

## **Journey of the Muslim Women's Movement: A Study**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper, drawing upon discussions and dialogues with Journey of the Muslim women's movement. Due to the social and religious reformation movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indian society got new horizons and perspectives. This century proved to be a benchmark considering the movements of women emancipation. Modern thinkers and social activists begun religion and social reformation movements. The age of Renaissance began. At first, the reformation movement began Brahma Samaj in Bengal, Arya Samaj in Punjab and Satyashodhak Samaj in Maharashtra attacked the social vices in the Hindu society. They undertook women emancipation movements. However, such movements begun to take place quite late in Muslim society. This happened due to the influence of Ulema on Muslims. In spite of that Wahabi and Aligarh movements took initiative for the reformation of the society.

**Keywords:** Muslim women, Movement, Society, Conference, Organization.

### **Introduction:**

The 19th century was the age of Enlightenment in India. The Contribution of Brahma Samaj and Satyashodhak Samaj are important in this. It was the time when the social, religious reforms as well as women emancipation movement begun. But all these reform efforts took place in Hinduism to a greater extent than in the Muslim community. In the Muslim community, however, efforts for social reform were slow and inadequate. The Ulema were controlling and guiding the socio-political behavior of the Muslim Community. He was not ready to make any changes in the Muslim society. However, efforts were made to reform the Muslim community through the Wahabi movement, Chabalgiri, Aligarh movement, Ahmadiyya. These movements were primarily revivalist and reactionary. They did not raise women's questions.

Other efforts were made to open the doors of education to Muslim women and to spread modern ideas. In this, the name of Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal has to be mentioned first. She encouraged Muslim women to pursue education. In 1912, she founded Sultania Girl's High School. Maulana Ashraf Ali Tanvi, a reformer in the Deoband tradition, took a stand that men and women should be educated. This religious ignorance is responsible for the plight of women. Women should also take religious and other practical education. Famous writer Saeed Mumtaz Ali made extensive efforts to uplift the status of women. Educated at Deoband Madrasa, Muumtaz Ali undertook a program to create awareness about women's rights in the Muslim community. In 1998, Haq-un-Niswan wrote a book on women's rights in Islam. He emphasized that according to holy Kuran women have the same right to education and knowledge as men.

Rukkayya Shekhawat Hussain, a Bengali writer who has worked tirelessly for the upliftment of Muslim women, has been instrumental in promoting gender equality. Due to her activism, she came to be known as Rukkayya Begum. She set up the Anjuman-e-Khatoon-e-Islam, an organization dedicated to the betterment of muslim women. Seminars, meetings reviewed the educational status of Muslim women and encouraged them for the education. There were efforts towards women empowerment in colonial period. Of course, it was very limited compared to the Hindu community. But these efforts did not have form go women's movement. They were a little scattered effort. Muslim women are in such a predicament that they cannot even stand on their own feet. Today, 59% of Muslim women in India who have not seen school. 60% of girls get married at the age of 17. Therefore, the proportion of girls pursuing higher education is very low. They also have a negligible position in employment and high-ranking jobs. The world of the majority Muslim women is limited to religion and family.

### **The beginning of the Muslim women's movement:**

The women's movement also started in India in the 1970s. On 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> December 1971, Muslim Satyashodhak Mandal and Indian Secular Society came together and organized a two day conference. It was the first conference to unite Muslim feminist movement. Hamid Dalwai, a staunch secular thinker. Along with his colleagues founded the Muslim Satyashodhak Samaj on March 22, 1970. The Muslim Women's Council of December 27, 28 1971 was attended by 176 women. Some of them had to attend the conference in police protection. Due to the opposition. The conference was attended by women from all walks of

life, including Jahanara Begum (Calcutta), Benuji Pathan (Ichalkaranji), Mumtaz Momin (Mumbai), Najma Sheikh (Pune), Maryam Safai (Pune) and many others. Sharifa Tayyabji was the chairperson of the council, Muslim women gave very eloquent speeches. The council appealed Muslim women to step out of the veil. Discussion were held on behalf of the council to discuss issues related to Muslim women's participation in the planning of education facilities for Muslim women, the right of Muslim women to equality, etc. The conference demanded to pass the resolution for prevention of two marriages and tradition, oral divorce, popularly known TeenTalak. This was the first conference of Muslim women not only in India but also in the world to come together and demand their rights. In addition to educating Muslim women, Muslim women's organization in India have taken up various initiatives such as helping divorced women and running a free legal counseling center that helped creates confidence in them and gained their faith. In 1973 the government of India introduced Article 125 of the Criminal Code, which provides that every women in India, regardless of religion, has the right to claim alimony after divorce.

