

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI

Women in Contemporary Islamic Societies

Mona.I. Mohammed Elattag

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Political Science

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for The Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

April, 2000

© Mona I. Mohammed Elattag, 2000



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-47781-9

Canada

ABSTRACT

Women in Contemporary Islamic Societies

Mona I. Mohammed

This study discusses status of women in contemporary Islamic societies. The approach adopted to develop the discussion is an analytical one. Because of the wide controversy over status of women in Muslim societies, particular and deliberate emphasis is given to the Islamic rules and principles and how they are culturally interpreted and reinterpreted to define the position of women in current Islamic societies. The study argues that women according to Islamic rules, are given equivalent status with men. It is however, the misperception, cultural-political misinterpretation of Islamic rules and laws, and the political interests of the governing party that lagged women behind men in Muslim societies.

The study concludes that national and international collaborative measures must be taken in order for Muslim women to secure a more dignified social and political status.

Dedication

To my beloved husband and children,
to every Muslim woman who thinks that Islam
is against her ambitions, this work is lovingly dedicated

Table of Contents

| | | |
|----------------|---|----|
| Chapter | | |
| | List of tables and figures | vi |
| One | Introduction | 1 |
| | I. Background of The Research Problem | 1 |
| | II. Research Problem | 7 |
| | III. Research Question | 8 |
| Two | Status Of Women In Muslim and Western Societies | 12 |
| | I. Status of Women in Islamic Societies | 12 |
| | II. Status of Women in Western Societies | 19 |
| | III. Comparative Perspective | 22 |
| Three | Theoretical Analysis and Literature Review | 24 |
| | I. Middle Eastern Feminism Theory | 26 |
| | II. Western-Feminism Theory | 35 |
| | 1. First Approach: Defenders of Islam | 36 |
| | 2. Second Approach: Critiques of Islam ... | 40 |
| | III. Islamization of Political and Social Institutions | 41 |
| Four | Analysis and Discussion of Data | 55 |
| | I. General Issues | 55 |
| | II. Data Analysis | 57 |
| | III. Discussion | 66 |
| Five | Women Organizations: History and Future | 73 |
| Six | Conclusion and Recommendation | 86 |
| | Bibliography | 89 |
| | Appendix A | 94 |

List of Tables and Figures

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Figure #1. Illiterate Women | 60 |
| Table #1. Education, Contraception and Infant Mortality | 61 |
| Table #2. Access to Education for Malian Girls | 63 |
| Table #3. Primary Education by Sex (Percentage of Students) | 64 |
| Table #4. Bachelor Degree by Major, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity, 1987 | 65 |
| Table #5. Estimated Numbers of Associations and Members in the Gulf States | 84 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Background of the Research Problem

Women's life is characterized by a complicated web of influences that are derived from social and cultural structures. The social and cultural realities of Muslim societies where women are bind by strong social norms and traditions set the margins and draw the boundaries for women's movement and freedom of thinking. In Muslim societies, women and men are not equal socially and culturally. It is true that physically women and men are different, their strengths and weaknesses are dissimilar, they behave in different ways, and they are treated differently. But women roles are determined in accordance with their social responsibilities towards men. A woman is the wife of the man, a daughter of the man, and a mother and sister of the man. Despite this, a woman is never an equal partner to the man. The cultural reality of unacceptable partnership relation between a man and a woman enhances women's subordination. Within the decisive role of women, they are obliged to listen carefully to all orders, instructions or opinions of their male guardian and obey him. Any disobedience to the guardian will definitely creates a series of problems in the family and generates long lasting accusation for women. This strong social web of influences determines for every single woman what is right, possible, and what is socially acceptable. It is in the light of

their knowledge, understanding, and experience that women have formulated their strategies for social and even biological survival. Thus, it should not sound strange to state that social adaptation of women and mobilization of their mental and physical capabilities has generally depended on both the resources available to them and their ability to analyze and understand the imminent influencing factors around them.

There is a strong relation between socio-cultural reality of Muslim societies and Islam as a religion. The socio-cultural boundaries that set for women are completely defended and justified by Islam's fundamental role in these societies. Islam has a powerful religious, social, and political influence upon Muslim societies. As a religion, Islam plays a central role in bringing all of the influencing social factors together as a mean of self-identity and understanding of one's particular environment and the world at large. Politically, Islam is strongly institutionalized against Western capitalism and Socialistic ideology and become a determinant factor in Muslim nations' building.

Women in Muslim societies have been trying to escape this web of influences and design a new independent drift for themselves. However, women's greatest impediments lie in the interpretation and re-interpretation of Islamic laws regarding their rights and privileges by the governing party. Islamic laws have given women the following fundamental rights:

-- The Qu'ranic laws put an end to the pre-Islamic custom of burying baby girls alive. It basically guarantees women the right to live.¹

-- The Qu'ranic laws guarantee women the right to inherit and endow property².

-- Qu'ranic laws guarantee women the right to have full possession and control of their wealth, the dower, while married and after divorce. In Islam the woman receives the dower not her guardian³.

-- Islam gives women the right to be fed, clothed, and educated by her guardian⁴.

-- Socially, women have the right to choose the future husband, the right to divorce, and the right for child custody⁵.

-- Economically, women have the right to work, gain money and conduct agreements on their names⁶.

¹ Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "The Status of Women In Early Islam," in Muslim Women, ed. Freda Hussain (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984), 15-17.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sheikh M.H. Kidwai of Gadia, Woman Under Different Social & Religious Laws: Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam (New Delhi: Seema Publications, 1976), 116-117.

⁶ Haleh Afshar, "Islam and feminism: an analysis of political strategies," in Feminism And Islam: Legal & Literary Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani. (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 199.

-- Politically, women have the right to participate and share with men the responsibility of their community'.

Unfortunately, these fundamental Islamic rights of women in most Muslim societies are seized by the cultural articulation of patriarchy. This men domination is demonstrated through the social structure, social mores, laws and political power¹. Such a structural process is facilitated by Islam's central role in the self-definition and cultural reality of Muslim's at large. In Muslim patriarchal society, the class-privileged men have traditionally written the laws and interpreted them, often with the underlying concern of protecting family and community. Because of this, women have been defined in terms of their relationships to men - either in need of being protected by men or men needing to be protected from them. In both cases, women who stray from the traditional patriarchal family will suffer at the hands of the social and legal systems. Because of the understanding that men are a degree above women, the Islamic laws are re-written and disrespected by both the social and legal male guardians. For example, in Somalia, a woman has no say over her future husband. She must completely consent to her father or her guardian regarding her future husband. If she refused to compel, then she is socially rejected, abused and in some

¹ Ibid.

² Farida Shaheed, "Networking for change: The role of women's group in initiating dialogue on women's issues," in Faith & Freedom, ed. Mahnaz Afkhami (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995), 79.

refused to compel, then she is socially rejected, abused and in some cases put in jail till she agrees.⁹

Politics and religion go hand-in-hand in most Islamic societies; one justifies the existence of the other and their structure reflects the social and economic life of that society. Islam is interpreted differently in different regions in the world and it is usually mixed with the existing cultures. Accordingly, differences occur between Muslims in their basic belief, practices and understanding of Islam. For example, political elites in Saudi Arabia and as part of a distinct culture, institutionalize Islam based on their own understanding and interpretation. Their judgements are said to be Islamic and based on the Qu'ran. To them, their regulations are fixed in the Qu'ran which means severe limitation: God's rules cannot be changed. Demands for change which are not consistent with the Qu'ran and the Sunna lead inevitably to conflict with those who believe in the divine character of the Shari'a¹⁰. Based on the Shari'a, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Sudan have structured their political institutions. The effect of this Islamic-political institutions upon women is reflected in weaker economic and social status. A recent study maintains that Muslim countries consistently report the lowest female participation in economic activities outside of agriculture. Additionally, there is evidence of a failure by the female work-force to respond to higher steps of economic development by a parallel increase in the number of women

⁹ Based on personal interview, May 5, 1999.

¹⁰ Qu'ranic laws are called Shari'a.

employed in non-agricultural activities"¹¹. Nadia Youssef points out that this failure is connected to the traditionally established closed occupational opportunity structure that limited women from employment sectors that presupposed close contact with men. Moreover, Muslim kin commitments ensured that divorced and widowed women be supported by their male relatives, a factor which exterminate their need to work for economic survival"¹².

Islam in itself is not the barrier that stand against women's liberty and their political and social participation. Islam is used and overused to determine women's role in the society as well as to legalize other social behaviours. For example, mobilization of the youth to go to holy wars against imperialist powers is done under the name of Islam. Terrorism and its negative consequences upon national and international communities is conducted under the name of Islam as well. Similarly, women social role of house-keeping is said to be Islamically recommended and advisable by the Prophet Mohammed. In fact, this recommendation is done by the patriarchal dominant groups who wanted women to take care of their children and Islam did not emphasize the limited role of house keeping of women. Islam did not ask women to stay home and beg their food from men. Islam is interpreted and understood by patriarchal powers in Muslim societies to determine this role for women. In addition, the same patriarchal social power determined for women their social

¹¹ Amal Rassam, "Towards a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Women in the Arab World," in Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World, (Paris: UNESCO, 1984) 133.

¹² Ibid.

behaviour. For example, women are told to wear certain clothes, how to speak with men and what to say, and when to show herself and when not. Simply, lines are drawn for women by men under the name of Islam.

II. Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the direct factors behind women's inferiority in Muslim societies. Inferiority here refers to the fact that women in Muslim societies are assigned subordinate status. This subordination is usually mandated and reflected in the following characteristics of the Muslim societies:

1. Women are secluded and segregated. Though an increasing number of women are receiving education (still seen as a man's priority) and are occupying important roles and positions in the public domain, the majority of women continue to occupy the private domain: the household.
2. The roles played by most women are those of a daughter, sister, wife, mother, mother-in-law, etc. Few professional careers are available to women under the existing division of labour.
3. Veiling is still widespread in most of the Arab world.
4. Personal status codes discriminate against women, particularly in such areas as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

5. Among certain classes, ownership of property is almost exclusively confined to men. Social, economic, and political organizationslegate women to marginality.

6. The prevailing standard of morality stresses those values and norms associated with traditional ideas of femininity, motherhood, wifehood, and sexuality.

7. The prevailing religious ideology considers women to be a source of evil, anarchy (fitna¹³), and trickery or deception (kaid).

8. Women may still be exposed to such practices as forced marriage, honour crimes, clitoridectomy, etc¹⁴.

III. Research Question

In light of the above research problem, the main question of the research project emerges as follows:

Are women in Muslim societies inferior to men? And if so, What are the factors behind this inferiority? Is this inferiority mandated by the true principles of Islam?

A number of other minor questions can be derived from this major research question. These minor questions can be summarized in as follows:

¹³ Halim Barakat, "The Arab family and the Challenge of Social Transformation," in Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 32.

- What is the traditionalist argument regarding Muslim women subordination?
- What is the role of patriarchy in Muslim women subordination?
- Are secular traditions responsible for Muslim women subordination? What are the solutions from a liberal point of view?
- How does reconciliatory approach defend Islam's position and blamed its misinterpretation?
- What is the relevance and impact of global capitalism upon Muslim women?
- What is the different between global capitalism and patriarchal domination? Are they endow the same impact upon Muslim women?
- What are the biological and physical difference between men and women and how these differences affect women's position?
- What is the relevance of nations building to Muslim women subordination?
- What are the two approaches that Westerners behold about Islam and Muslim women within Islamic laws?
- How Islam is politicized by Muslim countries? What is the effect of such politicization upon women?
- What are the most effective measures needed to improve Muslim women's position?
- Can education and social/political organizations change Muslim women's position?

The central thesis upon which the research project will be developed is as follows: Women have always searched for justice, equality with men, and recognition long time before Islam and even after Islam in Muslim societies. It is assumed that Islam have recognized, respected, and equalized women with men. However, the interpretation of Islamic laws and its interaction with the cultural domination and political interests have changed the actual position of women in Muslim societies. Thus, the discussion that follows will focus on exploring the implications and various dimensions of the above stated thesis. The next chapters explores the theoretical underpinnings of the research problem and critically reviews pertinent literature.

In order to develop the central argument of this research an analytical approach is adopted. This analytical approach is intended to examine Muslim women's situation, study the relevant factors that subordinated Muslim women, and explain why and how are these factors come to existence. Because of the complexity of the issues involved, the discussion is structured in such a way that only the major issues are touched upon. This research intends to discuss only the direct and major factors behind women's social, economic and political inferiority in Muslim societies. This research does not intend in any way to use or interpret Qu'ranic verses. However, reference to Qu'ranic verses will be made to support specific arguments or points. The reason why this study is avoiding use and interpretation of Qu'ranic verses is the fact that interpretation

of the Qu'ran is a highly complex matter designed for eminent Muslim Imams who are educated in this field.

In order to answer and show relevance of the above questions, the research is structured into seven major chapters and various subchapters. Chapter one serves as an introductory orientation. Chapter two introduces the purpose, plan, general structure, and the approach adopted. Chapter three discusses the issue from a theoretical point of view and review the literature pertains to it. Chapter four suggests the work strategies to deal with the issue and signifies their importance. Invitation for women's education is one of the strategy suggested which will be discussed in chapter five. The second strategy is a strong national and international Muslim women's organizations and is discussed in chapter six. Chapter seven serves as a conclusion.

Now having stated the central argument of the paper and delineated its general structure, the discussion will proceed to review the status of women in Muslim and Western societies.

CHAPTER TWO

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MUSLIM AND WESTERN SOCIETIES

I. Status of Women in Islamic Societies

Regardless of the positive Islamic laws regarding women which stated earlier, Muslim women have suffered men domination, social and economic prejudice, and political powerless both in history and at present. Although this study intends to examine women in Muslim societies (this term is used interchangeably with Islamic societies and Islamic community), it also compares Muslim women with Western women in some respects.

Comparably, domestic violence against women is apparent in both Muslim and Western societies. As for violence and abuse against women in Muslim societies there is clear deficiency in obtaining sufficient data in this respect. The main reason for this data deficiency is the cultural understanding that reporting against the father, husband, or brother is shameful, bad and socially unacceptable. Accordingly, the following paragraphs record true personal interviews with abused Muslim women from different Islamic countries. As they requested I can not spell out their names but their stories are true - they can not say it out loud since they are afraid that people will know who they are. As mentioned before, social obligations are stronger than Islamic rights of women in Muslim societies. In Muslim world (as in Tunisia, for example) The Advice and Complaints Centre for Women reported that 77% of the women that they have dealt with between the ages of 12 and 55 had

been victims of domestic violence¹. In Sudan, the number is not recorded but it is most probably the same as Tunisia. Women in Sudan are totally dependent upon men. Due to this dependency they are frequently abused and humiliated. To explain the situation in Sudan it is very important to see that traditions, cultures, and social norms play crucial role in shaping women's behaviour and position in the society. For example, it is socially shameful for a woman who is from a well known family to complain about her husband in areas such as their sexual life. In addition, a good woman is suppose to hide her husband's minors such as his lack of money, his abuse and fight with her, and his hatred feelings towards his in-laws. The following selected examples illustrate the different ways that Muslim men use to subjugate their women.

