ansar on expeditions. They would supply water and looked after the injured."⁶¹

قَالَ ثَعْلَبَةُ بْنُ أَبِي مَالِكٍ إِنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَسَمَ مِرْوَطًا بَيْنَ نِسَاءٍ مِنْ نِسَاءِ الْمَدِينَةِ، فَبَقِيَ مِرْطٌ جَدِيدٌ فَقَالَ لَهُ بَعْضُ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْطِ هَذَا ابْنَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الَّتِي عِنْدَكَ، يُرِيدُونَ أُمَّ كُلثومَ بِنْتَ عَلِيٍّ. فَقَالَ عُمَرُ أُمَّ سَلِيمٍ أَحَقُّ. وَأُمَّ سَلِيمٍ مِنْ نِسَاءِ الْأَنْصَارِ، يَمْنَنَ بِأَيِّعِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. قَالَ عُمَرُ فَإِنَّهَا كَانَتْ تَزْفُرُ لَنَا الْقَرَبَ يَوْمَ أُحُدٍ.⁶²

Narrated Tha'laba bin Abi Malik: 'Umar bin Al-Khattabii ; distributed woollen clothes amongst some women of Al Madina, and a nice woollen garment remained. Some of those who were sitting

كُنْ إِذَا دَخَلْنَ الْبَيْتَ قُضْنَ حَتَّى يَدْخُلْنَ وَأُخْرِجَ الرِّجَالُ، وَكُنْتُ آتِي عَائِشَةَ أَنَا وَعُبَيْدُ بْنُ عُمَيْرٍ وَهِيَ
مُجَاوِرَةٌ فِي حُفِّ ثَيْبٍ. قُلْتُ وَمَا حِجَابُهَا قَالَ هِيَ فِي قُبَّةٍ تُرَكِّبُهُ لَهَا غِشَاءٌ، وَمَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهَا غَيْرُ ذَلِكَ،
وَرَأَيْتُ عَلَيْهَا دِرْعًا مُوَرَّدًا.⁵³

Ibn Juraij said, "Ata informed us that when Ibn Hisham forbade women to perform Tawaf with men he said to him, 'How do you forbid them while the wives of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to perform Tawaf with the men?' I said, 'Was this before decreeing the use of the veil or after it?' 'Ata took an oath and said, I saw it after the order of veil.' I said, 'How did they mix with men?' Ata said, 'The women never mixed with the men and Aishah (R.A) used to perform Tawaf separately and never mixed with the men. (Once it happened that Aishah was performing the Tawaf and a woman said to her, 'O mother of believers! Let us touch the black stone.' 'Aishah said to her, 'Go yourself,' and she herself refused to do so. The wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to come out at night, in disguise and used to perform Tawaf with the men. But whenever they intended to enter the Kabah, they would stay outside till the men had gone out. I and Ubaid bin 'Umair used to visit 'Aishah while she was residing at Jauf Thabir." I asked, "What was her veil?" 'Ata said, "She was wearing an old Turkish veil, and that was the only thing (veil) which was a screen between us and her. I saw a pink cover on her."

From above narrations it is clear that Muslim women can go out of their homes for their needs and can engage in social or business activities but they are supposed to cover themselves modestly and wear hijab and must not adorn themselves for men to see.

Education

Urwa ibn Zubair (R.A) talks about the knowledge of Hazrat Aisha (R.A) in these words: "I have not seen anyone (man or woman) who has more scholarly knowledge of the Quran, the obligatory duties, what is lawful and what is unlawful(halal and haram), poetry and literature, and the history of Arabs and their genealogy, than Aishah".⁵⁴

Musa Ibn Talha says that he never saw anyone more fluent and eloquent in the Arabic language than Aishah (R.A). She has much information about medical and great interest with poetry and literature, people were surprised on her knowledge but Ibn abi Mulaika said that don't be surprised on her knowledge of poetry because she is

send down to me.

Islam is not against the women's work outside of home but restrict those factors which might cause of problems in society. There is no restriction for her to involve in lawful activities for livelihood outside of home if she takes care and follows all those restrictions which are given by Islamic Sharia. ⁵⁰

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ خَرَجَتْ سَوْدَةُ بِنْتُ زَمْعَةَ لَيْلًا فَزَا أَمَّا عُمَرُ فَعَرَفَهَا فَقَالَ إِنَّكَ وَاللَّهِ يَا سَوْدَةُ مَا تَتَّقِينَ عَلَيْنَا، فَرَجَعَتْ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَكَرَتْ ذَلِكَ لَهُ، وَهُوَ فِي حُجْرَتِي يَتَعَشَّى، وَإِنْ فِي يَدَيْهِ لَعَزَقًا، فَأُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ فَرَفَعَ عَنْهُ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ "قَدْ أُذِنَ لَكُنَّ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ لِحَوَائِجِكُنَّ". ⁵¹

Narrated by Hazrat Aisha (R.A) "Once Saudah bint Zam'a went out at night for some need, and 'Umar saw her' and recognizing her, he said (to her), "By Allah, O Saudah! You cannot hide yourself from us." So she returned to Prophet (PBUH) and mentioned that to him while he was sitting in my dwelling taking his supper and holding a bone covered with meat in his hand. Then the divine revelation was revealed to him and when that state was over, he Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was saying": "O women, You have been allowed by Allah to go out for your needs."

