

## Women's Rights in Afghanistan: From Muslims' Perspective

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### Abstract

Considering the logic of evolution of societies, the calamitous situation of women can be both changed and controlled. With the emergence of Islam, issue of women was more deeply raised in religious and intellectual discussions. At a time when having a daughter considered a shame on Arab families, a religion emerged after which assigned key social, political and even economic rights for women. Holy Quran says there is no superiority of nations over nations, races over races and men over women unless by divine piety and good action. One of the emphatic rules of Islam is that acquiring knowledge is an obligatory act for both men and women. On the issue of education secondary data shows that most people believe Islam and Shari'a not only emphasize that girls and women should acquire Islamic education (98%), but they allow women and girls to study all levels of formal educational system. Unfortunately said, in Afghanistan, more women are scarified by men's decisions.

**Keywords:** Women, Women Rights, Islam, Human Rights in Islam

### I. Introduction

Issue of women, especially during recent times both around the world and especially during recent two decades in Afghanistan, has become a very serious concern for scientists, governments and political circles. In the area of human rights and human development, major questions have been raised regarding women and their social status.

Although, the sociological studies on women conducted in Afghanistan, show many bitter facts, despite some problems with the quoting of the research undertaken. Afghan society has a strong religious tendency, deep-rooted traditional belongings and a patriarchal character and on the other side, has a relationship with developed western societies. Women in Afghanistan have become an important area for research. Historical evidence and previously conducted research shows that in Afghan society women have a lower legal and human status. It seems that there is a big difference between the religious values and beliefs, and what is really happening in Afghanistan. Women situation can be introduced as a social problem. Generally, social problems relate to those phenomena which are threatening desirable changes and evolution being made toward achievement of a full and multi-dimensional development. We believe that women issue has a historical dimension and its roots must be studied within that context. On the other side, women situation can be examined as a multi-dimensional issue. The situation of women cannot only be examined from cultural dimension, but it should also be studied from political, economic and social aspects; all these dimensions are interrelated and influenced by each other.

Considering the logic of evolution of societies, the calamitous situation of women can be both changed and controlled. Scientific and precise knowledge regarding the phenomena of a society is a precondition on any positive changes and evolution. People awareness of factors and consequences of women oppression can help different forces in society, especially the people, to solve this problem.

In this paper I have tried to clarify Islamic approach to women's rights and then, concerning secondary data I have compared the Religious values with the related social facts in Afghanistan.

Conducting this study was important for a number of reasons: It is important to examine the religious perceptions of people regarding the major issues of the country, including women, using scientific methods such subjects have a poor research to study the legal and human status of women. From Islamic viewpoint, observing

rights and performing the assigned duties, are important issues which must be considered in all areas of people's lives including families and other groups.

## 2. Women's Rights in Islam

With the emergence of Islam, issue of women was more deeply raised in religious and intellectual discussions. At a time when having a daughter considered a shame on Arab families, a religion emerged after which assigned key social, political and even economic rights for women. Especially at the time of its emergence, Islam faced a despotic patriarchal culture and history; a culture and history that had dominated the subjectivity of both men and women during a hundred years. Therefore, dynamic religious and ethical values were institutionalized in people's characters and even became a tool for justifying much inhuman behaviors. Some of these deviated beliefs which are entrenched among the Muslims are religiously justified: a woman should obey her husband; men have the right to physically punish their wives; women should be homemaker and take care of their husband's properties; *ghairat* belongs to men; women lack wisdom; women's jihad is as a homemaker and childcare, and they should have their husband's permission to leave home. But with reference to Quranic verses, example holy prophet (PBUH), and hajj rituals, we come up with other results. According to what holy Quran says, men and women are from the same root and they are equal in degree of creation and competence. Quran's basic messages address human or the public (*Alnas*), and in which there is no difference between men and women. One of the inequalities mentioned by Islam is inequality based on knowledge and piety of the human. Holy Quran says there is no superiority of nations over nations, races over races and men over women unless by divine piety and good action.