I talked to an old woman (over sixty years old), she told me that she have seven children and because she have no place to go, no money and no education, she preferred to stay with her ignorant husband all her life. The old lady spoke out and said that her husband used to feud with her most of the time if not all of it. The tool he used to subjugate her was to ignore her in every thing including their sexual life which has an interval of six to ten month.²

A women from Sudan who is about fifty five years old and works as a banker spoke about her life with her husband and said " my

¹ Ghada Karmi, "Women, Islam & Patriarchalism," in Feminism And Islam: Legal & Literary Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

² An interview by author, January 1991, Khartoum, SKCC, Sudan.

husband used not to join me in bed for years, some times two or three years in a row, I had to pretend that I am a happy wife because of my social status." She continued, "to save my family I accepted his ignorance".³ This lady had lost the greatest part of her sexual life because of the strict social rule in Sudan which undermines such type of ignorance as a ground for divorce. In Sudan, sexual ignorance is seen as a shameful matter for a woman to speak about and demand as a right. In addition, customs in Sudan look at a woman who demands sexuality as a prostitute even though she is married and demanding such a right from her husband. Because of customs and traditions this lady had to hide her sufferings all her life. Islamically a wife who do not enjoy her sexual life with her husband for two or three years is permitted to ask for divorce. Unfortunately, People in Sudan use to follow traditions and culture not Islamic rules.

A Sudanese lady lives in Canada who is about thirty seven years old and a house-wife complains about her husband saying that he use to spend all the welfare money for his personal needs. For this reason, she started to borrow money to buy her children and herself their necessities. She ended up with a large debt that she couldn't repay. She is now in a critical situation because she can not tell her husband about her debt nor she can repay it since she has no other income. The other problem is that she can not tell the Canadian government on him for his non-wise spending since this is against Sudanese traditions. She blames him for what she did as he

³ An interview by author, January 1991, Khartoum, SKCC, Sudan.

is very authoritative and act alone in all the money that they get from the government without giving her what she needs. Lack of money for a women is a lack of action, freedom, and independence. This is what her husband meant her to be.⁴

An Egyptian lady lives in Canada who is about thirty eight years old and a house-wife complains that her husband does not give her enough money to buy what she needs or to send to her family. This women has always missed her sense of independence and freedom. She can not act alone in any financial matter. She must refer to her husband in any type of spending even in what ever concern their children. The husband act as the sole authority in the house from a financial angle. Because she always has no money she feels powerless and without ability to take any family decision. As a consequence to this circle of dependency, she is always in trouble with her husband. The children are too much affected with their parent's problems. Their elder daughter start to think negatively about marriage and men. But fortunately and with the help of women group the lady managed to transfer the resolve some of her money problems and now she feels much more independent and free.⁵

Another Egyptian lady lives in Canada who is about forty years old tells her story with her husband. She married when she was thirty eight years old and has a Bachelor degree in Science. Her husband is less educated than her - but he has a well payed job.

⁴ An interview by author, April 1999, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

⁵ An interview by author, September 1998, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

Because she married late and is afraid to loose her husband and may not remarry again; she had to accept her husband's ignorance, stinginess, abuse and unjust orders. She said " my husband knows my loneliness, need for money and for a family that is why he suppressed me. He married me for two years and never a day that he slept or joined me in bed. He gives me no money in my hand - he buys every thing himself and does not ask me what I think. He ignores me when I talk to him - does not reply to my questions or concerns. When we want to go out he leaves me behind at home if I am late even for five minutes. He does not want me to listen to music arguing that it is a sin in Islam which is not true. Finally he complained about me to people saying that he hates me and then he divorced me after the two years." A Moroccan Muslim lady lives in Canada who is twenty eight years old and a house wife complains about her husband who does not help her in her house work. She has two children three years and one year old. She has to take care of the children, cook, clean the house, and do her shopping while he does nothing.⁶ His behaviour is connected to the Arab notion of men domination and the understanding that house work is for women only. However, it deserves mentioning here that Prophet Mohammed used to help his wives in their house work. As a result of her busyness in house work, she lost the chance to continue her education and work out-side the home to gain money.

⁶ An interview by author, August 1997, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

⁷ An interview by author, April 1998, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

Another Moroccan lady lives in Canada who is twenty four years old and a house wife complains about her husband who is a Post-Doctorate candidate. She said " my husband use to treat me like a child because he is thirteen years elder than me. He married me when I was nineteen, I was young and I used to love him a lot, he knows my attachment to him and use it against me. He does not buy me what I want, even my clothes, my family sends me. I asked him to let me go to school and he does not want. He wants me to take care only about the children while he is doing his Post-Doc Research."³ This lady can not complain to her family or to the government about his authoritative nature and stinginess. She is afraid that people will know about him and he gets angry and may divorce her. She has no education to depend upon, and no other income. She must compel to him since she has no other choice.

One of the most hidden women's abuse in Muslim societies is the physical abuse. In Sudan, a man's hit to his wife is perceived as completely shameful. That is why it is very rare to find a woman who speaks about her husband's beating let alone report it to any official bodies. Even though there is no much data recorded on women's physical abuse, personal interviews proved that it does happen in Sudan and else where in the Muslim world.

Muslim men beat their wives in most Muslim societies. Based on interviews with some Muslim women I will quote some of the reasons why Muslim men beat their wives. A Sudanese woman told me that her

³ An interview by author, December 1998, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

husband beaten her because she asked him what were he saying to his mother. She could not tell her family that he beaten her she just told them it was a regular fight⁹.

An Egyptian woman told me that her husband who is very famous and respectable man beaten her because she asked him about a woman that called him in the phone.¹⁰

A Somalian woman told me that her husband beaten her because she refused to join him in bed.¹¹

A Somali father beaten his daughter to marry a man that she does not like. The father thinks that the daughter does not know her best interest which he knows better than her.¹²

As for a brother to beat his sister in Muslim world is over presented. Brothers need no reason to beat their sisters. A brother can just ask the sister to make him a cup of coffee and if his sister refused, he has the right to beat her at once. In Muslim world the brother has the authority over his sister and never for the sister to have any authority over the brother. It is a cultural rather than an Islamic rule. This cultural norm is extremely difficult to change. Other examples of men beating women in Muslim world are there but they are hidden. Fear of men makes women close

⁹ An interview by author, May 1999, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

¹⁰ An interview by author, March 1998, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

¹¹ An interview by author, April 1999, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

¹² An interview by author, May 1999, Montreal, Concordia University, Canada.

their hearts, eyes and mouths. The previous examples shows that men in Muslim societies use different tools of power to suppress women and humiliate them. According to Islam, women are to be treated nicely, politely and decently. The Prophet Mohammed said that " the best of you is the best to his wife" Men in Muslim world argue that they are using their Islamic right of (men are superior to women) and they are treating their women in the best way they see it. But the major issue here is that women are ignorant about their basic rights in Islam. Even if women know their rights, how would they be able to defend them. Women in Muslim world lack effective power to speak or act on their own. Moreover, Muslim societies strictly reject any complains against fathers, brothers or husbands.

II. Status of Women in Western Societies

Women are most abused in Western societies than in others, as table #1 below shows. Most social violence, negligence, and humiliation in Western societies against women are found in their homes and by their partners. The reason why so many women "put up with" abuse in the home is basically due to their disparate status in society and the certainty that they have no feasible alternatives available to them. Women are often caught in a brutal circle of economic dependence, fear for their children's lives as well as their own, repeated pregnancies, shame, unfamiliarity with their rights before the law, lack of faith in themselves, and the surrounded social pressures. Fear of harming a husband's career and apprehension about the attitude of the police also prevent women

from reporting crimes of domestic violence. A recent British study revealed that even though 92% of abused women sought the detention of their abusers, actual arrests appeared in only 24% of the cases¹³.

These factors practically put abused women to a life of recurrent mistreatment from which they do not have the means to escape. Although there are protective measures to prevent such maltreatment and humiliation. United States for example provides support through non governmental organizations and give shelters and police assistance to victim women. Whereas Austria provide only police assistance and shelters which are not enough to protect the victims of social violence. This Social prejudice reinforces domestic violence against women specially when they are usually considered to be as just little more than their spouses' property. Victims' husbands presume that this junior role of women gives them the implicit right to abuse them in order to "keep them in their place," the underlying notion being the conception that women needed to be disciplined.

As for physical brutality and sexual abuse, they are widely spread in Western societies because they have been authorised for centuries by the legal systems which give women no protection or recourse. In their demands, Western women ask for more recognition,

¹³ United Nations, Women: Challenges To The Year 2000, (New York: UN Publications, 1991), 69.

equality, and respect of their society as the following quotes illustrate:

No Rape! No pornography! Both of these require that women are subordinate to men. Both are injuries levelled against women by men. Both presume that women want to be hurt, humiliated, 'taken', violated. Laws need to clamp down hard on the perpetrators of these violent acts.

Debbie Romford¹⁴

RESPECT for women in all walks of life - and therefore fair and equal treatment, in private and in public: in the professions, in medicine, in social security, at whatever age. Only early education and un-blinkered churches can achieve this.

E.R. Cardiff¹⁵

True Equality with men, especially job opportunities; equal pay, equal respect; an end to all the media hype about attractive females being slim and delicate; there are a lot of us big strong women, with muscles, even!

Sheila Cumbria¹⁶

In 19th century England and North America, as well as much of the developing world today, when a wife died or was permanently wounded as a result of domestic violence, the husband was often excused by the law under various pretexts and his sentence was magnificently light. As recently as 1954, Scotland Yard Commander G.H. Hatherill bragged: "There are only about 20 murders a year in

93.

¹⁴ Bernadette Vallely, What Women Want, (London: Virago Press, 1996)

¹⁵ Ibid, 94.

¹⁶ Ibid, 104.

London and many are not at all serious - some are just husbands killing their wives."¹⁷ In fact, in all cultures men have had the right to murder their wives on suspicion of adultery until very recently. The same rules have not been applied to male adultery from a historical comparative point of view¹⁸.

III. Comparative Perspective

As for Muslim women, this study assumes that there is a strong link between cultural/political interpretation of Islamic rules and subordination of Muslim women. Cultural/ political interpretation here refers to the fact that Islamic laws have no common definition and interpretation. Different interpreters of Islamic laws define and interpret Islamic rules according to their cultural/political background. In other words, Islam is understood, interpreted and practised differently by different regions of the Islamic societies. For example, an interpreter from Iran, Pakistan, and another from Turkey or Egypt will definitely define and interpret Q'uranic verses typical to his language concepts, cultural understanding, and in many instances political interests. In this sense, they are in fact formulating Islamic laws in a special manner so as to consistent with the existing social framework. Any interpretation that does not conform to what is culturally acceptable will be controversial and may well be rejected by that social group.

¹⁷ United Nations, Women: Challenge To The Year 2000. (New York: UN Publications, 1991), 70.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Cultural/political interpretation of Islamic laws is a significant mean by which women are distressed in their status as men's counterpart. In addition, Women's illiteracy plays crucial role in their subordination as well as their weak national and international communication and organizations.

By investigating the relationship between cultural/political interpretation, Muslim women's lack of education and the need for effective Muslim women's organizations, this study will contribute to a mutual understanding of the factors and barriers that need to be removed or at least modified. A suggestion for a common interpretation of Islamic laws regarding women's right, a global demand for Muslim women's religious and academic education and the creation of an effective organizations that defend women's rights are some of the significant mark-yards in the road for women emancipation.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The discussion in this chapter focusses mainly on the theories of Feminism. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section I discusses Middle Eastern feminism theory. Section II deals with Western-Feminism view; and the last section discusses the relevant of the political Islamization of the social institutions in Muslim societies.

The nature of the most of 20th century Muslim societies and their particularly rapid and strong Islamization of women's position, confirmed the old age theory of Islam as the cause of women's oppression in Middle Eastern society. It was after all an Islamic state which intended to be modeled on the ordinance of the Q'uran and the early Islamic community of the time of the Prophet and his successor, which was veiling and domesticating women in the Muslim societies. This conception inspired a wave of feminist opposition to Islam currently and revived some of the old arguments against the position of Muslim women. For example, the traditional argument which asserts that women are subordinated by nature and/or by God's will and design appeared in the writings of many Muslim writers. Abbas Mahmood al-Aqqad, a famous twentieth-century Egyptian writer, states in his book "The Women In The Qu'ran" that women are subordinate by nature. According to him, women are inclined to shyness and receptivity both by nature and because they obtain their character ('orfi) from men. This traditionalist argument may be

traced back to al-Imam al-Ghazzali (1050-111), whose school of thought dominated the Islamic establishment and put an end to further reinterpretation of the Qu'ran¹. In a special chapter on the manners of marriage in his famous book *Ihya' 'uloum ad-deen* (The Revivification of the Religious Sciences), al-Ghazzali talks about woman's limited mind (*qusour aqlihinna*) and insists on the right of man to be followed and not to be a follower because the Qu'ran described men as being superior to women².

This traditionalist view have continued to dominate the Islamic establishment which is evident in a 1975 special issue of the *Journal of Islamic Thought* (*Majallat al-fikr al-Islami*) published by Dar al-Ifta' in Lebanon. The editorial points out that Islam proclaim equality between woman and man "where equality was possible ... and preference was admissible where equality was impossible, for God said, 'men are superior to women,' made it the duty of man to struggle ... and to provide for dependents, and relieved woman from such burdens on account of her physical potential, personal circumstances, and family responsibilities,"³. In the same issue a different article addresses the question of inheritance and explains that Islam gave the male twice the share of the female because it "relieved the woman from financial responsibilities in the different states of her life. The father

¹ Halim Barakat, 33.

² Ibid.

³ Sheikh Hassan Khalid, "Al-mar'a fi'urf al-Islam," (The woman in Islam), *Majallat al-fiker al-Islami* 6, no.5 (May 1975):3.

carries out this responsibility before her marriage, the husband after marriage, and the sons carry it out in case the husband dies. Consequently, the man is assigned twice the woman's share, for it is quite clear that five monetary notes without responsibilities are more valuable and lasting than ten monetary notes with immense responsibilities."⁴

I. Middle Eastern Feminism Theory

The concept of patriarchy is a central one to the theory of universal oppression of women by men. This theory originally appeared as part of the new wave of radical feminism in the late 1960s and 70s. Patriarchy as the source of women's oppression, has transferred men into the arena of personal relations and gave them considerable political significance. This allowed categorization of societies and cultures in terms of the degree of dominance of patriarchy which turned to be a predominant method of analysis. It was in this context that a new criticism of Islam as the most patriarchal religion was conducted.

Fatima Mernissi, a Moroccan Islamic novelist argues against the patriarchal system in Muslim societies. To her, Islam does not promote the thesis that women is inherently inferior. Contrary to the popular belief, Islam maintains the potential equality between the sexes. The existing injustice, in her opinion, "is the outcome of certain social institutions designed to restrict her power

⁴ Ahmed Shalabi, "al-wiratha wal-wassiyah," (Inheritance and will), Majallat al-fiker al-Islami 6, no.5 (May 1975): 24.

namely, segregation and legal subordination of the woman to the man in the family structure. The whole system is based on the hypothesis that woman is a powerful and dangerous being."⁵ Mernissi claims that politicians in Iran and Saudi Arabia are using Islamic laws as in case of the hijab to reach their own political ends. Politicians intend to prevent women's participation in political decision-making process, to shut them up, and to make them invisible in order to dominate in that sphere. Moreover, veiling women in Muslim countries work as a powerful counter-democracy offense. Veiling almost 50% of the population is not a religion-inspired or spirituality-inclined endeavour as many believe it to be⁶. Mernissi proceeds: " The veil can be interpreted as a symbol revealing collective fantasy of the Muslim community: to make women disappear, to eliminate them from communal life, to relegate them to an easily controllable terrain - the home - to prevent them moving about, and to highlight their illegal position on male territory by means of a mask".

Along the same line, El Saadawi asserts that patriarchy in early Islamic societies allowed women to move about freely and expose their faces for all to see. In the present Islamic societies, segregation and the veil are not meant to ensure the protection of women, but essentially that of men. Men protection of honour and

⁵ Fatima Mernissi, Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society (New York: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1975), XV-XVI.

