



RESEARCH PAPER

Political Role of Female Leadership in The Sub-Continent

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ABSTRACT

This paper endeavors to analyze the social status of women in the Subcontinent in different eras such as the Early Medieval Period, women enjoyed all rights and high status in life. Hinduism was never allowed to participate in any ceremony without their women and they enjoyed equal rights as men have in society. In this paper, an effort is done to highlight the situation of the early Modern period with the arrival of Muslims, the position of women become deteriorated and Islam has a great impact on the status of women by Hijab and other limitations, to describe the British period was the time of changing and reforms to improve the women' status in society. The focal objectives of the study are to describe the role some prominent Muslim women played in the political field before the existence of Pakistan and to evaluate the efforts of movements and organizations for women's political, social, and legal rights. This paper through the deductive method of research also describes that Pakistan Movement proved a vital point for women to show their importance in the political field and Quaid-e-Azam also encouraged women to work in politics before and after the partition of the Sub-continent. Some suggestions are also made for the importance of women in politics. Social and legal reforms are required to enhance the political status of women. Religious people also can play an important to elevate the status of women in politics because no nation can make progress without the participation of women in politics.

KEYWORDS APWA, Organization, Struggle Movement, Women

Introduction

History has been remained witness how men discriminated women' status in society with cruel practices. In ancient time (2500 B.C to 15000) position of women was better in all matters of life. They enjoyed the equal rights to men and also honored as goddess in religion but during (300 BC) the cleric started many controversial customs which affect the social life of people. Many ferocious traditions were common like early age marriages, Sati, marriage right of widows and with infertile women viciously treated in society. All religions never support the inhuman traditions and brutal customs in society. Islam and other religions have some limitations and restrictions for women. The British period was the time of social change and reforms movements for women. Some social movements such as Brahman Smaj, Araya Smaj started against the rigidity of high class of society. The Movements succeeded to bring the reforms in Early Marriage Act (Anant, 1956, pp. 7-8), Sati Act and permission the widow to remarry (Archana, 1992, pp. 7-15).

During the 4th century Gupta rulers allowed the women to participate in the affairs of kingdom and also provide the administrative jobs for women. Chandra Gupta assigned some administrative tasks to his wife named "Kumara Devi" and daughter who performed very well (Anant, 1956, p. 186). Gupta dynasty opened the doors of social and political life

for women, women got opportunities for high rank jobs in military and other field of life such as Kruma Devi fought many battles as commander of her army. In the 2nd century (Roopa Vohra, 1986, p. 116) Gupta rulers arranged institutions for co- education of women.

Female Leadership in the Muslim Era

The Muslim era has great influenced on the society of Indian subcontinent especially position of women in Hinduism got more effects. Before Islam Hindu women were living without restrictions and limitations. Islam has social and moral traditions for women such as introduction of "Zenana" which was also practiced by the royal and upper class of Hindu. Emperor Jalal Udin Akbar gave the attention on seclusion of women and arranged the "Herms" for then in palace (Angma, 2015, pp. 7-8). *Purda* and *Burqa* were considered the hurdle in the way of progress of Muslim women but soon royal and noble families used to "Hijab" as respectable class (Ramana, 2009, pp. 9-10). In this period Women participated in social activities such as some sports, calligraphy, paintings, music, Horse riding and art of pallet bow and to attend social ceremonies with male in veil. During early Modern period with the arrival of Muslims, the position of women become deteriorated Islam has great impact on the status of women by Hijab and other limitations (Sharma, Indian Society, Institutions and Change, 2004, p. 123).

The Mughals were much interested in the education of women so royal and other noble ladies got high standard in literature, history, poetry and religious education. Women were allowed to get military and political training and hold any administrative job. In Mughals era, some royal women played an important role in history such as sister of King Hammayun was great advisor, supporter and writer of his bibliography named "Hammayun Namma" (Siddiqui, 2005, pp. 38-53). Emperor Shah Jahan's daughter Jahan Ara Begum (1614-1681) was an expert in the administrative affairs of Empire. She was also a great architecture with good sense of constructions (Jeffery, 2011, p. 75). She constructed many gardens, roads, rest houses Choubuji and Chandni Choak are master pieces of her abilities in India and Lahore.