#### **The Shahbano case and the second phase of the Muslim women's movement:**

In April 1985, in the Shahbano case, the Supreme court ruled that the right to alimony was granted under section 125 of the Shabhanos (CrPc) Act. The decision was welcomed by several women's organizations. But after this trial, the whole issue took a political and communal turn. As a result, what was given Divorce to Act? Muslim women by Shahabano case was taken away by Muslim women in 1986. The outcome of Shahabano trial is an interference in the Muslim religion that we will not tolerate was a stand taken by many conservative Muslim organization. The Shahbano case was based solely on the secular alimony of Muslim women. Therefore, not much public opinion was organized against it. The lawsuit has interfered with the Muslim religion and it is a violation of the rights of the Muslim minority in India. By the end of 1985, the subordinate organization had succeeded in propagating that the need to preserve the independent identity of the Muslim minority, and the agitation against the Shahbano case had intensified. Meeting and conventions began to be held on their behalf. Statements were made to the Prime Minister to protect the rights of women of all faiths. All these efforts were aimed at ensuring that the rights and equality granted by the Constitution were extended to Muslim women as well. The Shahbano verdict had brought a ray of hope into the lives of Muslim women, and Muslim women's organization also began to work harder. He began to gain the support of Muslim women, but the Muslim Women's Divorce Rights Protection Act deprived Muslim women of their rights

and denied them the right to equality, leaving Muslim women second to none. The most tragic thing that has happened to the rights of Muslim women and the women movement is that in his secular, democratically accepted pluralist Indian society, due to the identity of the Muslim minority, the rights of Muslim women have sacrificed and the Muslim women's movement has been pushed back centuries.

### **The post-1986 Muslim women's movement:**

After 1986, the two organizations, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and the Jamane-e- Hind, which represent India Muslims, have been claiming that it is a blatant lie. Therefore, feminists and humanitarians here are aware that we should work more vigorously and collectively against them and for the rights of Muslim women. It happened to the revolutionary activists and that is why Muslim women's organizations since 1987 worked hard for the purpose.

Awaaz-e-Niswanj, an organization founded in 1985, also started working in Mumbai after 1989 for the rights and their protection of Muslim women. The organization strives for the empowerment of women education. In 1999, the organization organized a major discussion on women's rights from a feminist perspective, which was attended by 250 women. The same conference created a network of women's organizations working for the rights of Muslim women. In recent years efforts towards the challenging task of creating coordination bet'n Muslim women and the various organizations have increased. The Indian Muslim Women's Movement was establishment in January 2007 in Mumbai through the Indian Muslim Women's Movement. It soon came to be known as a secular women's rights protecting. Today the organization operates in about 15 states but unfortunately organikath the Muslim Women's movement in India has always been at the mercy of the identity of the Muslim minority. Nevertheless, the Muslim Women's movement in India stood in the way of overcoming many obstacles. No movement is one - sided, one-minded and embracing the whole society. It develops from the movements of the organizations scattered in different places and the ideology expressed through them. It is being helped by the intelligentsia, the media and activists. The Muslim women's movement also stands in India with all these features.

**Conclusion:**

Looking at the overall journey of the Muslim women's movement, there are many questions facing Muslim women even today. The government should try to persuade the Muslim Personal Law Board to enact a law that protects the rights of women, or take the initiative to change the Muslim Personal Law for the justice of women by ousting the Law Board. It is only a matter of time before it will be quite clear whether the Modi government gives a communal color to all these issues within the framework of equal civil law or stands firmly for the rights of Muslim women and prevents the Muslim Law Board from sacrificing the rights of Muslim women in the name of minority identity.

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