⁶ Fatima Mernissi, Women's Rebellion & Islamic Memory (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1996), XI.

⁷ Ibid, 41-42.

prestige is seen through women's segregation and seclusion. Arab woman is not imprisoned in the home to safeguard her body, honour and morals, but rather to keep intact the honour and the morals of men⁸. El Saadawi continues, Islamic fundamentalist groups are trying to push women back to the veil, back home, back under the domination of their husbands. In the name of 'protection', 'honour', 'sacred motherhood', women are degraded and exploited inside and outside the home⁹.

Similarly, a study performed by Allaghi and Alaman in the Gulf region revealed that men's domination and cultural values rather than Islamic laws are behind women's subordination in all societies of the Gulf region. According to Allaghi and Almana, the chief manifestation of the cultural subordination of women in Muslim societies can be seen in the architectural composition of the houses. Special entrances and special sections of the homes are maintained exclusively for women. This social isolation has limited Gulf women to their remote world, which has its own traditions, rituals, norms, and differs totally from men's world. This social segregation has various negative social and economic effects for women¹⁰. Allaghi and Alaman continue, the cultural situation of

⁸ Nawal El Saadawi, The Hidden Face of Eve (London: Zed Press, 1980), 99-100.

⁹ Nawal El Saadawi, The Nawal El Saadawi Reader (London: Zed Books, 1997) 95.

¹⁰ Farida Allaghi and Aisha Almana, "Survey of Research on Women in the Arab Gulf Region," in Social Science Research and Women In The Arab World (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 29.

women in the Gulf region has established certain social relations and patterns of behaviour; major among them is hijab (the veil). To them, Allah (God) never intended to specify what he means by hijab; no verse has ever specified what modest look is. The Sunnah, however, had said that a woman can expose only her face and hands. Almana and others indicated that hijab is a product of social life rather than of the teaching of Islam. Literal interpretations of Q'uranic verses and Islamic philosophical and theological literature have sometimes misread or read out of context statements relating to the personal status of women in Islam and, more often, naively accepted ideological imagery as cultural reality¹¹.

Wikan, a Western Anthropologist, confirms that women in Oman are totally segregated by patriarchal traditions than by Islamic concepts that were conceived and interpreted by their male guardians. As a protection for the Muslim community of religious believers, women must be compelled and protected by men, the responsible upholders of law and moral order; they must be separated by physical and symbolic means, walls and veils; and they occupy the status of minors all through their lives, in that, no matter how old, a woman must have a male guardian. With this perception, women are charged with full responsibility for housework and child-rearing, duties that entail the potentialities of a considerable measure of influence, and even of power, in the life of the family. They have no economic responsibilities, however, and are entitled to be fed, housed, and clothed by their male guardian,

¹¹ Ibid, 30.

be he a father, husband, son, brother, or more distant kinsman related in the paternal line¹².

Unlike the others, Mernissi, El Saadawi, Allagi and Alaman, and Wikan, Kacem Amin (1863-1908), blamed secular traditions for woman's seclusion and exclusion from social affairs. Amin states that not Islam but secular customs and traditions "which prevailed in nations conquered by Islam and did not disappear with Islam's teaching," are the one to blame. Amin affirms that those secular traditions are strengthened by reactionary, secular political regimes through out the Muslim nation's history. Therefore, to change institutions which compel women into seclusion and ignorance is not in any way an attack on or violation of Islam. In Kacem Amin's argument, Islam becomes the most liberating of religions towards women:

Muslim law, before any other legal system, legalized woman's equality with men and asserted their freedom and liberty at the times when women were still in the most debased condition in all the nations of the world. Islam granted her all human rights and recognized her legal capacity, equal to that of men in all matters...¹³

Amin defend his liberal argument in his two prominent books on the subject of women emancipation, *Tahrir al-mar'a* (Liberation of Women), and *Al-mara al-jadjda* (The Modern Woman). In his first book, Amin based his defence of women's rights on religious texts and drew upon modern ideas and views. In his second book, Amin based his

¹² Unni Wikan, Behind the Veil in Arabia: Women in Oman (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 57.

¹³ Fatima Mernissi, 1975, XII.

arguments on the social sciences and he was influenced by the liberal perceptions of individual freedom and freedom of expression and belief. He linked between the decline of woman to the decline of society, and saw her oppression as one of several other forms of oppression. In Eastern countries, he pointed out, "you will find woman enslaved to man and man to the ruler. Man is an oppressor in his home, oppressed as soon as he leaves it."¹⁴ As pragmatic measures, Amin asked for removal of the veil, granting women the right to divorce, preclusion of polygamy, differentiate the conditions under which a man might be allowed to proclaim divorce, education of women, and women's participation in scientific, artistic, political, and social activities¹⁵. The reconciliatory apologetic reformist approach ascribes the subservient position of women to the misinterpretation of Islam rather than to Islam itself. The Egyptian author Aminah al-Sa'id defend Islam's position and clarify in the following quote how Islam is being misinterpreted and misunderstood by reactionary forces:

Islam in its time, appeared as a great social revolution in the history of women's position, not only for us in the Arab nations but also for the whole world. Just before the rise of Islam. Woman was scarcely a human being; she had no rights. Islam restored to woman her total humanity, it freed her from the domination of the male by giving her (a) the right to education, (b) the right to buy and sell property and (c) the right to hold a job and to go into business .. Islam did not differentiate between men and women except in giving the woman half the man's share of inheritance, in return for the fact that the man was to be responsible for the woman's material

¹⁴ Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 168.

¹⁵ Halim Barakat, 34.

needs. At the time this was a gain, but it is now considered a curse. For with the decay of Arab civilization, reactionary forces gained ascendancy, and these forces used inheritance as an excuse to lower the entire status of women to that of half the man or even, in some cases, less than half¹⁶.

The concept of global capitalism and patriarchy are used in this study to refer to male economic and social domination. While global capitalism refers to the male economic interests and authority, patriarchy refers to male social and political interests and domination. In this sense Sayigh pointed out that the specific approach which has been developed in relation to Muslim women begins, as it has been argued, not with Arab difference, nor with Islam, but with social and economic forces that shape them¹⁷. Under both concepts, the institutions of the law are formulated to reinforce the norms of patriarchal rule as it protects capitalism and reinforces class, race and cultural biases. The history of the law as it relates to women represents a clear pattern of protecting class interests. Similar to Sayigh's argument, Keddie and Baron states that instead of Islam, global capitalism and patriarchy, an understanding of the position of Middle Eastern women is now being sought in both historical and contemporary social relations and

¹⁶ Aminah Al-Sa'id, "The Arab Woman and the Challenge of Society," in Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Basima Qattan Beirgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 376.

¹⁷ Rosemary Sayigh, "Orientalism and Arab Women," in Arab Studies Quarterly 3 (1981): 266.

political processes¹⁸

To Mahdavi, the biological and physical differences are the one to blame for women subordination. Mahdavi asserts that Islam when it overwhelmed the Middle East in the seventh century, was not just a new religious system but a powerful social revolution that completely altered the way of life of whole societies, including family life and the role of women. She continues, theoretically Islam did give women rights. But there are certain assumptions in the Islamic approach to women that in practice serve to limit their role¹⁹. According to Mahdavi, the primary assumption is that men and women are not equal because they are biologically different. The biological differences affect both sexual needs and mental ability. This assumption affect Islam's interpretation regarding women's rights in the social system such as divorce, marriage, child custody and inheritance²⁰. The differences between man and woman in their psychological and physical make-up is evident in the nature of childbearing and its association with woman body. Nature has endowed women with the power, patience, and capability to enable them to carry and take care of their offsprings. On the other hand, men are naturally found to have larger brains than women and thicker. Physiologist proved that according to brain structure of both sexes,

¹⁸ Nikki Keddie and Beth Baron, Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Shireen Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran: Views of the Ulama," in Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 258.

²⁰ Ibid.

men are showing superior intelligence and more mental growth. Based on this structure, men are qualified to perform certain tasks that women can't. These facts are beyond any doubts and scientifically proven¹¹.

The notion of nations building is one of the determining factors in shaping the position of women in the 20th century Middle East. It is argued that despite their differing political systems, Middle Eastern societies have had to grapple with the problems of establishing modern nation states and forging new nations of citizenship, and that the degree of formal emancipation, women are able to achieve, the modalities of their participation in economic life and the nature of the social movements through which they are able to articulate their gender interests are intimately linked to state building processes and are responsive to their transformations¹².

As an example, the process of Islamization of Iran's Anti-Western foreign policy, importance of radical foreign policy for the regime arose from its mobilizing value. The failure of the hardliner leadership to deliver tangible economic prosperity and social justice to its people led the regime to rely on mass mobilisation through political and ideological propaganda. The denunciation of the West for the conspiracy against Islam and the poor continuously

¹¹ Afraizur Rahman, Role Of Muslim Woman In Society (London: Seerah Foundation, 1986), 22-25.

¹² Deniz Kandiyoti, Women, Islam and State (London: MacMillan Press, 1991), 2-3.

proved to be a poor mobilizing issue. The press and mass media, Friday prayers and Mosques were all put at the service of revolutionary Islamic propaganda, accusation of the West and internal enemies, and enforcement of Islamic education for citizens. Both propaganda and Islamic education infiltrated schools, universities, prisons, offices and streets²³.

II. Western-Feminism Theory

This subsection intends to review the Western literature and views regarding Muslim women. Regarding women, Westerners' studies see Islam through two different approaches: The first approach is with defensive posture and maintains that Islam sustains rather than undermines women's rights Culver (1967)²⁴; Levy (1965)²⁵; and Charnay (1971)²⁶ are among the writers who support this approach. The second approach takes critical posture that blames Islam for the low status of women and the inequality of the sexes which is prevalent in the Muslim world. Among the writers who support this approach are Bousquet (1966)²⁷; Bullough (1973)²⁸; and Anderson, (1970)²⁹.

²³ Parvin Paidar, *Women and The Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 269.

²⁴ E.T. Culver, "Women in Islam," in *Women in the World of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967).

²⁵ R. Levy, "The Status of Women in Islam," in *The Social Structure of Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

²⁶ J. P. Charnay, "Social Relationships and the Conditions of Women," in *Islamic Culture and Socio-economic Change* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.T. Brill, 1971).

²⁷ G. H. Bousquet, *L'Ethique Sexuelle de l'Islam* (Paris: Maison neuve et Larose, 1966).

1) First approach: defenders of islam

Abdel Kadir, defender of the position of women in Islam argues that while Q'uran and the Prophet's original teachings may at the present time seem to subjugate women, an examination of the style of life prevalent during Mohammed's time indicates loose family ties, predominant polygamy, easy divorce and remarriage, and obsession with sexual pleasures. Pre-Islamic institutions, particularly female infanticide and marriage by kidnapping, were highly unfavourable to women. In this respect, the Prophet's rulings were in fact directed towards improving the moral quality of life for both men and women. Islamic institutions, particularly of the "Utopian Age of Islam", the seventh century, elevated the status of women by banning female infanticide, limiting the number of women a man could marry to four (conditioned by fairness), imposing adequate provisions by the husband for his wife and children within marriage and even after divorce¹⁰.

In general, women have been cruelly and mercilessly exploited by different secular cultures during the course of history. For example, the Roman law gave the husband the right to kill his wife if she was found to have poisoned somebody, serve wine, or adopted

¹⁸ V. L. Bullough, "Sex is Not Enough: Women in Islam," in The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes towards Women (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

¹⁹ J. N.D. Anderson, "The Islamic Law of Marriage and Divorce," in Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures eds. A.M. Lutfiyya and C.W. Churchill (The Hague, Mouton/New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

¹⁰ Soha Abdel-Kader, "A Survey of Trends in Social Sciences Research on Women in the Arab Region, 1960-1980" in Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 141.

as her own child somebody else's child³¹. The Romans did not allow women to exercise any civil or public rights and they were considered as personal property of their husbands, and could not make a will or a contract³².

Similar to Romans, in the Classical Greek society (500-323 B.C.), women were completely secluded and treated as inferior creature to man. Moreover, Sarah Pomeroy stated that: "women were usually secluded so that they could not be seen by men who were not close relatives. Women were expected to confine themselves to their quarters and to manage the household, care for small children and servants, and supervise the weaving and cooking."³³ Nevertheless, Aristotle wrote that the purpose of marriage and the function of women was to provide heirs. This Aristotelian theory conceptualizes women not just as subordinate by social necessity, but also as naturally and biologically inferior in both mental and physical capacities - and thus articulated their "expected" obedient position by nature³⁴. Analogously, Plato classifies women together with children and servants and states generally that in all the pursuits of mankind the female sex is inferior to the male. In the eyes of the old Athenians, women were treated as property and they can even

³¹ Sheikh M. H. Kidwai of Gadia, 4.

³² Ibid.

³³ Leila Ahmed, Women & Gender In Islam (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 28.

³⁴ Aristotle, The Works of Aristotle ed. W.D. Ross, Vol. 10 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 1.5.1254b.

be willed away³⁵. Aristotle said that the male "is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled." Aristotle added that Man's nature is the most rounded off and complete. Woman is more compassionate but also "more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and strike... more void of shame and self respect, more false of speech, more deceptive."³⁶. Aristotle linked the rule of men over women to the rule of the "soul over the body, and of the mind as the rational element over the passionate."³⁷

By contrast, Nazat argues, Islam while it did not entirely remove the stigma of wickedness and impurity which other religions had placed on women, in the eyes of Allah and in the Q'uran and hadiths (Prophet's sayings), all believers, men and women, are treated as equal³⁸. Polygamy, for instance, is considered particularly humiliating to the status of Muslim women. Although, all the prophets of the Old Testament (Abraham, David, and Solomon) had more than one wife, and as such, Islam did not create this custom. Indeed, it was advocated by the Q'uran as a restriction on prevailing customs, which granted a man to marry more than four wives.³⁹ Defenders of Islam such as Saleh and Esposito affirm that

³⁵ Sheikh M.H. Kidwai of Gadia, 6.

³⁶ Aristotle, 1968.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ A. Nazat, "Women in Islam," in *Islamic Literature*, Vol 14 (1969): 5-

³⁹ Scha Abdel-Kader, 142.

the contemporary low status of Muslim women does not reflect the spirit of the Q'uran or hadiths. Rather, it is the result of 'extra-Islamic conditions', misinterpretation of Q'uranic injunctions and abuses of Islamic law. The influences of social customs and traditions such as domestication of women, for instance, resulted in the acceptance of such social standards as the veiling and seclusion of women^{40 41}

Culver defend Islam arguing that in the true understanding and authentic interpretation of the spirit of the Q'uran and hadiths that the salvation of women in Muslim countries lies. The future status of Muslim women lies with those who seek their freedom and emancipation within Islam, rather than with those who seek it without⁴².

Abdel Kadir defend Islam and argues that Western thinking has prevented Western scholars from understanding the status of women in Islam. The role and status of Muslim women should not be judged by Western principles or standards⁴³. The social, political, philosophical, scientific and industrial revolutions in the West and the growth of women as men's counterpart have made Westerns think

⁴⁰ S. Saleh, "Women in Islam: Their Role in Religious and Traditional Culture," International Journal of Sociology of The Family vol. 2 (September 1972): 193-201.

⁴¹ J. L. Espositio, "Women's Rights in Islam," Journal of Islamic Studies Vol. 14, No.2 (Summer 1975): 99-114.

⁴² E. T. Culver.

⁴³ Soha Abdel-Kadir, 142.

that Muslim women should take Western women as an example⁴⁴.