Zaib-unNisa (1638-1702) was the daughter and great advisor of King Aurang Zeb Alamgir. She was a religious lady have written many books in Arabic and Persian such as "Divan-i-Makhaf" and Tafseer ul Quran. She has constructed many roads, buildings and gardens for the public (Annie Krieger-Krynicky, 2005, pp. 17-20). Razia Sultana (1205-1240) was known as brave warrior daughter of Qutbu-din-Aibak, In the absence of her father, she holds and managed the administration of Delhi. Chand Bibi (1550-1599) was a great warrior who fought against the King Akbar to defend Ahmadnagar. Noor Jahan (1577-1645) was an expert in matter of state, the King Jahangir loved her much, so he always kept with him in every decision.

Women in the British Period

British modernized the Indian society as well female also Hindus understood the importance of western education for women, but Muslims were against the western and co-education. With the passage of time, the Muslims realized the importance of western education. British arranged the missionary organizations and vocational schools to promote western education and English language for female in the society.

Anie Besent (1847-1933)

She was a British lady with literary qualities. She was much interested in the problems of common people so she and the organized a party All India Home Role League to give the economic, political and cultural awareness to the people in the society. She has started newspaper "New India" and written over three hundred pamphlets (Raj Kumar, 1981, pp. 5-10). She encouraged the women to stand for their rights and raised their voices for political status in the society.

Mrs. Sirojani Nadu (1870-1949)

She was a great lady who fought for the rights of women in India and awarded with the title of "Nightingale of India" (Naravane, 1996, pp. 90-92). She has written so many articles and essays to support Hindu-Muslim Unity. She raised the voice for the property rights of Indian women (Sengupta, 1984, p. 30). In 20th century, the Muslim realized that is necessary to survive in every field of life, but women's education was opposed by traditional and conservative people. Some Muslim personalities such as Nawab Abdul Latif, Peary Chand Mitra and Moulvi Abdul Hakim supported the education of Muslim women (Latif, 1968, p. 104), Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan also suggested only religious and domestic education for women but written many poems such as "Haqooq-e-Niswan" on the rights of women.

Many Muslim educated personalities supported and encouraged the women for education and other political activities. Great poets and writers have highlighted the scarification and hardships of women's life such as Molana Altaf Husain Hali's poem "Chup Ki Dad" Allama Rashid-ul-Khari has written on the inheritance rights and Molvi Syed Mumtaz Ali also worked on the education of women.

From 1904-1911, many educational institutes were arranged in many cities for Muslim women. Mrs. Saronji Nendu raised voice for the political right of women so she met the secretary India Montagu with her delegation to demand the social, political and education rights. In 1918, two main political parties all India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress favored the political right of women and also supported to join freedom movement. Mrs Sirojni also protested on the India Act 1935 to ignore the rights of women also asked the government to provide every right to women equal to men (Lalneihzovi, 2007, pp. 69-72).

The Legacy of Women Leadership

After the Khilafat Movement revealed on Muslims that they are so lagged in every field of life and realized the presence of women in field. The Muslims divert their attention on the education of women and arranged many primary, secondary and high educational institutes for them. In 1939, Punjab established many high standard institutes Kinnaird College, Queen Mary College for Muslim girls (Gail, 1998, p. 177). Many Muslim women came forward for the education of women such as a Muslim woman Fatima Begum arranged religious and western education and also trained them for politics (Sharma, Social Change and Social Control, 1997, p. 176).

From 1940-1947 was the time of political awareness of Muslim women, In the 20th session of All India Muslim League, female activists motivated to take part in freedom movement the Muslim women and prepared them for every scarification for freedom (Wilmer, 1996, pp. 573-590). Begum Jahan Ara, Begum Liaqat Ali arranged some technical institutions to utilize the skills and abilities of women and (Dawn, 1945) Khursheed Begum convinced the Mrs. of Governor UP to establish women's college and hospital (Dawn, 1945).

In 1937 at Lakhnow Quaid-e-Azam organized the formal political platform for Muslim women and asked Begum Mohammad Ali to form the women section of Muslim League at district and provincial level. In 1946, during the election Quaid-e-Azam advised the women wing of Muslim League to register the women's vote in every province; government reserved four seats for women luckily Muslim women won two seats in elections. After election a large number of Muslim girls, students and women joined the Freedom Movement and created new spirit in it.