In Quranic verses, *istizaf* is one of the most sociological and anthropological concepts, which means weakening the human in any form. The meanings of *isti'bad* (changing the human being into slave), *isti'mar* (colonialization), *istikbar* (arrogance), *istismar* (exploitation), and *istihmar* (fooling people) are all summarized in this Quranic concept. Oppression of women by men is a form of weakening the human being, which contravenes the monotheistic spirit of Islam. In Islam, monotheistic worldview should be revealed in human existence and the society. Islam's ideology is the result of its monotheistic worldview and thus this monotheistic spirit should dominate the society in political, economic, cultural and legal dimensions. Based on this, no forms of discrimination and inequitable distinction between men and women can be justified, and also women can make effort in playing different roles in the society and achieve different-level status. (There is nothing for a human being without endeavor).

The equality of men and women based on creation and human rights in performing hajj is clearly deducible. Hajj shows the holistic spirit of Islam. In hajj, men and women, blacks and whites, Arabs and non-Arabs, and all of those who believe in the Islam, pray toward a single *qibla* which demonstrates the monotheistic equality of humanity. Both men and women are responsible for performing the obligatory acts by which humans can attain perfection. They both are addressed in performing social and political duties such as forbidding honor and forbidding dishonor, Jihad (Jihad against the commanding soul and disbelievers), leadership, etc. One of the great obligatory acts is to acquire knowledge, which is assigned to both men and women.

The active participation of women in political circles (e.g. allegiance to Holy Prophet PBUH), war, and social activities in the earlier times is clear. It is obvious that if women remain at home they will not gain competence to actively participate in different areas of social life. Society is the sphere for mental and practical development of women.

Based on a general perception we should say that from Islam's viewpoint, men and women are equal and enjoy equal rights. Women rights in marriage and choosing husband, polygamy, violence should be observed in line with the spirit of Islam.

## 3. A Comparative Approach to Islam Values and Social Facts about Women in Afghanistan

The results of this study show that there is a significant difference between the beliefs of people regarding women rights, and what is really happening in our society. It shows the important fact that religious values and beliefs have not been adequately institutionalized in our society. In practice, it is the despotic and patriarchal values that dominate the behavior and functions of different groups in our society. Paying attention to Kherad Foundation and Ministry of women's affairs' reports we can conclude if there is a gap between Islam values and social facts in Afghanistan. This comparison has been done concerning three issues: education, marriage and social activities.

On the issue of education secondary data (Kherad foundation's report, 2009) shows that most people believe Islam and Shari'a not only emphasize that girls and women should acquire Islamic education (98%), but they allow women and girls to study all levels of formal educational system. However, there are some differences between the ideas of urban and rural people, and men and women in different provinces of the country in this regard. In Jalalabad province, about 20% of the respondents believed that Islam does not allow women or girls to acquire Islamic education. There are also a significant proportion of respondents in some provinces who had negative ideas regarding women education. About 20% of the respondents in Nangarhar, 45% in Kandahar and nearly 40% in Paktia believed that Islam does not allow women to attain higher education. The existing traditional and mostly patriarchal context show that human values of Islam has not been well institutionalized in people's character in Afghanistan.

It is important to say that Afghanistan's social evolution flow is moving towards more desirable development, and its close and traditional social structure is gradually going to be restructured and change into more open structure. Women, like men, are aware of Islam's emphasis on education and acquiring knowledge and this is one of the most important achievements of this study.

We conclude that there are differences between the dominant values in rural life and values which dominate the lives of urban people. For example, while 15% of rural people believed that Islam does not allow women to be educated, only 3 percent of urban respondents thought so. It is clear that urban people, comparing rural people, are more involved in attaining knowledge, know about the media, and are somewhat freer from patriarchal customs and prejudices. From sociological viewpoint, urban communities seem to be more open and more civilized than rural communities. Differences between the views of urban and rural people regarding all the questions are partly obvious. But, as traditional values continue to survive in our urban areas; these differences are not so great.