Abdel Kadir continues her defence to Islam saying that the position of women in Middle East should not be attributed entirely to Islam. Muslim Women's position is directly related to the position of all people in the Middle East, male or female, adult or child, rich or poor. Women's position is also function of the socio-economic standards prevalent in countries of the region. As the standard of living rises, so too may that of the whole population including women⁴⁵.

2) Second approach: critiques of islam

Critics of the status of women in Islam argue that in essence the Q'uran offers no real ethical codes or moral values regarding men-women relations. The enjoyment of physical pleasures, particularly for men, is accepted and provided for. Women, on the other hand, are primarily sexual objects to be protected from their own immoral qualities and to be hidden behind veils and curtains. Muslim marriage is based on the premise that social order can only be maintained if the woman's dangerous potential for chaos is restored. Women are thus held as a piece of property, not as a person. A new sexual order and new legislation are needed to remove the limitations to women's potential^{46 47}.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 151.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 142.

⁴⁶ L.V. Bullough.

⁴⁷ J. N.D. Anderson.

The discrepancies between Islamic ideals and the actual situation of women in the Islamic societies gave credence to Islamic criticisms. For example, the encouragement of the polygamous family and male domination was argued that it failed to grant women their fundamental rights within the family and society⁴⁸. According to such critics, ingrained patterns of Islamic culture and tradition are in many ways diametrically opposed to the Western way and inconsistent with the requirements of an industrial era. This is particularly so as the prevailing customs of the seclusion and veiling of women which are considered as major obstacles. They are preventing women from participating in the vital process of socio-economic development in the Muslim world⁴⁹. The Western critics are accused for their westernization attempts to women in Muslim societies.

III. Islamization of Political and Social Institutions

The previous discussion has revealed the factors behind women subordination in Muslim societies. This subsection analyzes these factors and describes the practical use of Islam in Muslim world by the governing party. In addition, the discussion will explain how Islam is reconstructed to link between Muslim identity, state policy, and women subjugation. The leading argument that emerges is that religious ideology and leadership do more than legitimising

⁴⁸ Parvin Paidar, 17-18.

⁴⁹ Soha Abedl-Kadir, 143.

patriarchal practices; they play a vital role in the construction of "Muslim identity," projected as a categorizable phenomenon with specific doctrinal commitments of personal law that characterize Muslims from others. This construction and naming of community identity constitutes a specific legal and political obligation to the "Unity of Islam" and is designed to homogenise the Muslim community through a set of common religious symbols. This narrow construction of community identity is strengthened by government policies and political class which constantly reaffirm support for practices and institutions, for whom community identity emerges as a code of principles. From women's perspective, the difficulty lies in the continuous emphasis on the unity of community identity, defined in terms of family codes which restrain the enunciation of gender interests within the terms of reference set by a specific identity discourse; whatever rights they might have achieved are thus sacrificed at the creed of "Muslim identity".

Muslim identity and the reconstruction of the Muslim society are conducted under the name "Islamization of the social and political institutions." Women are not weak or objects of oppression according to Islam. But they are according to the cultural domination and traditional behaviour. Islamization of the social institutions include education, marriage, divorce, child custody, freedom of movement, and Friday prayer which are regulated by the domination

⁵⁰ Zoya Hasan, Forging Identities: Gender, Communities and the State in India (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 59.

of male clergy interpretation to Islamic laws that intend to subjugate women.

Social state policy such as in Sudan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia is constructed against women on spheres like marriage, education, and health. For example, state policy in Iran has focused on the construction of marriage as the only legitimate site of sexual pleasure and procreation and its universalisation. To accomplish this, the state has employed a number of strategies: the minimum age of marriage was lowered, restriction on polygamy was removed, financial assistance was offered to newly wed couples, and a campaign was waged on the virtues of marriage and Islamic matrimonial rights⁵¹. In addition, (Mut'a Marriage)⁵² is legalized. Women are affected by such practice which in a sense has legalized prostitution. In this type of marriage, a man can go at any time to get a wife for an hour or two, and he chooses which ever girl he likes.

According to Gerner, also in Saudi Arabia girls are taught virtually no math or science and are not allowed to participate in physical education classes. There is total sexual separation in classes and all teachers are female, only for infrequent visiting male professors who lecture and answer questions through closed circuit television and telephone. Those who desire further education (possibly abroad) find themselves poorly prepared unless have had

⁵¹ Parvin Paider, 277.

⁵² It refers to temporary marriages which vary from one hour to ninety nine years. This type of marriage does not grant any inheritance rights.

private tutoring at home, a privilege of a few elite. As a result, women still lag behind men in their literacy rates and in participation in education at all levels⁵³.

Analogously, Islamisation of the education system in Iran is built around several state policies: First, total submission to Islamic ideology. Teachers, lectures and administrators either agree to carry the banner of Islamisation or face dismissal. Islamic student associations play an important role in keeping the pressure on the staff and students of educational institutes. Second, the enforcement of Islamic gender relation to Islamise the system is based on Shi'y'a Islamic ideology. This measure is achieved through gender segregation and imposition of hijab on women. Third, preparation of separate curricula and text books for boys and girls to ensure the build up of two distinct gender relations⁵⁴. Women teachers and students are highly affected by these policies. Women instructors and administrators are threatened by the Ministry of Education with discharge if they did not wear hijab. Many female students were continuously in trouble at school over their appearing and many are suspended since their lack of interest in hijab is understood as a political action against the regime. The extra educational tensions on female students sometimes acted as an encouragement for them to give up education in favour of marriage. A report of suicide by schoolgirls as a result of psychological

⁵³ Debbie J. Gerner, "Roles in Transition: The Evolving Position of Women in Arab-Islamic Countries," in Muslim Women ed. Freda Hussain (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984), 78.

⁵⁴ Parvin Piader, 312.

pressures and humiliation at school over "un-Islamic behaviour" was recorded⁵⁵.

Iran has used the (Role Models Strategy) at the revolution time. At the revolution, the religious establishment have encouraged women and provided models to mobilize them and to gain their support. Mobilizing models at the revolution were deemed necessary and for the best interest of the country to use. In this respect Betteridge claims that at the revolution, Zainab (grand daughter of Prophet Mohammed) was used as a role model for inspiring political opposition among women. Women were encouraged to imitate her. In history, Zainab was best known for her supporting role to her brother (Imam Hussain) at the Battle of Karbala (seventh century). After her brother's death, she came to the fore speaking out openly and effectively against his enemies. It was claimed that Zainab divorced her husband in order to accompany her brother to Karbala. Betteridge continues, an interpretation to such an example shows how an independent women should be in their lives, even if it meant disobeying or leaving their husband to accomplish higher aims. But before the revolution specific models were used to veil women and to attach them to their homes. For this end, Fatima served as the primary role model as the Prophet's daughter, Zainab's mother, and the ideal wife. Both Fatima and Zainab served to represent the image of how a woman would and should, become involved in revolutionary activity when necessary and should at other times assume primary

⁵⁵ Ibid.

responsibility as wife and mother⁵⁶.

In Egypt, the state policy regarding education and school curriculum is intended to prepare women to improve their living conditions within the family. In this sense Gerner argues that women's education is needed to make them understand the outlines of the country's developing plans. Egyptian education system theoretically provides both sexes with equal opportunity, but does not attempt to prepare women for the same role as men. In other words, the fact that girls are permitted to attend school does not mean an equal educational opportunity is granted. Thus, a different curriculum is still used for females, particularly at the lower levels⁵⁷.

In Egypt as in many other Arab countries, the family code is influenced by the conservative Islamic group campaigns in which women are deprived of basic human rights. They are ruled by the law of obedience which lowered them to the state of "slaves" to their husbands who have comprehensive right to divorce and polygamy. Theoretically, Islamic fundamentalists promote motherhood to the level of heaven but in the legal code an Egyptian mother cannot give her nationality to her children⁵⁸. In addition, Islamic fundamentalist groups are preaching segregation, advocating

⁵⁶ Anne H. Betteridge, "To Veil or Not to Veil: A Matter of Protest or Policy," in Women And Revolution In Iran ed. Guity Nashat (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1983), 119-120.

⁵⁷ Debbie J. Gerner, 78.

⁵⁸ Nawal El Saasawi, 1997, 95.

exclusion of romantic stories and music from school books (romantic stories here refer to classical love stories). They scream and shriek verses of the Q'uran and prayers all day and night into microphones and loudspeakers. They humiliate anybody who criticizes or differs in opinion with them and charge him or her of heresy⁵⁹.

Differently, Muslim women in India suffer from state (non-interference policy). With regard to personal laws, non-interference policy had left Muslim community practising their own religious codes and no attempt for change was initiated. In this regard Zoya Hasan argues that personal laws are only one form of discrimination which form a significant source of disadvantage for women. Furthermore, legal equality is not inconsequential. Women's lack of rights in law is a determining factor in maintaining their subordination to men and a legitimate device for limiting their access to property and inheritance. Muslim family laws after Independence have remained virtually unchanged. The government has made no attempt to reform Muslim personal law; in fact it has regularly adopted a policy of non-interference. It never responded to the Muslim minority community in this regard⁶⁰.

Although the above paragraphs discussed the notion of "politics of Islam" in nation-building through gender role, this paragraph examines the social behaviour of a nation through misunderstanding to Islamic principles and culture. In this paragraph modern Sudan is used as the model. In Sudan as in many

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Zoya Hasan, 60.

other countries of Africa, women suffer severe traditional Islamic culture that of circumcision (removal of a sensory organs of a woman's genitals as a mean of removing her sexuality while retaining her productive functions). Figures for females that undergone this surgery range from 80 million to 90 million in Africa alone.⁶¹ Conceivably 4 million to 5 million girls, usually two to seventeen years of age, are circumcised each year. Mothers and midwives perform the operation on young girls. The operation may result in painful urination, intercourse, and childbirth, or chronic infections and permanent scarring. The common wisdom of traditional Africans have recognized the clitoris and the external genitals as the target organs of female sexual gratification and by removing them they have succeeded in greatly hindering women's ability to achieve that gratification but not in reducing her sexual desire. One of the reasons commonly given for the practise is Islamic custom; it is said to be written in the Q'uran, an obligation of the devout like prayers or spiritual cleansing⁶². However, no clear cut command exists in the scriptures.

Toubia is a famous Sudanese doctor who argues that in a patrilineal, patrilocal, patriarchal, polygenic extended family system of the Sudan, women are the tools for gaining social honour. Yet they practice honour only through their men, families, or tribes. There is no room for them to exercise social rites outside of those set by the system. Women's sexuality and sensuality and

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

their counterparts, virginity and purity, are a source of moral and social prestige for men. They are an indirect economic investment or directly exchangeable commodity for financial gain and the risk of losing control over them is not truly in the hands of the women⁶³. A woman who is not circumcised will face social rejection and may not marry because no one accepts to have a wife whose virginity is questionable⁶⁴. Un-circumcised woman is seen in a position to practise prostitution but if she is circumcised she will not be able to do so because the future husband will be able to test her virginity and hence dishonour her family. Practising circumcision has often been described as having the strength of a religious belief. There is misperception that Islam does not openly prohibited female circumcision, but have provided the ideal that reinforced an ongoing process of increasing subjugation of women. It was clearly not difficult for the benefactors of the order to adopt the new ideology and use it in their favour without facing a major contradiction⁶⁵. Toubia continues to argues that women may want to avoid being victimized for the existing of their sexuality, and since they do not possess the economic, political, and social power to defend this sexuality, they suppress it.⁶⁶

⁶³ Nahid Toubia, Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1988), 151.

⁶⁴ Hanny Lightfoot-Klein, Prisoners of Ritual: An Odyssey Into Female Genital Circumcision in Africa (New York: The Haworth Press, 1989), 153.

⁶⁵ Nahid Toubia, 150-1.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 152.

In defending Islam's position in this regard, El Saadawi and Sabib wrote:

God does not create the organs of the body haphazardly. It is not possible that he should have created the clitoris in woman's body only in order that it be cut off in an early stage in life. This is a contradiction into which neither religion nor the creator could possibly be involved. If God has created the clitoris as a sexually sensitive organ, whose sole function seems to be the procurement of sexual pleasure to the woman, it follows that he also considers such pleasures for women as normal and legitimate and therefore as an integral part for mental and physical health. The physical and mental health of women cannot be complete if they do not experience sexual pleasure⁶⁷.

Furthermore, Sabib argues defending Islam's position by stating that:

Islam holds the human species in honour, and accordingly human beings should not suffer any harm, physical or mental. Islamic law and traditions preserve the wholeness of the individual, protecting him or her from everything that causes hurt, and female circumcision is nothing but a habit, a bad one, that should be fought We must therefore fight against this custom, which is neither religious duty nor even a recommended practice⁶⁸.

Female circumcision as a mean of integration to the existing social system creates severe sexual frustration, fear of sexual desire, and a humiliating sense of shame and guilt for its existence. It is also a mean by which women experience self-denial, lack of confidence, and a fatalistic attitude many women have toward themselves. Many women believe that female circumcision was meant to provide the husband with great sexual pleasure and infinite suffering to the wife. The problem is that in Sudan the social

⁶⁷ Hanny Lightfoot-Klein, 169.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

traditions dominate specially when mixed with religious belief. Old women of the society believe that Mohammed the Prophet did not prohibit this practice, so to them it is permitted. But at the same time they do not realize that the Prophet did not clearly state it as an Islamic rule and so it should not be practised. Lack of medical education among Sudanese women adds to the existing problem. There is a need for an organized educated group to work with the local community and provide it with the necessary information regarding the deep implications of such a practise.

To sum up, the occurrence of women's inferiority in Muslim countries is due to different elements. Women are treated according to specific understanding and situations in every Muslim region by different social and political groups. While section (I) of this chapter discusses the Middle Eastern theory, section (II) discusses the Western-Feminism theory. There are two main arguments here: 1) Defenders of Islam, who believe that comparably to the position of women prior to Islam, women's position has been significantly improved by Islam's teachings at that time. 2) The critiques of Islam, who argue that Islam does not offer a real ethical code or moral values regarding men-women relations. They also argue that women in Muslim societies are treated as sexual objects with regards to polygamy and have no actual social or economic position.

Section (III) of the chapter discusses how Islam is politicized by Muslim countries and how such politization affected women's position. Countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Egypt use different tools under the name of Islam to keep women in a

degraded position intentionally. Examples of such tools are the laws regarding women's education, marriage, divorce, child custody, and health issue (such as circumcision in Sudan).

According to the traditionalist school mastered by Imam Alghazali, there are two main points supported by the school's Islamic interpretation regarding women's subordination. First, women's limited mind and second, the superiority of men above women. While Imam Alghazali has built his argument on Islamic versions, the interpretation to the same versions varies from one person to another and from one culture to another. For example, men's superiority is not valid all the time. It is conditioned with men's possessions, health, education, and religious understanding and belief.

With regards to the role of patriarchy in women's subordination, Fatima Mernissi argues that from a political point of view, women's subordination is maintained and supported by Muslim social structure which favours men over women and make men dominate. Similarly, Nawal Elsa'adawi argues that women's degradation by mean of veiling and segregation are intend to protect men's world rather than that of women.

Allaghi and Alaman support the idea that cultural values and men's domination have isolated women socially in Gulf States. The establishment of social isolation of women have increased their economic and political backwardness in Gulf States.

Wikan who studied Omani women, supported Allaghi and Alaman in their views. She claims that women in Oman are totally segregated by patriarchal traditions and social structure which have resulted in total economic dependence of women on men.