According the Quaid-e- Azam, creation of Pakistan was not only political movement but also a social, educational revolution for Muslim. He realized the people women in politics were as important as men and without their presence movement cannot be succeeded. After creation of Pakistan, Quaid-e- Azam arranged some delegations including women with

Islamic code of conduct to send UNO to introduce the new country in the world (Raja, 1991, p. 192). Quaid-e-Azam participated in ceremony USA, invited by International Herald Tribune with Muslim ladies Begum Shah Nawaz and M.A.H Ispahani to present point of view on the propaganda of The Hindus against the Muslim about rigid nature towards their women's political awareness and theocratic state (Ispahani, 1976, p. 231).

Anjuman Khawateen Pakistan (AKP)

After creation of Pakistan many organizations established to educate and give awareness to the Muslim women such as AKP started worked to educate the women. An active member Begum Abdul Qayum Khan organized the women in province "Serhad" and advised them to train their children as soldiers of Islam and prepared them for every scarification for country and Islam (Ufaq, Khawateen Pakistan ka Ijtima, 1952, p. 4).

Pakistan Home Economics Association (PHEA)

An organization "PHEA" was formed to train the women technical art and skills so that they can able to support their families and solve the financial problems. Miss Fatima Jinnah was the active president and manager of "PHEA" ask the women to join the organization and learn skill along with education to play important role in the progress of Pakistan. Mrs. Fatima Mansoori wrote a letter in 15th February 1958, to Miss Fatima Jinnah to report the activities of Association:

"As desired by you, I am sending herewith the report of the journal of Home Economics, which contains the report of Association and the constitution, during the year 1956-57 and 1957-1958 (Association, 1958).

All Pakistan Women Association (APWA)

After creation, Pakistan has face so many problems in which women remained prominent to solve those troubles. In 1949, Begum Rana Liaqat Ali Khan formed an organization (APWA) to help and inhabit refugees in country but after it started many projects for women to enhance their social, political and legal status in society. The aims of this organization were to encourage the participation of women in the development of Pakistan and to improve their political, social and legal status of women (Khan, 2007, pp. 26-27).

APWA started many programs for the health care of mother and child, social work for needy, training centers and handicrafts shops of women, literacy programs, family planning centers, Legal Aid for needy. Main project of APWA was start of health centers in rural areas (APWA, 1941, pp. 1-9). APWA founded many schools and colleges for women in rural areas and seven adult schools in East Pakistan. After launch 56 branches in different districts, APWA extended the circle of welfare programs at international. Mostly Islamic countries attended the APWA conference in Pakistan and Begum Rana Liaqat Ali addressed in the conference that:

"Women have equal rights in the society, so no one can stop their way to progress, so they should stand for their rights. Now movement for women rights has started so educated women who have command over different international languages can better understand about the situation (Ufaq, Anjuman-e-Pakistan ky zary ethmam mubaihsa taqreery, 1952)"

APWA was an organization who served country in every field of progress and also raised funds and donations on many occasions. Unfortunately, it also has to face the negative propaganda and conspiracy even that Fatimah Begum raised objections on the partiality of APWA, according to her, now APWA is not the organization of poor and needy women it has become a political government's platform to win the elections where wives of only rich and bureaucrats were appointed on important posts. Begum Hussain Malik, Secretary Anjuman-e-Khawateen removed these allegations in her speech that

“It is total wrong allegation that government has formed the APWA to gain the vote and favour in the election, it is clear that no external power has control over the country, we have formed this government and country and aim of APWA is to serve the nation work for the welfare of the women. All those women who have the feelings and sympathy for the nation can join the APWA. (Ufaq, Anjuman-e-Pakistan ky zary ethmam mubaihsa taqreery, 1952)”

Women’s Political Activities in Pakistan

Creation of Pakistan proved bedrock for women in politics, self-awareness and self-recognition. Women started their political journey from Khilafat Movement to Pakistan and remained succeeded to get their political rights. In 19th century during Khilafat Movement, mother of Ali set the first political ground for women with her speech against British after that large number of women took part in the movement and showed their End Enthusiasm. Muslim women’s scarification for Pakistan remained remarkable and presented “role model” for other nations. Women’s branches of all India Muslim league started work all over the country and organize public meetings and to create the political awareness.