Responses given to the question "Do the girls in your area go to school?" show that almost in all the areas of the country, girls go to school at a young age, but as they get older, they are not allowed to continue their education because of limitations and obstacles in Afghanistan traditional society.

One of the emphatic rules of Islam is that acquiring knowledge is an obligatory act for both men and women. The collected data show that all the men and women in Afghanistan, including rural and urban people, youth and the old, are aware of this religious rule, except than some of the respondents (10-20%) in Nangarhar, Dai Kundi and Bamiyan who believed that acquiring knowledge is not an obligatory act for men and women. Other studies show that desirable development are not witnessed in these provinces of the country, and the traditional and interpretative patriarchal values are more strong compared to other areas of the country. Developmental planning and facilities provided in these provinces do not help to adequately inform people about these Islamic values. This was shown through the evidence in this research. According to the statistics issue by Ministry of Women Affairs in 2007, more than 85% of women in Afghanistan are illiterate, and of 15% of the literate women, very few received any education beyond elementary level.

The number of students in 2006 was 5.4 million of which 1.9 million were girls. A careful look at the number and educational level of male and female staff in government agencies and ministries shows that not only is the number of female staff very lower than men, with the exception of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, but they have a lower educational background.

Based on these facts, it can be concluded that social and political forces working in Afghanistan have not adequately provided the ground for active and fruitful participation of women in the area of education. Although the absolute majority of our people believe that Islam is for education and even consider it as an obligatory act, practically it is the restrictive traditional values that continue to marginalize women. A vital and sensitive point which education sociology considers is that development values, especially our religious values, should be institutionalized in the character of people in the course of sociability. In our society, patriarchal prejudices practically prevented the development and awareness of women and have violated their rights in this area. The fact is that people respect Islam as a hallowed religion; they can't obviously contravene Islamic rules in their comments and thoughts. Due to this, most of the respondents in this study have emphasized the importance of education according to Islam. But existing facts in the past and present time obviously show that women have not enjoyed the necessary educational opportunities and facilities both because of political regime's restrictions, and strong and entrenched traditional obstacles that exist in society. The first step in a society's development process is raising knowledge level of people. The second step is to institutionalize the informing elements and dynamic values in formal and informal areas people

lives, and the third step is precisely planning and allocation of necessary resources in order to pave the ground for desirable development.

Positions regarding the area of social activities of women are significantly different from education dimension. In the area of education, a high number of the respondents believed that Islam allows women and girls to be educated and has introduced acquiring knowledge as an obligatory act both for men and women. In the area of social activities, although a much greater number of respondents believe that Islam generally supports the social activities of women and girls, in some cases, respondents gave negative responses to this question.

In response to the question "does Islam allow women and girls to work outside of their homes?", although 90.4% of the respondents throughout the provinces answered "yes", there is a slight difference between the opinions of rural and urban respondents, as some differences are seen between the values and tendencies which dominate the related sphere. 84.4% of rural and 92% of urban respondents answered "yes" to this question.

There is no tangible difference between the ideas of male and female respondents, but considering the gender variable, the data shows that percentage of "no" answers was higher among the old people, especially in over 54 years ages. The sociological studies have shown that the youth are more likely to seek success and knowledge than the old. They give more importance to improvement of their characters, society development, freedom and activities in different areas, and as society is transiting from traditional values to modern values, most of the young people have a tendency towards modern and democratic values. On the other hand, the older people have a much stronger sense of belonging to traditional and conservative values and are more against freedom and social activities of women. The reason that older people hold these negative ideas is that traditional values have been institutionalized in their characters. These interpretations can be used in describing the differences between the ideas of urban and rural respondents.

Data analysis shows that respondents in provinces in which there were fewer cultural and economic changes were more against the social activities of women.

Provinces which have traditional and tribal context are much more against women's social activities. As the Islamic values are progressive, structure breaking and anti-dictatorial, it is clear that they are in conflict with values and tendencies of uncivilized, realistic and prejudicial societies.