Apart from patriarchal arguments, Kacem Amin argues that secular traditions inherited by Islam's openings in early Islam's days are responsible of women's subordination. Fighting of these traditions through women's education, freedom, and political participation are the solutions according to Kacem Amin's liberal views.

On the other hand, Amina Al Sai'd argues for a conciliatory approach. She says that women's degradation is based on misinterpretation of Islamic versions. Al Sai'd calls for new re-interpretation of Islamic versions that considers the time of early Islam and distinguish between the events associated with women's rights at that time and at present.

Sayigh and others blame global capitalism which in this study refers to "men's economic domination" for women's subordination. Sayigh argues that the interrelated social and economic forces that shape Muslim societies are the one to blame for women's backwardness in these societies and not Islam.

Mahdavi claims that physical differences and brain structure of both sexes are beyond men's superiority. Nature has endowed each sex with certain capabilities to perform certain jobs. Accordingly, by nature women have got less fortune in physical building and brain structure and that is why men dominate them.

Other argument regarding reasons for women's subordination in Muslim societies is the argument of nation building. It is argued that some Muslim countries such as Iran uses Islam to mobilize its citizens against the West and limited women's political and social role accordingly. Iran interpreted Islam's rules in its own view to support its Anti-Western propaganda for women's veiling, domestication, and limited women's political and social participation accordingly.

A final point that chapter III raises is that despite the interrelated factors and forces behind Muslim women subordination, there are good solutions to be looked at. The study signifies women's education and an establishment of a strong social and political women organization among other solutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

I. GENERAL ISSUES

The previous discussion has brought into mind the direct factors behind Muslim women's subordination. These factors emanate from different conceptual understanding to the role of women, i.e. traditionalist view, patriarchy, secularism, and global capitalism. Muslim women are victims of Islamic laws' interpreted by these different groups regarding their rights. Continuous demands to improve women's situation are taking place almost everywhere in Muslim countries. But before any improvement can be seen, there are specific prerequisite measures must be taken. Women's education and the establishment of a strong women's social and political organization are the most important ones.

The ability of women to participate in modern economic, political, and social formations remains conditional upon their ability to obtain the skills needed for this participation. Traditionally, women did and could participate in economic activities without necessarily requiring sophisticated modern skills; it is increasingly evident however, that for entry into the current job market the necessary training and skills required need

social organization and education¹.

Education is considered the most important strategy for women's liberation as well as their integration into the national processes. At home, traditionally the mother has been the transmitter of Islamic values and political culture to the child. In society, this role is played by the school. The woman, as the link between family and nation, has to participate in both processes: as a mother for the child and as a teacher for the student². The role played by women in linking the home and the school is declared in the many Muslim societies such as Iran. Iran see teachers as the guardian of millions of future mothers of the Islamic society that they are trying to build. These mothers have a great responsibility towards the country in submitting the Islamic ideology to the future generations.

The strategy of education is important because the quality of education these teachers and mothers obtain depends entirely upon the curriculum they received when they were children. Women need to receive non-prejudiced (gender-neutral) religious education as well as an academic one. Any education that is built upon specific misunderstanding to religious facts will definitely affect the status of women in that society.

The other strategy is strong social and political organization to support Muslim women's rights and to call for changes in the

¹ Shahida Lateef, Muslim Women in India: Political & Private Realities: 1890-1980 (London: Zed Books, 1990), 152.

² Parvin Paider, 312.

existing systems. Due to the complexity of the issues involved in interpreting and practising Islam by various sects (i.e. Sunni, Shiy'a, Sofi, etc..) neutral Muslim women organization is needed. Perviously structured organizations lack the effective means to achieve its intended goals. Women organizations were built to defend women's rights and to create new environment for discussions, innovations and to be a forum to exchange ideas. Unfortunately, the weak structure of these organizations as well as their economic dependency had contributed to their quick dissolution. New measures should be taken as well as new platforms that emphasize the independency and sovereignty of such organizations.

The following sections demonstrate the importance of the above strategies and in light of the data analysis. The analysis will signify how women in general and in Muslim societies in particular can improve and strengthen their position.

II. DATA ANALYSIS

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in 1990, 26.5% of the adult population of the world (948.1 million) were uneducated. Of that number, 346.5 million were males (19.4%), while 601.6 million were females (33.6%). The numbers were even greater in developing countries, where the illiteracy rate for women stood at 45 percent³. The distribution of women illiteracy in different

³ United Nations, Women: Challenges To The Year 2000 (New York: UN Publications, 1991), 28.

regions of the world is shown in figure # 1 below.

For these women, illiteracy complicates their other problems further, because it contributes to their marginalization within the family, the workplace, and public life. It accounts for the fact that women have often not gained from socio-economic and technological progress. Illiterate women are always caught in a vicious circle of poverty, repeated child bearing, ill health and powerlessness, lacking the means to break out of their crisis of illiteracy.

There is a direct correlation between literacy, health, economic and political power and exercise of informed choice, especially for women, which cannot be emphasized enough. Education definitely determines a woman's access to paid employment, her earning capacity, her overall health, control over her fertility, family size and spacing, and the education and health of her family. For example, it has been found that women with seven years or more of education tend to marry on average four years later and have 2.2 fewer children statistically than women with no schooling⁴.

Education has a critical role in child survival and birth control. In Ghana, illiterate women are twice as likely to lose children as mothers with primary schooling and four times as likely as mothers with secondary education. In Indonesia, mothers who lack any type of education are two times more likely to lose

⁴ Ibid.

children under five than mothers with some education⁵.

Similarly, women with more than seven years of education in countries as different as Kenya, Bangladesh, Portugal, and Mexico were found to be four times as likely to use contraception than those without schooling⁶. Table #1 below further shows the relation between educated women, their contraceptive use and infant mortality rate in selected countries.

Furthermore, education helps women overcome social prejudice, make control of their lives and presume a status and identity beyond child bearing, thereby allowing them to participate more fully in the public life of their society. It opens up wider horizons, creates new opportunities and, most importantly, empowers women with choice. And last but not least, education is the single most important weapon to encounter sexual stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes towards women.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Debbie Taylor, Woman: A World Report (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 79.

Fig. 1

Percentage of Illiterate Women, Aged 20 - 24
(Selected Countries)

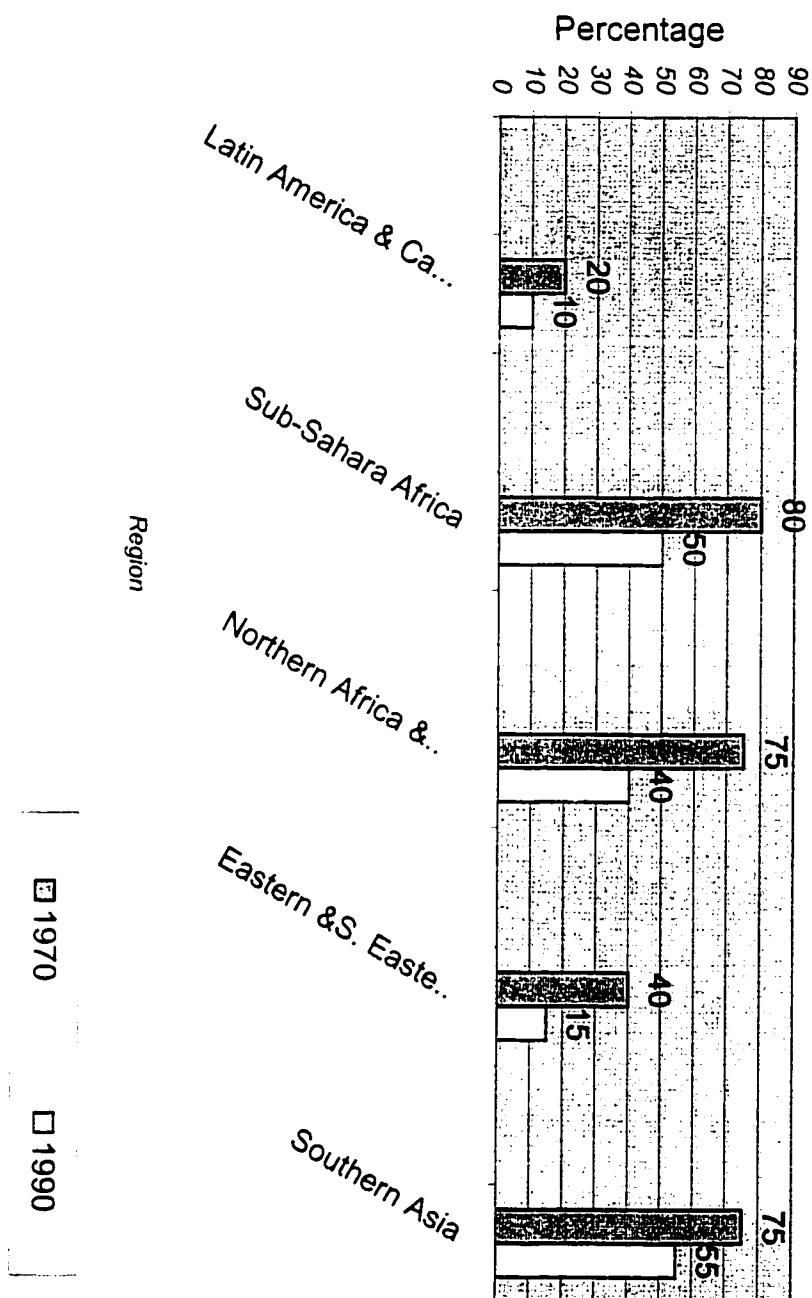


TABLE 1
EDUCATION, CONTRACEPTION AND INFANT MORTALITY
"SELECTED COUNTRIES"

| Mortality dying years | Contraception | | | | Infant | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|-----|----|--------------|-----|-------|
| | (% of married women | | | | (% of babies | | |
| | using efficient | | | | in first | | |
| | contraception) | | | | of life) | | |
| Years of Education | 0 | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7+ | 0 | 1-3 | 4-67+ |
| Kenya | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 7 |
| Egypt | 16 | 24 | 30 | 48 | 15 | 14 | 13 8 |
| Indonesia | 20 | 26 | 28 | 32 | 10 | 11 | 8 6 |
| Bangladesh | 4 | 6 | 7 | 20 | 14 | 13 | 11 12 |
| Portugal | 13 | 21 | 36 | 51 | 6 | 4 | 4 3 |
| Colombia | 14 | 24 | 38 | 46 | 9 | 8 | 5 4 |
| Mexico | 8 | 17 | 29 | 46 | 9 | 8 | 7 5 |

Source: Debbie Taylor, Woman: A World Report (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 80.

Unfortunately, women in Islamic societies lack the power, courage, and resources to defend themselves and to stand against men to demand their full rights of equality and acknowledgment. The basic factor that contributes to this deficiency of power and resources is education and its ultimate consequence of economic independence. Lack of education or its limitation confines employment opportunities for women, infirm their self-esteem, and adds to their dependency. Women lag behind men in primary,

secondary, and post-secondary education in most of Muslim countries. In Egypt in 1990, for instance, there were 76 females for every 100 males in secondary education. In Tunisia, this figure is 77; and in Morocco, it was 69. These inequalities can also be seen in primary education: 80 girls for every 100 boys in Egypt, 87 in Syria, and 66 in Morocco. In Saudi Arabia, the figure was 84. It should be pointed out that all these figures show significant improvement on what had been the case twenty years ago¹. Nonetheless, the differences between male and female school attendance are remarkable. In addition, women suffer asymmetric illiteracy. The adult illiteracy rate for females in 1990 in Kuwait was 33% and 51% in Iraq and Libya. In Somalia, it was 86%². Additionally, the following tables (#2 and #3) illustrate this inconsistency of education in two African Muslim countries. For further details on women's educational status in other countries, please refer to the appendix.

¹ World Bank, World Development Report (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 300-1.

² Ibid, 304.

TABLE 2
ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR MALIAN GIRLS

| Primary Technical School | Secondary School | T Training Inst. | Train. Inst |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| % of Girls in school 1965/ 87 | % of Girls in school 1965/ 87 | % of Girls in T.T.I. 1985 | % of Girls in in T.T.I. 1985 |
| 16 / 17 | 2 / 4 | 13 | 12.3 |

Source: World Bank, World Development Report 1990 (New York:
Oxford University Press, 1990), 234.

TABLE 3
PRIMARY EDUCATION BY SEX (PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS)

| Regions | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1986 | |
|-------------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Dakar | 54 | 46 | 55 | 45 | 54 | 46 |
| Ziguinchor | 73 | 27 | 69 | 31 | 61 | 39 |
| Diourbel | 67 | 33 | 64 | 36 | 65 | 35 |
| St. Louis | 63 | 37 | 61 | 39 | 61 | 39 |
| Tambacounda | 69 | 31 | 66 | 34 | 66 | 34 |
| Kaolack | 62 | 38 | 62 | 38 | 61 | 39 |
| Louga | - | - | 64 | 36 | 67 | 33 |
| Fatick | - | - | - | - | 61 | 39 |
| Kolda | - | - | - | - | 71 | 29 |
| ----- | | | | | | |
| Senegal | 62 | 38 | 60 | 40 | 60 | 40 |

Source: Barbara Callaway & Lucy Creevey, The Heritage of Islam: Women, Religion, & Politics in West Africa (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1994), 75.

The apparent decline of female enrolment in schools is associated with other fundamental factors that directly contribute to their lag of education. These factors are political, social, and economical in nature. From a political point of view and as stated before, women in Iran during 1980-84 were prohibited from studying certain disciplines such as engineering, technical and experimental sciences⁹. As well, restrictions were imposed on women's admission to most medical, environmental, and human sciences by defining a maximum number of

⁹ Parvin Paider, 319.

places for women, which fluctuated between 20 to 50 percent¹⁰.

The social factors are the most important since they are linked with the economic ones. Social norms affects area of specialization when women mostly choose their majors and concentrate their efforts. These areas of specialization, as shown in table #4, below determine for women their sex role, income, social contribution and add to their physical segregation. Women do not freely choose these majors but they were forced some-how through, for example, admission requirements or state policy as in case of Iran to adhere to such areas.

TABLE 4

**BACHELOR DEGREE BY MAJOR,
SEX, AND RACE/ETHNICITY, 1987**

| Degree Area | Male | Female |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Business/Management | 46.1 | 39.0 |
| Computer/Information Technician | 51.7 | 24.7 |
| Education | 20.7 | 69.1 |
| Engineering | 66.2 | 11.6 |
| Foreign Language | 22.4 | 60.2 |
| Health Professions | 6.4 | 75.3 |
| Home Economics | 6.1 | 81.4 |
| Letters & Fine Arts | 31.1 | 59.1 |
| Mathematics | 44.7 | 39.3 |
| Physical Science | 62.3 | 23.2 |
| Psychology | 26.9 | 59.5 |
| Social Science | 48.3 | 38.6 |

Source: Adopted from Jane C. Ollenburger and Helen A. Moore, A Sociology of Women: The Intersection of Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Colonization (New Jersey: Prentice Hall,

¹⁰ Ibid.

III. DISCUSSION

Table #4 above shows the areas in which women and men receive their degrees in college and university programs and it demonstrates excessive segmentation of sexes. Women are over-represented in areas of home-economics, education and health professions. They are under-represented in engineering, computer/information technologies and the physical sciences which are male dominated. Oliver Fulton commented in this sex segregation as the "uneven distribution of the sexes within academia," identifying the semi-professions as areas of high female concentration: Social work, nursing, home economics, library studies, and education. He identified an intermediate group of subjects such as fine arts and humanities - in which women have customary had a legitimate interest¹¹. These academic specialities have the profound proportion of women as well as the lowest status in the university community¹². Thus, women are least likely (about 10%) to be in the physical sciences, medicine, and law and participate insignificantly in engineering. The author concludes that due to social and gender discrimination, women spend their intellectual lives physically and intellectually isolated from the core of the campus.