Begum Mohammad Ali Johar was the first women who addressed the public meeting of All India Muslim League Working Committee (Times, 2015). In 1947, Pakistan Movement was reached on the peak of popularity in children, old, young and women. Women were fully involved in politics and gave every scarification for freedom such as a young student named Fatima Sughra hoisted the Muslim League flag at the Lahore Secretariat where police torture them with shells of tear gas and send them in jails also (Jalandhri, 1981, pp. 101-102). History of Pakistan is full of scarifications, struggle and efforts of women. Some great female leaders whose work and struggle for homeland and freedom was remarkable such as

Amjadi Begum

She was the wife of Molana Mohammad Ali Johar and daughter-in-law of Amma Bi. In 1915, she entered in the sphere of politics when her husband and brother-in-law arrested in Khilafat Movement, so she started speeches at public meetings against British. She was best orator even Mahatma Gandhi also admired her speech style. In 23 March 1940, she participated in drafting of resolution because being the only female member of All India Muslim League Working Committee.

Fatimah Jinnah

She was the “Mother of Nation” because from death of her sister in law till death remained with Muslims. Quaid-e-Azam also admired her that without her scarifications Freedom Movement never be succeeded. In every event of politics, she stood with her brother. Quaid-e-Azam assigned her duty to organize the women for struggle Movement. In Pakistan her struggle and efforts for restoration of democracy, welfare of people remained continued. She also challenged the dictator Ayub Khan in presidential election.

Gul-E-Raana (Begum Liaqat Ali Khan)

She was founder of APWA organization and the wife of first prime minister of Pakistan Rana Liaqat Ali Khan (Agarwal, 2019, pp. 1-10). Quaid-e-Azam appointed her as financial advisor and also worked as first female governor of province Sindh. She was performed her duties as ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherland and Italy. She was also elected Governor of Sindh and in 1952 she joined the UN delegation (Khan, 2007, pp. 300-350).

Nusrat Khanum

She was known as Lady Abdulla Haroon She founded the organization “Anjuman-e-Khawateen” in Sindh to improve the social, economic and political condition of women. She was an active member of Muslim League even during struggle Movement “Nusrat Club

become the centre of political activities (Ullah, 2005, pp. 35-40). She worked as vice-president of women branch of the All India Muslim League.

Fatima Sughra Begum

Sughra Begum was the brave lady who, in 1947 during the political procession hoisted the flag at secretariat building (Publications, 1992, p. 468). She formed the Muslim League branches in different cities of Sindh, After Pakistan she worked for refugees also raised fund for relief Committee. She was the wife of Ghulam Husain Hidayat Ullah.

Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz

She was highly educated lady and daughter of Sir Mohammad Shafe. She was elected as first member of All India Muslim League and also attended Round Table Conference to represent the political right of women. During Civil Disobedience Movement was arrested and played vital role in politics. She also visited state of America to represent the Pakistan (Singh, 2001, p. 117).

Salma Mehmuda

Salma Mehmuda was the daughter of Fazal Ilahi Badil. In 1940 she formed and worked as member of Women Branch of Punjab Muslim League provincial subcommittee, she worked for education of women so opened many girls.

Geeti Ara Begum

She was the wife of Mian Bashir Ahmad and daughter of Sir Muhammad Shafe. She was an active member in politics who worked as Ambassador to Turkey also. She worked hard for Anjuman-e-Himayat-e-Islam and also raised fund to support the Anjuman. On the advice of Quaid-e-Azam she convinced the women to vote for Pakistan. She appointed as members of All Indian Muslim women's council and as finance Secretary of the Provincial branch of the All India women's conference (Begum, 1977, pp. 137-139). After came into being of Pakistan she helped the refugees.

Amir Un-Nisa

She was known Lady Mohammad Shafe also the daughter of Mian Nizam-ud-din. She was great social worker and politician also She continued mission of her husband after his death. In 1905, she started work for awareness the Muslim women and motivated for their rights (Mirza, 1969, pp. 116-117). She organized the Anjuman-e-Khawateen e Islam in Lahore. In 1947, she was actively take part in civil Disobedient against the Khizar Hayat in Punjab.

Hassan Ara Begum (Begum Hakam)

Hassan Ara Begum was the member of national Indian association club, first honorary magistrate in Calcutta and the in charge of women's central subcommittee, she arranged the Meena bazar in Calcutta which gave an opportunity for conversation and social gathering. She was the. In 1925, Lady Batten Paoul nominated her the member of Girl Guides (Pictorial, 1976, p. 83). Quaid e Azam appointed her from Bengal as member of All India Muslim League Sub Women Committee.