28% of the respondents in Samangan, 24% in Kandahar and 20.4% in Laghman believed that Islam not allow girls and women to work outside their homes. 10-20% of the respondents in Nangarhar, Dai Kundi, Bamiyan, Farah and Badghis answered "no" to this question.

The percentage of negative answers given to the question that "does Islam allow women or girls to be community leaders", were much higher. It is obvious that acceptance of community leadership by women means that values related to equality of men and women, and developmental ideas of Islam, have undermined and eradicated the patriarchal and colonialist values and obstacles of society. However, the fact is something else.

Regarding the community leadership by women, about 34% of rural respondents and 12% of urban respondents believed that Islam does not allow women to be leaders in the community and as the values of traditional societies are much stronger among rural people, and especially among older people compared to the youth. Therefore, older people gave more "no" answers than younger people.

Considering the variable of gender, the proportion of "yes" answers among the women are greater than men. This difference shows that women (82%) want to participate in political-social activities, while 74% of men were against active participation in community leadership.

78.4% of the respondents in Laghman, 64.2% in Nangarhar and 54.4% in Bamiyan believed that Islam is against community leadership by women. 25- 35% of the respondents in Kandahar, Farah, Paktia and Dai Kundi disagreed with this issue.

The data description in the previous chapter show that in most cases, difference in opinions between urban and rural, old and young, men and women (in all cases, a much greater number of female respondents mentioned that Islam support social, economic and political activities of women) are clear. The proportion of respondents who gave negative responses in some specific provinces, include Nangarhar, Dai Kundi, Bamiyan, Kandahar, Paktia and Farah, are more higher than those provinces.

In cases where traditional values of the respondents are more in conflict with the related issue, the rate of disagreement increases. For example, among the groups with traditional values (rural communities, old people and men living in provinces with tribal traditional social and cultural context) the rate of disagreement regarding

community leadership by women, women speaking with strangers in public and business was higher. 42.7% of rural respondents vis-à-vis 21% of urban respondents believed that Islam does not allow women and girls to talk to strangers in public. It is surprising that more than 50% of male respondents gave negative answers in this regard. Comparing the ideas of age groups show that 44.4% of respondents in "above 56" age group answered "no" to this question, while respondents of other age groups believed that Islam does not allow women or girls to talk to strangers in public.

Date analysis show that in Bamiyan (63.3%), Laghman (56.9%), Kandahar (53.2%) and Nangarhar (50.7%) which have a stronger traditional and tribal context, more than 50% of the respondents gave negative answers to this question.

Regarding business of women, 58.3% of rural respondents vis-à-vis 41.7% of urban respondents believed that Islam does not allow girls or women to do business. 96.2% of the respondents in Panjshir, which is a very high figure, 88.2% in Logar and 70.7% in Parwan, mentioned that Islam is against business activities of women. This figure in Nangarhar, Kapisa, Kandahar, Bamiyan and Laghman, changes between 45-50%. The high percent of negative answers in Panjshir and Logar can result from some factors particular to those provinces, but is beyond the scope of this research.

One of the questions asked about women's participation in decision making and expressing ideas "Are women in your area encouraged to express their ideas regarding the major problems faced by the people in the area?". In response to this question, a low percent of the respondents (10-10%) believed that women in their area are encouraged to express their ideas regarding the important issues. A higher percent of respondents believed that women are sometimes or never encouraged to express their ideas regarding the problems. There were differences between the ideas of old people and the youth, and urban and rural people but to a lower extent compared to other questions.

A high proportion of positive answers was given regarding women's attendance in school, working outside their homes, employment in small businesses, etc, but no data is available on the situation of women compared to that of men. The positive responses were provided by a small number of women.

There are differences between the opinions of different groups in society and religious beliefs of people and the existing facts in society are significantly different from each other. 2003 Statistical Yearbook mentioned that: of the formal staff of governmental agencies in 2003, 75% were male and 25% were female. These statistics show that the number of male staff was three times higher than female staff. This figure is very high among service personnel; about 90% of the service personnel are male and 10% of them are female (the number of male workers was nine times more than female workers).