It shows that Islam does not restrict women from going outside home when she needs something or for any lawful requirements.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ كَانَ الرُّكْبَانُ يَمْشُونَ بَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مُحْرِمَاتٌ فَإِذَا حَادَوْا ابْتَدَأَ سِدْلُكِ إِحْدَانَا جُلْبَابَهَا مِنْ رَأْسِهَا إِلَى وَجْهِهَا فَإِذَا جَاوَزُونَا كَشَفْتَاهُ. ⁵²

It is reported by Hazrat Aishah (R.A): "Riders would pass by us when we were performing the rites of pilgrimage with Allah's messenger. When they came near us, we would let down our outer garments from our head over our faces and when they had passed on, we would uncover our faces."

قَالَ ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ أَخْبَرَنَا قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَطَاءٌ، إِذْ مَنَّعَ ابْنُ هِشَامٍ الْبَسَاءَ الطَّوَاتِ مَعَ الرِّجَالِ قَالَ كَيْفَ يَمْتَنِعُهُنَّ، وَقَدْ طَاوَتْ بَسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَعَ الرِّجَالِ قُلْتُ أَبْعَدَ الْحِجَابِ أَوْ قَبْلَ قَالَ إِي لَعَمْرِي لَقَدْ أَدْرَكْتُهُ بَعْدَ الْحِجَابِ. قُلْتُ كَيْفَ يُحَالِطُنَ الرِّجَالُ قَالَ لَمْ يَكُنْ يُحَالِطُنَ كَانَتْ عَائِشَةُ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. تَطَوُّتُ حَجَرَةً مِنَ الرِّجَالِ لَا تُحَالِطُهُمْ، فَقَالَتْ أَمْرًا أَنْتَ لَقِي تَسْتَلِمُ يَأْمُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. قَالَتْ { انْطَلِقِي } عَنْكَ، وَأَبَتْ. { وَكُنْ } يَخْرُجْنَ مُتَّكِئَاتٍ بِاللَّيْلِ، فَيَطْفِئْنَ مَعَ الرِّجَالِ، وَلِكِنَّهُنَّ

created by the Creator of this universe. There is a legal maxim that 'Al asl fil asya al ibah' This Islamic legal maxim is upheld by Imam Shafa'i and many Hanafi jurists like al-Karkhi. They hold the view point that the reality of all things is permissibility till it is prohibited through some legal evidence. The wisdom behind this maxim is that Allah Almighty has produced all things for benefit of human beings so they should be consumed and cherished.⁴⁶

Within Islamic framework there are some priority roles assigned to men and women. Men are expected to be bread winner of the family thus the obligation of earning money and giving provisions to family rests on men's shoulder whereas on the other hand Muslim women are expected to look after the internal domain of the house and looking after the children. This is simply a division of work load in an Islamic setup. However, there are segments of women in contemporary society who are not married or are widowed or divorced who have to earn a living for themselves or their children willingly or unwillingly.

1. Women in Entrepreneurship in Muslim History

Agriculture and Farming

Women become helping hands of men to graze their animals and in farming there is also an incident when Hazrat Musa (A.S) left the Egypt and went to Median. He saw that two girls are looking after their sheep then he helped them it is mention in Holy Quran as:

وَمَا تَوْجِهُتُمْ لِقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ⁴⁷

When he set out towards Madyan, he said, I hope my Lord will guide me to the straight path.

وَمَا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا

خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصَدِّقَ الرِّعَاءَ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ⁴⁸

And when he arrived at the waters of Madyan, he found a large number of people watering (their animals) and found, aloof from them, two women keeping (their animals) back. He said,. What is the matter with you?. They said,. We cannot water (our animals) until these shepherds take (their animals) back after watering them, and our father is very old man.

فَسَقَىٰ لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّىٰ إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَأَمَّا أَنزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقَدِيرٌ⁴⁹

So he (Musa) watered (their animals) for them, then he turned to a shade and said, .My Lord, I am in need of whatever good you