A second major social norm that affects women's education in Muslim world in particular and in developing world in general, is the notion of "favouring the son over the daughter". In order to

¹¹ O. Fulton and M. Trow, "Students and teachers," in Teachers and Students ed. M. Trow (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), 28.

¹² Ibid.

understand why parents continue to favour their sons over their daughters when it comes to choosing whom to educate means perceiving education as an investment. And it is an investment of time as well as money for many parents. Many states in the developing world (including Muslim world), charge school fees, insist that students wear a standard uniform, and request parents to pay the cost of their children's books and stationery. In addition, parents have to transport or pay for their children's transport to and from the school every day. In this sense, the choice of whether to send a child to school is influenced by two major concerns: the amount of work the child could be doing to help support the family while she or he is still of school age; and the chance of the education investment paying off in the future in the shape of a good, well-paid job that will help the family when the child leaves school¹³. Accordingly, girls in developing world are more likely to help support their families at school age. Little girls tend to have more responsibility than their brothers mainly because mothers are more overburdened than fathers and because, in most cultures, it is more appropriate for a daughter to help her mother than a son. It is in this cultural and traditional values where women tend to loose their basic rights of education and scarify their future employment opportunity for the sake of the man be he the father, brother or son. In this sense, women are evaluated socially and economically,

¹³ Debbie Taylor, Woman: A World Report (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 71.

and poor, they have lost either way due to their dominant culture and social values.

A third social constraint that interfere with continuation of woman's education in Muslim world is the notion of motherhood and marriage responsibilities. Continuation of a secondary and university education for a woman has meant a *de facto* delay in marriage. A woman who reaches her thirties without marriage is socially rejected and under-looked at by her family, friends and peers. Such social rejection creates a strong feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and sorrow to those who are over thirty years old. When I reached my 20th years, all my school friends were married and I was the only one who didn't at that time. My mother used to worry about such a delay to the extend that she had gone to a (shiekh) a Muslim Imam, to read me some Q'uranic verses. She believed that I may had experienced some devil eye that delayed my marriage to that age. I married at the age of 22 to satisfy my mother, family, and to secure my social position as a married woman. Later I resumed my educational career to complete a university degree as well as a graduate one. I give this personal example to illustrate how one of us in Muslim and traditional societies faces such social pressures to accomplish what these societies preserve important, i.e. marriage & motherhood. There are no pressure put in education since it is not considered as an urgent or of any importance to women.

On the other hand, there are various economic restraints that affect women's accessibility to education in Muslim world.

Accessibility here refers to the fact that not all successful high school graduates are admitted to universities. This admission restriction is based upon economic and political facts. Due to the small size universities, limitation of resources; i.e. books, computers, and professionals teaching staff, the admission policy, as in Sudan, is structured. As a state policy, applications of preceding years students are not automatically considered. Former high school students face high competition with new ones because the percentage accepted changes every academic year in certain majors. In addition, the government in the Sudan forces new and graduates students to perform obligatory civilian or military service before their diplomas are granted. This state policy of obligatory service has contributed to whole range of delay to entry into universities by new students. As a new condition, all high school graduates males and females are to perform their obligatory service before they apply to a university. Any one who did not complete his obligatory service and obtain his/her discharge certificate can not apply or be accepted in a university neither can travel outside the country. (Certain class of students in the society get exempted or obtained their discharge certificates through personal contacts). This last requirement has deeply affected women in Sudan. Culturally, it is not appropriate for women to serve in military missions or to travel far distances alone to perform governmental duties. Most parents reject the idea that their daughters engage in obligatory services and prefer to let them discontinue their education instead. The day or night schedule of most offered program is also hinders women's

accessibility to education. It deserves mentioning here that the schedule of the program in Muslim and developing world is very much affected by the economic situation of the country. For example, electricity in Sudan is supplied in specific day or night time and not all day long. The government justifies such shortage of supply as a measure to reduce energy consumption and to be able to provide as many locations as possible with electricity. Accordingly, most offered programs are scheduled and they may well not please various housewives due to time conflicts with their own home responsibilities.

Due to economic pressures, most lecturers and administrators in developing world choose to work less hours and hold another job so that they can be able to meet their financial needs. Work conditions and state policies have also made good number of lecturers as in Sudan, Egypt and Morocco, migrate to developed world in order to obtain better work conditions and have higher pay. Besides, economic difficulties has made materials such as computers, books and references thoroughly insufficient. Accordingly, it has been argued that it is economically reasonable to teach as many students as possible at one time. Making it difficult to schedule a program or a course twice a day or a week. Hence, married as well as single women, are the most affected by such economic limitations. To cite my personal experience, if I have not been into Canada at a certain time of my life, I would have not been able to continue my education as a married woman with four children in Sudan.

Thus, the challenge confronting Muslim women becomes immense. Women need to be educated religiously and academically to disclose the facts of all religiously defined problems, sectarianly based and which rest upon superficialities that reduce Islam's multifaceted nature to mere imposition of penalties that fall mostly upon the poor and the imposing of the veil on women. Women need to be educated specifically about their religious rights to defend them and to demonstrate that the particular Islamic Shariya which conservative movements have articulated is mostly based on distorted interpretations of Islam and other philosophies that emphasize the inevitability of fate. It is women who must demonstrate that there exist philosophies and interpretations more sophisticated, justly, and humane.

Islam emphasised and encouraged rather than prohibited women's education. The Islamic history recorded sound educated women as a mean to encourage others to follow the same line. An example of a strong educated women was the Prophet's wife Saiyyda 'Aisha who was a very learned woman. To quote the words of her student 'Urwa ibn al-Zubair who testifies to her place in learning:

I did not see a greater scholar than 'Aisha in the learning of the Q'uran, obligatory duties, lawful and unlawful matters, poetry and literature, Arab history and genealogy¹⁴.

In addition, Sayyida Nafisa who is a descendant of 'Ali, the fourth Caliph, was also known as a great scholar in teaching Islamic laws. Imam al-Shafi'i, founder of the Shafi'i school of Islamic law,

¹⁴ Abdur Raman I. Doi, Women In Islam (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1989),

was one of her prominent students and sat in her circle in al-Fustat when he was at the peak of his eminence¹⁵. Based on these examples, a Muslim woman must study religion, and translate it with her own powers or rationale intelligence rather than seeing it through the others' perspectives. Women must link religious concepts and texts to their historical and social contexts and develop a highly critical outlook in which rationality gets the better of tradition and emulation, and the doctrine of utility replaces a blind adherence to the literalness of the text. Certain scholars and legalists of the Islamic faith have deliberated that in cases where the text is in conflict with the public interest, the latter must take priority over the former. For religions must develop and change as societies develop.

¹⁵ Aisha Lemu and fatima Hareen, Women In Islam (Leicester: The Islamic foundations, 1978), 16.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS: HISTORY AND FUTURE

This chapter discusses and evaluates the progress of women's organized movements in Muslim world as well as in Western world. The major aim of the following paragraphs is to demonstrate how much did women accomplished through an organized group activities locally and internationally and how important and effective are these organizations for women's future progress.

The first women movement in Muslim world occurred in Turkey during Ottoman Empire Era "around 1800s" in an attempt to modernize Turkey. Leila Ahmed wrote: "In the last decades of nineteenth and early twentieth century the emancipation of women and women's education became issues that were much discussed and written about, particularly by the young Turks and their reformist and nationalist sympathiser". She continues, in 1895 "Turkish Women's Weekly" began to be published emphasizing the need for women education. The feminist movement had also emphasized the need for literacy and emancipation in order to elevate Muslim society. Women movement had achieved significant success when the government in 1926 adopted a new civil code modelled on that of Neuchatel Switzerland. In 1930 women were given the right to vote in elections. Thus by 1930 Turkish women had acquired legal and civil status equal to that of

women in most advanced European countries.¹

In Egypt which was a Turkish colony, the movement had influenced Egyptian women as well. In 1920 and 1930s Huda Sha'rawi and other group of women were very active seeking higher and free education for women. They also campaigned for reforms in Islamic law- though unfavourably without any remarkable success (and to this day reforms in this area have been minimal). Sha'rawi's social reforms was based on the spirit of Q'uran and she has not promoted reforms which do not have Islamic sanction. For example, Sha'rawi's claims for equality of education for girls have been based on the teachings of the Q'uran so as her demands for restriction or abolition of polygamy. Sha'rawi was advocating women's rights in light of Islam and never tried to separate her feminist activity from the principles of Muslim religion.²

Haga Kashif, a Sudanese activist wrote: "the first women's organization in Sudan was the League of Young Women's Teachers in 1946." The League studied women condition in Sudan, but the first scientific study on women was the Memorandum which the Union of Sudanese Women Teachers sent to the governmental authorities in 1949. Other studies were also conducted during the period of 1958-1965. These studies were reports in nature on professional, social, and political status of women. There were however no positive attempts to improve the situation of women at that period of time

¹ Leila Ahmed, "Early Feminist Movement In The Middle East: Turkey and Egypt," in Muslim Women ed. Freda Hussain (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984), 113-117.

² Ibid, 119-120.

due to the military government which controlled the country and ordered the dissolution of all social organizations, including women's organizations.³

In Iran, women movement occurred in 1940s and 50s. The Iranian Women League (Jamiyat Zanan Iran) was founded in 1942 by Mrs. Badrulmoluk Bamdad who also edited a women's magazine called Zan Emruz (Today's Women). In 1946 the National Council of Women was founded. Its main objectives was to "establish equality between men and women, prohibit polygamy, safeguard mothers health, raise the educational standard of women, and teach child care". The women's Council, too, was most energetic in its campaign for political equality. It has a large fellowship which was mobilized whenever needed. The Council has represented Iranian women in many International congregations including Women and Peace Conference in Paris (1945) and the International Women's Assembly in New York (1946).

Women in Iran also began to establish professional and religious associations. Iranian Women's Medical Association was founded in 1953 and the Association of Iranian Nurses was also founded in the same year. In 1947 the Iranian Jewish Ladies' Organization was founded to carry out welfare services in general and raise the standard of health and education of women and

³ Haga Kashif-Badri, "The History, Development, Organization and Position of Women Studies in the Sudan," in Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 100.

⁴ Parvin Paider, 127.

children. Other associations that were found at the same period of time (1940-50s) include: The Ladies' Association of Municipal Aid which planned to assist municipal agencies in welfare activities; The Women's Art Committee, which aimed to promote art and industry among women and youth; and The International Women's Club of Iran, which intended to establish friendship, support and compassion between women of all nations represented in Iran, and to reach the poor and help them to a better life.⁵

In Western hemisphere, the beginning of the 19th century had witnessed the first American women movement. Women were outraged by sex discrimination within abolitionist groups. Many were Quakers, accustomed to the relative freedom allowed women within the Society of Friends; when they aspired active political work, they were surprised to discover the limitations of the role allocated to them as women in American society. At the time, English common law governed their status: women had no legal control over their property or their children, they had no right to vote, hold public office, or serve on juries. Abolitionist women were often prevented from speaking in public or even from serving on committees not by opponents but by their male colleagues. The women reacted by organizing the first women's rights convention, held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848⁶.

⁵ Ibid, 128.

⁶ Marjorie Lansing, "Political change for the American woman," in Women In The World: A Comparative Study ed. Lynne B. Iglitzinand Ruth Ross (Oxford: Clie Books, 1976), 176.

The aims of the American women movement, as Lansing sees it, in its early development were broad. The convention affirmed that "all men and women are created equal" and asked for equal legal, educational, and economic status with men. In 1920s and by the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, women were finally given the right to vote, the movement vanished overnight and remained inactive for a period of about forty years⁷.

In the 1960s various groups also started to seek equality for women. Like the abolitionist women of the 1840s, the women who joined the civil rights and peace movements found themselves denounced active decision-making roles because of their sex⁸.

Attempts of this second wave of feminists have succeed in bringing the Equal Rights Amendment into light which aimed at state laws discriminating against women in marriage, ownership of property, and employment. A second landmark in part a result again of feminist efforts -- was the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that no state can intervene with a woman's right to have an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. In addition, new federal policy limits sex discrimination in salaries and working conditions; federally funded colleges and universities are required to admit and to hire and promote men and women on an equal basis. Whereas these

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

new laws have only begun to be enforced, they have the capacity to end American women's discrimination.⁹

The most important change in the status of American women was the entry of large numbers of married women into the workforce during World War II. Approximately seven million women went to work, three-quarters of them were married. Moreover, the issue of inequalities in pay in similar jobs has continued and has been given a great deal of attention. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 is now being enforced. Analogously, women's political role was also changed since the number of women who actively pursued political careers were increased. Additionally, women's education had also been expanded and by 1968, 42 percent of the higher degrees were awarded to women¹⁰.

Similarly, the social concepts and attitudes towards women in Brazil have been based upon discrimination and violence. Women's organized movement in Brazil has been fighting for a long time to break the traditional social chains that are around women's neck. During the military dictatorship from 1964-1985, Brazilian Feminist Movement had fought with other social movements for renewal of democracy. The movement had succeeded in two areas: First, it gained the public support for elimination of violence against women; and second, it created the (S.O.S. Mulher) which is (Women S.O.S). Women S.O.S was created in Sao Paulo to assist female victims of violence.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

In mid 1980s (S.O.S. Mulher) was regarded as the founding spirit of police stations for women and shelters for violence victims.

Women's movement has made a remarkable efforts in making the government recognizes women's rights which were so far denied. It presented proposals to the national government in order to end violence against women. These proposals were strengthened by the UN Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which stands as women's bill of rights that Brazil had signed in 1981. (CEDAW) requires government to take actions that promote women's legal, economic, and social status. It also provides guidelines for legal policy and development of programmes to encourage equality as a mean of justice¹¹. The following proposals were suggested by the Women's Movement:

- The elimination of gender discrimination within the penal code, rejection of domestic violence and the legalization of abortion.
- The creation of government machineries to promote women's rights such as the state councils on the status of women and the national council of women's right¹²

The major achievement of the feminist movement was its success in changing the perception of violence against women from an inevitable and acceptable cultural phenomenon to a criminal act

¹¹ Marsha A. Freeman, "Women Development and Justice: Using the International Convention on Women's Right," in Ours By Right: Women's Rights As Human Rights ed. Joanna Kerr (Ottawa: North-South Institute, 1993), 93.

¹² Joanna Kerr, "Calling for change: International Strategies to end violence against women," Poverty and Development (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Drukkerij Randstad Bv, May 1994), 14.

chargeable by law. Another achievement which the feminist movement was able to bring about was lobbying on their right to plan and control their family size in terms of child birth and their right to abortion. This right is even entrenched in the country's new constitution "article 226 paragraph 7."¹³ This recognition of family plan and abortion right was considered as the most progressed level towards women's emancipation and freedom of choice.

In terms of political participation and involvement in the formulation of public policy, women's participation had increased dramatically after the 1975 sponsorship of United Nations to the International Women's year which encouraged and materialized lots of women's projects and themes related to women's participation.¹⁴

The previous examples showed how women through their organizations are able to achieve social, political and economic recognition. Working in groups and through organized local and international forums is the strongest measure proved successful for women so far. But in Muslim world, there are two main barriers to overcome in order for a Muslim women's organization to be effective and influential. The first barrier is men's domination in all facets of life. El Saadawi addresses this problem clearly when she stated that in some Muslim countries the law stipulates explicitly that a man has the right to prevent a woman from going outside the

¹³ Gita Sen and Rachel C. Snow, Power and Decision: The Social Control of Reproduction (Boston: Havard University Press, 1994), 116.