The figures issued by Ministry of Women Affairs in 2007 show very high differences between the number of men and women working in economic and political areas. According to this report, the number of women in high level decision making positions of different agencies, is much less than men, and in many governmental agencies, no woman is working in such positions.

Regarding the social and political activities of women progressive actions and pro-women movements as well as movements of Muslim and revolutionary figures who have taken effective steps toward achievement of human values in the society, eliminating discrimination against women and combating against despotism and colonialism. Bubujan's movement against Britain colonialism, and efforts of Malalai, Ghazi Adey, Madad Khan's mother (sister of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan) and progressive actions of Maleka Suraya toward strengthening women movements in 1922, etc are of the notable progressive efforts in the history of Afghanistan. But so far we have not witnessed an extensive social movement indicating the rule of new legal values corresponding with Islamic ideology.

Social and cultural evolutions are gradual. In the current context, legal status of women in Afghanistan's constitution is respected and laws of the country have not established any limitations for women's social activities. But the facts show the deep roots of male-dominated and patriarchal culture are deeply entrenched. Combating and eliminating these roots, requires extensive research on the issue and precise and extensive planning to promote public awareness of these issue in society.

#### 4. Some of the results gained regarding marriage issue are as follows:

The studies and research conducted in developed and undeveloped countries show that in countries such as Afghanistan, the ideal marriage age is expected to be below average marriage age in developed countries. The average

marriage age in European countries is between 30 to 35 for boys and 25 to 30 for girls. While in the traditional society of Afghanistan, the highest percent of the respondents in this research, considered 21-25 age groups and about 57.3% considered 17-20 age group as ideal marriage age for girls. Thus, it can be concluded that the average marriage age among boys and girls in our society is at a young age. Of the factors emphasized by the sociologists low level of education and general knowledge, non-existence of focused professional activities in society and traditional tendencies and beliefs. It must be noted that people rely on religious emphasis including recommendations made by Holy Prophet (PBUH) on marriage.

Regarding the ideal marriage age for girls and boys, different opinions were provided by men and women, and among urban and rural people. Women mentioned a young age for boys' marriage. 48% of female respondents mentioned that 21-25 age group is appropriate for boys to marry, while 17-20 age group was mentioned by 45.7% of male respondent (the highest percent). This research shows that ideal age of marriage from rural respondents' viewpoint is lower than urban respondents.

In the provinces of the country, the highest percent of the respondents considered 17-20 and 21-25 ages groups as ideal marriage age for boys. The age group which was chosen by respondents as appropriate marriage age for girls, is lower than that chosen for boys. A higher percentage of respondents mentioned 17-20 age group as appropriate for girls' marriage.

In Afghanistan the ideal age in which girls expects to marry is 15-17, but in some provinces such as Paktia (90%), Kunduz (73%), Takhar (48%), Ghazni (10%), Baghlan and (53%), above 17 years was mentioned by the respondents. In this regard, the values of rural and urban communities have resulted in differences in views and functions. From rural respondents' viewpoint, the ideal age in which girls expect to marry is 15-17, while urban respondents said that girls expect to marry above 17 years.

In respect to this question "do girls' fathers or their oldest male relatives determine *toyana* (wedding money which groom should pay) for wedding?" in most cases, more than 90% of the respondents in different provinces, urban and rural areas and among men and women, answered "yes". This phenomenon (*toyana*) indicates the role of traditional values in our society.

*Sarbadal* marriage is considerably prevalent in most parts of the country, in some provinces such as Paktia (97.6%), Baghlan (72.5%) and Nangarhar (79%), the respondents believed that this kind of marriage is very prevalent in their areas to a high extent.

According to the results of the research, a considerable number of respondents believe that women and girls in their area are used as a commodity to repay debts or resolving a social problem (nearly 46% of the respondents).

The existence of polygamy phenomenon is common in Afghanistan; this phenomenon results from rule of patriarchal values, family and ethnic competitions, and partly from problems such as childless, disease and conflicts. Compared to developed countries, this phenomenon is more prevalent in society here and based on Islam's recommendations, Muslim societies are expected to move toward the expansion of monogamy, but still tribal and traditional values make this practice difficult to eliminate.