Mehmooda Begum (Sahib Zadi)

She was educated and kind-hearted lady and remained the chief Executive of Family Planning Organizations and member of relief committee of Pakistan. In 1947, she elected as the member of women section of Awami Muslim league. She worked as president of Red Crescent Society, National Craft Council of Pakistan (Pakistan, 1961, pp. 71-72). She served as president of TB Association Pakistan and SOS children.

Ikram Ullah Shaista

She was born in Bengal and highly qualified daughter of Sir Hassan Suharwardi. She was president of Muslim women federation, elected the Constituent Assembly of India, worked as secretary of advisory board of education and also selected as important member of delegation to UN (Sharif-al-Mujahid, 1981, p. 688). She was served as Pakistan Ambassador to Morocco (Ikramullah, 1992, p. 20). In 1962, she was good author and written many books such as "Purdah to Parliament", a biography of Hussein Shaheed Suharwardi and also translated the novel "Mira-Tula-Uroos".

Begum Taiyba

Begum Taiyba was the founder of the Anjuman-e-Khawateen-e-Islam and a daughter of Imad-ul-Mulk. She was much interested in female education so many female's schools and institutions were formed by her (Dasgupta, 2003, p. 45). She also arranged many educational conferences to solve problems in female education. She was good writer also has written many stories books for children and on the topics of social evils such as Dowry and status of widow in society. She highlighted the low status of women in society.

Noor-Us-Sabah Begum

She was born in Rampur State and also active member of Muslim League. She led princely life but after joining the Khilafat and Civil Disobedient Movement changed her life style. She was appointed as Secretary of Muslim League in Delhi there she started social activities for women. She was very interested in rights of women with a delegation met with Viceroy Lord Mountbatten also explained Two Nation Theory of Muslims (Begum, 1977, pp. 85-90)"

Begum Viqar-Un-Nisa Noon

Her name was Victoria Rekha but known as wife of Sir Feroze Khan Noon. She joined the politics with her husband and elected as member of women's subcommittee of Muslim League in Punjab. She actively participated to protest against British during Civil Disobedience Movement in Punjab. She was also member of refugee committee to help the people transfer and settlement in Pakistan. She shifted in Pakistan after partition of Subcontinent and started social activities. She joined the organization "APWA" and also played an important role in accession of Gwadar Port.

Bi Amma (Abdi Bano Begum)

Abdi Begum was the first Muslim Lady who joined the politics in conservative atmosphere. She was wife of Abdul Ali Khan and Ali brothers who were the founder of the Khilafat Movement. Abdi Begum supported her sons to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Islam and her couplet 'Boli Amma Mohammad Ali Ki. Jan Beta Khilafat -Pay-Dey Do' became famous (Srivastava, 2003, p. 66). Muslim respected her due to kind behavior and become popular as Bi Amma for all Muslims.

Conclusion

In South Asian Subcontinent women's status was not secured, women were agitating against their men regarding their rights where men were also stood against the imperialism for their freedom. Mostly people were also against the women 's rights such as education, property, right, right to vote were not considered as important as for men.

Women remained silent fight fighters in every field of life from home to politics, their work and role never acknowledge or admired as men. History of Pakistan will be incomplete without mention the role and struggle of women. British promoted the tribal system and feudalism to strengthen their roots of government. All reforms and developments were for

landlord to help to strong their system. British government never formed enough laws to improve the status of tribal women even they ignored the women's rights in the Act of India 1935. From Gauri's to Mughal is called period of Muslim power in India but with the passage of time they could not keep the pace of changings of world. After 1857 golden time Muslims ended. This time Sir Syed Ahmad emphasized on the importance of Western Education and women also entered in the arena of politics during Khilafat Movement, first political Muslim Lady was Abdi Begum (Bi Amma)

Quaid-e-Azam firmly believed that women should show their power and solid role in politics and also encouraged them to come forward to play their role. Miss Fatima Jinnah, Begum Rana Liaqat Ali Khan, Begum Salma Tasadduq Hussain, Begum Jahan Ara, Lady Abdullah and Shaista Ikramullah played vital role in the Pakistan Movement. It is fact that without participation and scarification of women Pakistan Movement never can be succeeded.

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