¹⁴ Fanny Tabak, "Women's Role in the Formulation of Public Policies in Brazil," in Women, Power and Political System ed. Margherita Randel (London: St Martin's Press, 1981), 66.

home without his permission. In other cases, while there is no explicit statement to this effect, a man is given the right to prevent a woman from going out to work if this conflicts with the welfare of the family; and it is the man who defines what is the welfare of the family.¹⁵ El Saadawi continues; " to break the patriarchal web and achieve total independence, a woman must be conscious of her self and have an independent personality and an attainment of a sense of authority which she may possess when she has not lost her sense of her own value and humanity."¹⁶

Secondly, a social consciousness is needed based on awareness of other women's need and a desire to unite with them to acquire the capabilities and power necessary to end oppression and to achieve justice and freedom for themselves. But women cannot achieve social consciousness without achieving a self awareness. A woman who is dependent on her husband or father can not liberate other women or the nation from dependency. Self-sufficiency is the most important factor to bring about women together and to convince others to cooperate and coordinate for a larger and collective independence.¹⁷

The survival of women's organization depends upon three major preconditions: First, Muslim women need to break their economic and

¹⁵ Nawal El Saadawi, " The Political Challenges Facing Arab Women at the End of the 20th Century," in Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge ed. Nahid Toubia (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1988), 9.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

cultural dependency; second, break down their isolation; and third, their organization must have high degree of awareness concerning the challenges and problems facing them at present and historically, lack of one or more of these preconditions have resulted in the closure of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association in Egypt. In this respect El Saadawi wrote:

On 15 June 1991, the Egyptian government closed down the Arab Women's Solidarity Association which we had founded in April 1982 along with a group of other Arab women and men. This closing-down was the culmination of systematic attacks on the association and its founders emanating from the different Islamic political groups, from Saudi Arabia, and from different governmental institutions and administrations.

Women's rights and women's movement have always been considered anathema to these Islamic political movements and to the state religious institution. Only a small minority of progressive Islamic intellectuals and thinkers had some sympathy for the efforts made by women to struggle for their rights.

One of them, Farag Foda, was assassinated by a terrorist group on 8 June 1992, and today many other intellectuals and independent thinkers are threatened by similar fate. Several professionals, journalists, and writers have been killed in Algeria. The names of those under threat have figured on various death lists circulated in Arab countries including Egypt, Yemen, the Sudan, Algeria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia¹⁸

Similarly, women's associations in the Gulf Region are not powerful enough to force the ruling elites to make concessions. The struggle of women's associations in changing Islamic laws governing women are very confined. Moreover, labour unions and formal governing parties are outlawed in most of the Gulf states. Accordingly, political movements are taking place in religious

¹⁸ Nawal El Saadawi, 1997, 113.

centres, cultural societies, sports clubs and women's voluntary and professional associations. It is only indirectly through the machinery of non-political organizations and institutions that political change can be channelled.¹⁹

Associations play significant role normally performed by political parties in other democratic societies. They reflect the social and political changes that have taken place in the Gulf region and represent a new social force that might bring about changes in the future. The number of these associations exceeds 80 with 32,000 current members of both sexes (see table #5 below). The role of these associations is increasing, which may lead to more involvement in the political and social events in the future. The governments of the Gulf states are alert that such pressure groups might become a threat to their governments and they are trying to limit their power by different methods. In Bahrain, for example, the government has recently issued a legislation in which it limits the role of all associations. The legislation grants complete authority to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to dissolve any association without even giving justification. Moreover, professional societies are disallowed in most Gulf states, only charitable ones are permitted to function.²⁰

¹⁹ Munira Fakhro, "Gulf Women and Islamic Law," in Feminism & Islam: Legal and Literacy Perspectives ed. Mai Yamani (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 260.

²⁰ Ibid.

TABLE 5

**ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND
MEMBERS IN THE GULF STATES**

| State | No. of Associations | | | | Members | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Prof. ²¹ | Charit. ²² | Women | Total | Prof. | Charit. | Women |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| UAE | 11 | 8 | 6 | 26 | 2281 | 6666 | 3488 |
| 5766 | | | | | | | |
| Bahrain | 7 | 6 | 5 | 18 | - | 2163 | 684 |
| 5420 | | | | | | | |
| Oman | - | - | 7 | 7 | - | - | 1500 |
| 1500 | | | | | | | |
| Qatar | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 500 | - |
| 500 | | | | | | | |
| Kuwait | 16 | 9 | 4 | 29 | 15332 | 2177 | 1304 |
| 8813 | | | | | | | |
| Saudi A. | - | 68 | 19 | 87 | - | 22073 | 3084 |
| 25156 | | | | | | | |
| Total | 34 | 77 | 42 | 168 | - | - | - |
| 57156 | | | | | | | |

Source: Munira Fakhro, "Gulf Women and Islamic Law," in Feminism & Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 261.

In conclusion, pace of change in the areas of education, social change and political consciousness will eventually lead to a modernisation in the political front and to a broadening of the foundation of decision-making to include women. At the same time, democracy alone will not lead to reforms in Islamic law regarding women. The recent example of the Islamic groups who won the majority

²¹ Prof. here is an abbreviation of the word Professional.

²² Charit. here is an abbreviation of the word Charitable.

seats in the parliament in Jordan and Kuwait and their priority in amending the constitution so that the Shariya' becomes the sole basis of the legislation reveal such a fact.²³ Any reform in Islamic law in Muslim societies in general and in the Gulf region in particular regarding women cannot be accomplished without the effort and willingness of all Muslim societies to work together to locate a formula that join both modernity and the essence of Islamic teachings. A formula within the framework of Islamic teachings will, hopefully, resolve the controversy over the position of women in Islam and modernity.

²³ Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This study has revealed that women in Muslim societies are inferior to men and are dominated, subjugated, and humiliated by them. This inferiority and humiliation are by no means Islamic or related to Islamic laws and teachings in any respect. Islam is used and overused to serve social prejudice, economic dependency, and political interests. Easterners and Westerners Knew that Islam is innocent of all the accusations condemned against it regarding degradation of women. They also know that who ever is in power can formulate, interpret and implement Islam to serve his own best interests. The whole idea is that no one can actually prove that Muslims themselves are conducting a whole range of conspiracy against Islam before any body else. The main victims of this conspiracy are women. The tools employed to conduct it is the misconception, interpretation, and reinterpretation of Islamic laws according to the strongest minorities' interest which are the male dominant groups at the higher governmental levels.

In fact, Muslim women everywhere are in urgent need for national and international collaborative measures to protect their rights against violence, discrimination, and to provide them with educational and employment opportunities. Educational strategy is recommended through world-wide efforts to end literacy among women and particulary among Muslim women. In addition, education should become a government priority in budget expenditure. Textbooks and

all related curricular items should be revised in order to eliminate sex stereotyping and include women's contribution to civilization and human knowledge. Secondary education and post secondary education should be accessible to women with no restriction to specific fields of study. Programs' schedules should be revised and generously offered in a manner to encourage and attract as many women as possible. Training and promotion should be guaranteed to women by the concerned governments. Education must be understood as a vital key to the welfare of women, children and community as a whole. Through education women would be able to overcome social prejudice and build a new identity beyond child-bearing.

By working through organized associations women will be able to represent themselves in government agencies and non-governmental organizations to defend their rights and to strengthen their positions. Some of the major issues that to be addressed in any women's organization are: guarantee of equal employment opportunities for women, assurance of flexible hours in the job for women with children as well as development of child care facilities, and guarantee of equal pay for equal job. If economic independence is achieved, social prejudice will be reduced and political strength will be established. Strong women organizations to work locally and internationally is a must if Muslim women to overcome their inferiority. Without communication, collaboration, and defensive measures taken at both levels, i.e. nationally and internationally, Muslim women can never enhance their position or brought their concerns into light. Finally, women in general and in Muslim

societies in particular, should increase their efforts since they still have a long way to go before they can achieve their aspired demands.

Bibliography

- Abdel-Kader, Soha. "A Survey of Trends in Social Sciences Research on Women in the Arab Region, 1960-1980." In Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World. Paris: UNESCO, 1984.
- Afshar, Haleh. "Islam and feminism: an analysis of political strategies." In Feminism And Islam: Legal & Literary Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani. New York: New York University Press, 1996.
- Ahmed, Leila. Women & Gender In Islam. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Ahmed, Leila. "Early Feminist Movement In The Middle East: Turkey and Egypt." In Muslim Women, ed. Freda Hussain. London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984.
- Allaghi, Farida., and Aisha Almana. "Survey of Research on Women in the Arab Gulf Region." In Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World. Paris: UNESCO, 1984.
- Al-Sa'id, Aminah. "The Arab Woman and the Challenge of Society." In Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Basima Qattan Bezirgan. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.
- Anderson, J. N.D. "The Islamic Law of Marriage and Divorce." In Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures, eds. A. M. Lutfiyya and C.W. Churchill. The Hague, Mouton/New York: Humanities Press, 1970.
- Aristotle. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W.D. Ross, Vol. 10 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Barakat, Halim. "The Arab family and the Challenge of Social Transformation." In Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
- Betteridge, Anne H. "To Veil or Not to Veil: A Matter of Protest or Policy." In Women And Revolution In Iran, ed. Guity Nashat. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1983.
- Bousquet, G. H. L'Ethique Sexuelle de l'Islam. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1966.
- Bullough, V.L. "Sex is Not Enough: Women in Islam." In The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes towards Women.

- Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1973.
- Callaway, Barbara., and Lucy Creevey. The Heritage of Islam: Women, Religion, & Politics in West Africa. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1994.
- Charnay, J.P. "Social Relationships and the Conditions of Women." In Islamic Culture and Socio-economic Change. Leiden, The Netherlands: E.T. Brill, 1971.
- Culver, E.T. "Women in Islam." In Women in the World of Religion. New York: Doubleday, 1967.
- Doi, Abdur Raman I. Women In Islam. London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1989.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. The Hidden Face of Eve. London: Zed Press, 1980.
- _____. "The Political Challenges Facing Arab Women at the End of the 20th Century." In Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge, ed. Nahid Toubia. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1983.
- _____. The Nawal El Saadawi Reader. London: Zed Books, 1997.
- Esposito, J.L. "Women's Rights in Islam." Journal of Islamic Studies. Vol. 14, No.2, (Summer 1975): 99-114.
- Fakhro, Munira. "Gulf Women and Islamic Law." In Feminism & Islam: Legal and Literacy Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani. New York: New York University press, 1996.
- Freeman, Marsha A. "Women Development and Justice: Using the International Convention on Women's Right." In Ours By Right: Women's Rights As Human Rights, ed. Joanna Kerr. Ottawa: North-South Institute, 1993.
- Fulton, O., and M. Trow. "Students and teachers." In Teachers and Students, ed. M. Trow. New York: McGraw Hill, 1975, 1-38.
- Gerner, Debbie J. "Roles in Transition: The Evolving Position of Women in Arab-Islamic Countries." In Muslim Women, ed. Freda Hussain. London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984.
- Hasan, Zoya. Forging Identities: Gender, Communities and the State in India. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994.

- Hourani, Albert. Arabic Thought In The Liberal Age: 1798-1939. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. Women, Islam and State. London: Macmillan Press, 1991.
- Karmi, Ghada. "Women, Islam & Patriarchalism." In Feminism And Islam: Legal & Literary Perspectives, ed. Mai Yamani. New York: New York University Press, 1996.
- Kashif-Badri, Haga. "The History, Development, Organization and Position of Women Studies in the Sudan." In Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World. Paris: UNESCO, 1984.
- Keddie, Nikki., and Baron, Beth (eds). Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Kerr, Joanna. "Calling for change: International Strategies to end violence against women." In Poverty and Development. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Drukkerij Randstad Bv, May 1994.
- Khalid, Sheikh Hassan. "Al-mar'a fi'urf al-Islam" (The woman in Islam), Majallat al-fiker al-Islami 6, no.5 (May 1975): 3-5.
- Kidwai of Gadia, Sheikh M.H. Woman Under Different Social & Religious Laws (Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam). New Delhi: Seema Publications, 1976.
- Lansing, Marjorie. "Political change for the American woman." In Women In The World: A Comparative Study, ed. Lynne B. Iglittin and Ruth Ross. Oxford: Clio Books, 1976.
- Lateef, Shahida. Muslim Women in India: Political & Private Realities: 1890-1980. London: Zed Books, 1990.
- Lemu, Aisha., and Fatima Hareen. Women In Islam. Leicester: The Islamic foundations, 1978.
- Levy, R. "The Status of Women in Islam." In The Social Structure of Islam. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Lightfoot-Klein, Hanny. Prisoners of Ritual: An Odyssey Into Female Genital Circumcision in Africa. New York: The Haworth Press, 1989.

- Mernissi, Fatima. Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society. New York: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1975.
- _____. Women's Rebellion & Islamic Memory. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1996.
- Nazat, A. "Women in Islam." In Islamic Literature, Vol 14, (1969): 5-24.
- Ollenburger, Jane C., and Helen A. Moore. A Sociology of Women: The Intersection of Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Colonization. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992.
- Paidar, Parvin. Women and The Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran. London: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Rahman, Afzalur. Role Of Muslim Woman In Society. London: Seerah Foundation, 1986.
- Rassam, Amal. "Towards a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Women in the Arab World." In Social Science Research and Women in the Arab World. Paris: UNESCO, 1984.
- Saleh, S. "Women in Islam: Their Role in Religious and Traditional Culture." International Journal of Sociology of The Family vol.2 (September 1972): 193-201.
- Sayigh, Rosemary. "Orientalism and Arab Women." In Arab Studies Quarterly vol 3, no. 3. (1981).
- Sen, Gita., and Rachel C. Snow. Power and Decision: The Social Control of Reproduction. Boston: Havard University Press, 1994.
- Shaheed, Farida. "Networking for change: The role of women's group in initiating dialogue on women's issues." In Faith & Freedom, ed. Mahnaz Afkhami. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995.
- Shalabi, Ahmed. "al-wiratha wal-wassiyya" (Inheritance and will), Majallat al-fiker al-Islami 6, no.5 (May 1975): 24-25.
- Stowasser, Barbara Freyer. "The Status of Women In Early Islam." In Muslim Women, ed. Freda Hussain. London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984.

Tabak, Fanny. "Women's Role in the Formulation of Public Policies in Brazil." In Women, Power and Political System, ed. Margherita Randel. London: St Martin's Press, 1981.

Taylor, Debbie. Woman: A World Report. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Toubia, Nahid. (ed.) Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1988.

_____. "The Social and Political Implications of Female Circumcision: The Case of the Sudan." In Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change, ed. Ferena, Elizabeth Warnock. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.

United Nations. Women: Challenges To The Year 2000. New York: UN Publications, 1991.

Wikan, Unni. Behind the Veil in Arabia: Women in Oman. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

World Bank. World Development Report. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

World Bank. World Development Report 1990. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Valliey, Bernadette. What Women Want. London: Virago Press, 1996.