The difference between religious beliefs of the people and the current facts is considerable regarding the situation of widows. 77% believed that from Islam's viewpoint, widows themselves should decide on what to do after the death of their husbands, while in practice a considerable number of widows are forced to marry a man from their dead husband's family.

Another considerable case is girls' lack of access to their *mahr* rights. 73% of respondents said that women do not have access to *mahr*.

All the aforementioned phenomena (polygamy, marriage of widows with a man of their dead husbands' families, women's lack of access to their *mahr* and marriage of young years) emphasize the fact that religious values of women rights in Islam, encourage people to monogamy, allows the widows to freely decide about the futures and grants women the right to access their *mahrs*.

In some recently conducted research, events including a series of major phenomena such as suicide of women, runaway from home, mental problems, etc which result from forced marriage and family violences.

Regarding issue of polygamy, some research shows that in about 80% cases of polygamy, men do not consult with women about their marriage and when remain unaware of this issue.

Kherad foundation research shows that although most women are allowed to participate in local councils, men do not pay attention to their ideas and views.

Another considerable result achieved during this study is that most of the local settlements for women are reached based on local custom not national law. Local customs are based on respecting views of the elders (men) in which women enjoy no status and position.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

- **Education:** most people believe that Islam support acquiring knowledge by women and girls. Religious values are respected among Afghani people, but other studies and reports, including the summary reports prepared using interview with focus groups, and the recent publications of Ministry of Women Affairs, show that a small number of women enjoy education at higher levels. Our traditional and patriarchal society, have not so far provided educational opportunities for women. One of our major recommendations to government authorities, civil society organizations, Ulama and the intellectuals is that while continuing the awareness raising activities, to encourage people to acquire knowledge and also provide the necessary facilities for public education. Promoting the knowledge level of people through educational materials in schools and higher educational levels, various formal and informal publications, radio-TV programs, holding scientific conferences and seminars, religious propaganda through Ulama, can motivate people acquiring knowledge. It is important to change the subjectivity of men and the old people as they are major obstacles towards acquiring knowledge.
- One of the necessary measures of government and the donor community is to establish cultural-educational center, schools, high schools, and higher education centers in different areas of the country. The reports show that many areas of the country do not have adequate educational facilities, and in some areas, far distances and lack of transportation facilities were major obstacles preventing girls from going to school.
- Running the literacy projects is another key measure of government and other respected agencies. This measure shows that the respected authorities and people emphasize the issue of education and will gradually bring positive changes in society's cultural system. It will also provide educational opportunities for those women and girls who could not attain formal and informal education in the past.
- It is essential to plan for training women and employing them in administrative and educational centers, especially in deprived areas of the country. Unequal numbers of male and female staff in the ministries, departments and other centers, including elementary schools, high schools and universities show the restrictions faced by women in our society.
- Social problems are multi-dimensional and resulted from many factors. Low literacy level, violence against women, forced marriages, exchanging girls, local settlements based on patriarchal customs, poor participation of women in social activities are all interrelated. Although serious attention should be given to educational programs (both for men and women, girls and boys), some substantial measures should be adopted to implement the rule of national law, security provision and eliminating violence. Failure in any area will possibly have negative effects on other areas. For example, young age of marriage is in relationship with promoting education level and educational system. Insecurity and irresponsible armed people can result in many forms of violence against women and girls, including forced marriage, sexual oppression and this relates to illiteracy. Inadequate presence of women on councils and their inability to make their voice heard in decision making is related to the patriarchal culture, lack of public awareness, therefore, the development planning should be multi-dimensional.
- In addition to education, the results gained in the area of women's socio-political activities and marriage, show that a much more open views regarding the legal issues of women. This shows the possibility of character improvement and brings new changes among the young people of the country. Minds and characters of old people are affected by traditional, conservative and patriarchal values, and are less likely to change. Thus, it is necessary for all the authorities in formal and informal spheres to seriously develop awareness rising and capacity building programs for adolescents and youth. The aim here is forming a society in which women's rights and provides the grounds for activities and improvement of all respected women and girls.
- The cultural and political planners in our society should consider the differences between the opinions and views of urban and rural people. Values and beliefs in the rural communities have contributed to more obstacles and restrictions being faced by women. Comparing urban areas, in rural Afghanistan, a greater

number of women are illiterate and a few of them have an active role in areas of social life, governmental agencies, political positions, business, other than in traditional jobs. Participation of women in local councils, considering the poor religious support for this, puts many restrictions and obstacles in rural areas. Rural people's perception of women is that a woman should not have relation with other groups and strangers, and a man who does not assume importance to this issue is a bum. We must accept that there is a difference between the opinions and conceptual acceptance of religious values and what is really institutionalized in Afghan character. It must be noted that from people's viewpoint (both in rural and urban areas), Islam is not against acquiring knowledge by women and their social activities. This means that awareness raising programs, especially in rural areas, should be developed emphasizing religious values. The historical evolution resulting from the emergence of Islam shows that no ideology is as capable as Islam to change and confront the restrictive customs of close societies. The deep roots of traditionalism continue to coexist among urban more strongly. Urban areas of Afghanistan are still at the level of transition from traditional to modern society and thus, the precise planning in the area of cultural development should be taken seriously in the urban areas.

- Cultural specifications of different provinces of the country are not similar. These differences should be considered in political, cultural and economic development planning. Awareness raising programs in provinces such as Nangarhar, Laghma, Bamiyan, Dai Kundi, should be developed with a high degree of emphasis on our religious values.

One of the important suggestions to all the respected authorities, including governmental authorities, ministries, civil society organizations, Ulama (religious leaders) and intellectuals is that they widely disseminate information and findings people during specific courses and within coordinated to deeply affect the minds of people. This can be achieved through radio/television, press, posters, conferences and seminars, revising educational materials, lectures, religious pulpits, etc. The next step is to allocate financial resources and appropriate planning in the area of women education. In fact, the first basic step is to change the tribal and patriarchal subjectivities dominating the society and the second basic step, is programming and allocating facilities, and human and financial resources in this area.

Developing such programs can result in positive changes being made in oral and written literature of our country. In our historical literature, although in the area of gnosis and hallowed contexts, including Holy Quran, women have a high and valuable status and human dignity, but the subordinate status of women is clearly seen in the general literature of the society, which reflects the dominant historical subjectivity in the country. The following verses denote the low status of women:

### **5. Woman and dragon should both be buried because the world would be better without these two nasty things.**

*Women are imperfect in creation because they are selfish and notorious*

*It is mentioned in one of Qazalee's anecdotes:*

A *hakim* asked for a short wife. Some asked him why you don't want a tall one. He answered that woman is a bad thing, and the less (from bad/ women) the better. In fact, all disasters faced by men are because of women.

These interpretations are the result of the dominant subjectivity of patriarchal and despotic history of the East. They are based on this superstitious belief that women are imperfect in wisdom, ill natured and incendiary. The sexual attitude of women is also apparent in our historical literature, especially in recent times.

The function of men in Afghanistan is based on these beliefs; is kind of interpretations are prevalent in the oral literature of men. Creation of critical literature against the historical patriarchal rule should be centrally considered by the activists of civil society, government and other forces of the society, in order to achieve the original human causes in line with the liberal ideology of Islam.

The eulogistic literature has mostly pointed to three major roles of women as mother, wife and lover. Although these three roles are of high importance, they do not reflect the human rights of women in areas of culture, literature, politics, society and economy. There rights should be reflected in the oral and written literatures and functions of society.

According to the scholars, there are three pillars for the faith: Belief from the bottom of the Herat, confession with the tongue and practice with the body. In Afghanistan, the first and third pillars are not institutionalized and are only present in mind. With the hope that with realization of women rights, a move toward a firm belief in love and truth by everyone.



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