APPENDIX A

Education of Women (Worldwide)

(Illiterate women aged 15-44 and women enrolment in
Primary and Post Secondary levels)

| Country (or area) | Aged 15-24 | | | | Aged 25-44 | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----|------|----|------------|-----|------|----|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Afghanistan | | | 54 | 89 | | | 71 | 97 |
| Algeria | 35 | 70 | 15 | 41 | 63 | 94 | 56 | 84 |
| Argentina | 4 | 4 | | | 5 | 6 | | |
| Bahrain | 23 | 45 | 10 | 18 | 55 | 78 | 20 | 42 |
| Bangladesh | 53 | 78 | | | 64 | 88 | | |
| Barbados | 0 | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | | |
| Belize | 3 | 3 | | | 8 | 8 | | |
| Benin | | | 54 | 82 | | | | |
| Bolivia | | | 9 | 24 | | | 83 | 94 |
| Botswana | 46 | 36 | | | 60 | 52 | 21 | 50 |
| Brazil | 26 | 25 | 14 | 12 | 29 | 37 | 23 | 29 |
| Brunei | 9 | 18 | 6 | 7 | 23 | 61 | 10 | 29 |
| Burkina Faso | | | 77 | 93 | | | 86 | 98 |
| Cameroon, U.R. | | | 20 | 41 | | | 45 | 78 |
| Chile | 5 | 4 | | | 9 | 10 | | |
| China | | | 5 | 18 | | | 14 | 43 |
| Colombia | 13 | 12 | | | 17 | 21 | | |
| Costa Rica | 5 | 5 | | | 12 | 13 | | |
| Cuba | | | 2 | 1 | | | 5 | 6 |
| Dominica | 1 | 1 | | | 5 | 3 | | |
| Dominican Rep. | 22 | 21 | | | 27 | 34 | | |
| Ecuador | 12 | 16 | 5 | 7 | 21 | 30 | 11 | 18 |
| Egypt | | | 37 | 62 | | | 46 | 80 |
| El Salvador | 27 | 30 | 27 | 29 | 41 | 49 | 40 | 51 |
| Ethiopia | 88 | 100 | | | 92 | 100 | | |
| Fiji | | | 6 | 9 | | | 14 | 27 |
| Ghana | 31 | 60 | | | 60 | 89 | | |
| Greece | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | 13 | | |
| Grenada | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| Guadeloupe | | | 2 | 1 | | | 6 | 4 |
| Guatemala | 38 | 52 | | | 47 | 64 | | |
| Guineabissau | | | 40 | 82 | | | 70 | 95 |
| Guyana | 2 | 2 | | | 5 | 9 | | |
| Haiti | 64 | 72 | | | 74 | 86 | | |
| Honduras | 29 | 28 | | | 43 | 49 | | |
| Hong Kong | 3 | 5 | | | 10 | 31 | | |
| Hungary | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| India | 38 | 67 | | | 50 | 81 | | |
| Indonesia | 13 | 26 | 10 | 18 | 29 | 59 | 18 | 40 |
| Iran | | | 29 | 58 | | | 54 | 80 |
| Israel | 3 | 6 | | | 7 | 21 | | |
| Italy | 1 | 1 | | | 3 | 4 | | |
| Jamaica | 2 | 1 | | | 4 | 3 | | |
| Korea, Rep. | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | 10 | | |
| Kuwait | 28 | 40 | 19 | 24 | 33 | 55 | 26 | 41 |

| Country (or area) | Aged 15-24 | | | | Aged 25-44 | | | |
|----------------------|------------|----|------|----|------------|----|------|----|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Libyan Ar. Jm. | 9 | 62 | | | 37 | 93 | | |
| Macau | 9 | 14 | | | 14 | 25 | | |
| Maldives | | | 16 | 13 | | | 15 | 17 |
| Mali | | | 73 | 87 | | | 90 | 97 |
| Mexico | 15 | 18 | | | 20 | 29 | | |
| Morocco | 47 | 77 | | | 70 | 95 | | |
| Mozambique | | | 36 | 75 | | | 54 | 91 |
| Nepal | 67 | 94 | 55 | 85 | 80 | 98 | 69 | 92 |
| Neth. Antilles | 5 | 3 | | | 4 | 4 | | |
| Nicaragua | 37 | 34 | | | 43 | 46 | | |
| Pakistan | 59 | 82 | 55 | 75 | 69 | 90 | 62 | 86 |
| Panama | 12 | 13 | 5 | 4 | 20 | 22 | 11 | 11 |
| Paraguay | 8 | 11 | | | 14 | 22 | | |
| Peru | 7 | 20 | 3 | 10 | 16 | 42 | 17 | 38 |
| Philippines | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 13 | 16 | 13 | 13 |
| Portugal | 3 | 4 | | | 16 | 26 | | |
| Puerto Rico | 5 | 3 | | | 6 | 8 | | |
| Reunion | | | 6 | 2 | | | 20 | 13 |
| Rwanda | | | 40 | 55 | | | 41 | 77 |
| Saint Lucia | 6 | 4 | | | 21 | 18 | | |
| Sao Tome Prn. | | | 9 | 26 | | | 25 | 61 |
| Seychelles | 28 | 18 | | | 44 | 39 | | |
| Singapore | 8 | 15 | 4 | 4 | 16 | 49 | 5 | 18 |
| Spain | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Sri Lanka | 10 | 16 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 30 | 7 | 14 |
| St. Christopher | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| St. Vincent | 2 | 2 | | | 4 | 4 | | |
| Swaziland | | | 24 | 25 | | | 41 | 47 |
| Syrian Ar. Rep. | 22 | 65 | | | 38 | 83 | | |
| Thailand | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 9 |
| Togo | 51 | 83 | | | 76 | 95 | | |
| Trinidad Tbg. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| Tunisia | | | 10 | 37 | | | 36 | 74 |
| Turkey | 13 | 44 | 9 | 32 | 28 | 69 | 18 | 59 |
| Untd. Arab Em. | | | 34 | 44 | | | 40 | 61 |
| U. R. Tanzania | | | 19 | 46 | | | 33 | 72 |
| Uruguay | | | 2 | 1 | | | 4 | 3 |
| Venezuela | 13 | 13 | | | 18 | 26 | | |
| Vietnam | | | 4 | 6 | | | 5 | 12 |
| Yugoslavia | 2 | 7 | | | 10 | 32 | | |

**13. Number enrolled at primary and post-secondary levels
(in thousands)**

| Country (or area) | Primary Level | | | | Post-Secondary level | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|---------|---------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Afghanistan | 519.5 | 84.4 | 883.6 | 179.0 | 6.6 | 1.1 | 21.2 | 4.7 |
| Albania | 261.1 | 235.4 | 291.8 | 260.9 | 17.2 | 8.3 | 7.3 | 7.2 |
| Algeria | 1179.2 | 707.9 | 1845.9 | 1340.0 | 15.3 | 4.2 | 51.7 | 17.2 |
| Angola | 279.5 | 154.9 | 670.3 | 588.5 | 1.4 | 0.9 | | |
| Antigua Barb. | 5.0 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 4.7 | | | | |
| Argentina | 1713.1 | 1672.7 | 1953.7 | 1887.3 | 157.3 | 117.3 | 244.9 | 249.9 |
| Australia | 933.4 | 878.6 | 864.3 | 823.9 | 120.9 | 58.8 | 177.0 | 146.7 |
| Austria | 273.3 | 258.6 | 205.3 | 195.1 | 42.2 | 17.5 | 79.3 | 57.5 |
| Bahrain | 22.4 | 16.3 | 26.6 | 22.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| Bangladesh | 3590.7 | 1693.1 | 5182.0 | 3037.3 | 106.1 | 11.5 | 215.0 | 35.0 |
| Barbados | 19.9 | 19.1 | 16.2 | 15.9 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| Belgium | 525.8 | 495.8 | 432.2 | 409.9 | 79.6 | 45.2 | 109.2 | 86.9 |
| Belize | 16.1 | 15.5 | | | 0.0 | 0.1 | | |
| Benin | 119.4 | 54.5 | 245.0 | 134.1 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 2.9 | 0.6 |
| Bhutan | 8.5 | 0.5 | 17.3 | 7.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Bolivia | 402.5 | 276.6 | 521.8 | 456.4 | 25.3 | 10.0 | 38.8 | 18.2 |
| Botswana | 38.9 | 44.1 | 78.1 | 93.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.5 |
| Brazil | 7990.6 | 7904.0 | 11406.8 | 11040.6 | 268.3 | 162.2 | 818.4 | 832.7 |
| Brunei | 14.6 | 13.4 | 16.0 | 14.5 | | | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Bulgaria | 539.8 | 510.0 | 511.8 | 482.3 | 49.2 | 50.4 | 44.4 | 56.9 |
| Burkina Faso | 67.1 | 38.3 | 122.7 | 73.1 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.4 |
| Burma | 1685.7 | 1492.0 | 2104.5 | 1946.0 | 28.6 | 17.5 | 62.0 | 64.6 |
| Burundi | 122.0 | 59.8 | 102.3 | 66.3 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| Byelorussia | | | | | 67.5 | 72.6 | 78.8 | 95.0 |
| Cameroon, U.R. | 530.4 | 392.8 | 721.4 | 621.4 | 2.5 | 0.2 | 10.8 | 2.3 |
| Canada | 1919.2 | 1817.3 | 1120.4 | 1064.5 | 384.2 | 257.8 | 443.2 | 445.2 |
| Cape Verde | 14.4 | 13.5 | 29.9 | 28.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | | |
| Cent. Af. Rep. | 118.6 | 57.7 | 163.3 | 96.5 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 2.3 | 0.4 |
| Chad | 143.5 | 48.3 | 183.5 | 70.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.1 |
| Chile | 1029.5 | 1010.6 | 1143.3 | 1091.2 | 48.3 | 30.1 | 85.1 | 55.0 |
| China | | | 81096.0 | 65174.0 | | | 891.2 | 270.3 |
| Colombia | 1633.2 | 1652.9 | 2151.7 | 2166.5 | 62.7 | 22.9 | 179.7 | 119.3 |
| Comoros | 10.3 | 4.7 | 34.9 | 24.8 | | | | |
| Congo | 135.2 | 105.9 | 199.4 | 183.6 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 5.8 | 1.0 |
| Costa Rica | 178.5 | 170.9 | 179.3 | 169.4 | 8.8 | 6.7 | 34.0 | 27.0 |
| Cuba | 781.7 | 748.7 | 796.7 | 719.7 | 15.9 | 10.4 | 101.4 | 88.1 |
| Cyprus | 35.7 | 33.5 | 24.9 | 23.8 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Czechoslovakia | 1004.2 | 962.2 | 967.2 | 937.3 | 81.4 | 49.7 | 115.1 | 82.0 |
| Dem. Kampchea | 591.0 | 398.5 | | | 5.9 | 2.2 | | |
| Dem. Yemen | 107.9 | 26.6 | 166.8 | 94.4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 4.1 | 1.6 |
| Denmark | 224.5 | 218.6 | 222.7 | 212.0 | 48.1 | 27.9 | 54.3 | 51.9 |
| Dominica | 9.3 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.1 | | | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Dominican Rep. | 384.0 | 380.1 | 534.0 | 532.7 | 13.4 | 10.1 | 37.4 | 31.8 |
| Ecuador | 506.9 | 477.1 | 732.8 | 699.3 | 27.1 | 11.6 | 179.7 | 101.8 |
| Egypt | 2361.6 | 1433.3 | 2786.9 | 1875.9 | 171.5 | 61.8 | 381.0 | 179.0 |
| El Salvador | 293.5 | 266.1 | 461.7 | 445.1 | 7.0 | 2.5 | 24.3 | 12.3 |
| Eq. Guinea | 17.7 | 13.9 | | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.1 |
| Ethiopia | 449.7 | 205.7 | 1262.4 | 681.6 | 4.1 | 0.4 | 12.4 | 2.7 |
| Fiji | 63.0 | 58.4 | 65.9 | 63.7 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 2.7 | 0.9 |
| Finland | 202.8 | 183.5 | 191.5 | 181.9 | 30.9 | 28.9 | 63.8 | 59.4 |

| Country (or area) | Primary Level | | | | Post-Secondary level | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| France | 2527.3 | 2412.4 | 2374.4 | 2236.0 | | | 571.9 | 488.5 |
| Fr. Polynesia | 12.4 | 11.7 | 15.1 | 13.9 | | | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Gabon | 52.7 | 47.9 | 72.3 | 69.3 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.3 |
| Gambia | 11.8 | 5.3 | 25.9 | 13.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | | |
| German Dem. Rep. | | | 1042.5 | 1064.0 | 172.9 | 130.3 | 168.5 | 232.3 |
| Germany, F. R. | 3233.1 | 3111.7 | 2638.9 | 2405.5 | 368.5 | 135.3 | 719.8 | 503.4 |
| Ghana | 537.3 | 429.6 | 809.9 | 639.5 | 4.6 | 0.8 | 8.9 | 1.4 |
| Greece | 472.0 | 435.4 | 466.5 | 433.1 | 58.8 | 27.0 | 71.3 | 46.1 |
| Grenada | 15.4 | 15.0 | 9.4 | 8.6 | | | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Guadeloupe | 36.0 | 34.2 | | | | | | |
| Guatemala | 282.1 | 223.6 | 441.3 | 362.1 | 12.7 | 2.9 | 43.0 | 17.0 |
| Guinea | 130.7 | 60.6 | 180.3 | 96.9 | 1.8 | 0.2 | 20.2 | 5.3 |
| Guineabissau | 19.6 | 8.4 | 55.0 | 26.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Guyana | 66.6 | 63.9 | 69.1 | 66.8 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| Haiti | 204.0 | 162.8 | 327.6 | 279.0 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 4.2 | 1.6 |
| Honduras | 191.9 | 189.8 | 295.0 | 272.9 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 20.2 | 12.0 |
| Hong Kong | 389.2 | 350.4 | 286.8 | 263.6 | 17.9 | 7.6 | 43.5 | 18.2 |
| Hungary | 577.7 | 538.3 | 597.0 | 565.2 | 46.1 | 34.4 | 50.9 | 50.3 |
| Iceland | 13.9 | 13.2 | 13.5 | 12.9 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| India | 35739.1 | 21306.3 | 43769.2 | 27848.7 | 2270.6 | 633.0 | 4087.4 | 1435.1 |
| Indonesia | 8089.4 | 6780.8 | 12164.5 | 10740.1 | 185.8 | 62.4 | 277.9 | 116.8 |
| Iran | 1937.8 | 1072.3 | 3310.1 | 2261.0 | 55.7 | 19.0 | 148.9 | 70.9 |
| Iraq | 780.4 | 318.5 | 1403.1 | 1212.8 | 33.0 | 9.4 | 76.0 | 35.0 |
| Ireland | 266.6 | 253.6 | 214.6 | 205.4 | 18.7 | 9.8 | 32.5 | 22.2 |
| Israel | 249.0 | 229.9 | 308.2 | 297.7 | 30.9 | 24.6 | 47.1 | 41.7 |
| Italy | 2505.6 | 2351.3 | 2316.7 | 2189.9 | 428.2 | 259.0 | 641.7 | 476.0 |
| Ivory Coast | 320.0 | 182.9 | 609.1 | 407.3 | 3.8 | 0.6 | 11.9 | 3.1 |
| Jamaica | 177.6 | 176.9 | 179.7 | 178.5 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 7.8 | 5.9 |
| Japan | 4851.9 | 4706.2 | 5985.8 | 5764.8 | 1306.6 | 512.8 | 1620.9 | 791.3 |
| Jordan | 155.5 | 122.1 | 235.4 | 213.0 | 3.2 | 1.3 | 17.2 | 12.9 |
| Kenya | 836.3 | 591.3 | 1843.3 | 1677.2 | 6.7 | 1.1 | 11.6 | 2.7 |
| Korea, D.P. Rep. | | | 1318.7 | 1243.0 | 152.6 | 48.9 | 467.4 | 148.1 |
| Korea, Rep. | 2994.7 | 2754.6 | 2912.6 | 2745.4 | 152.5 | 48.9 | 467.4 | 148.1 |
| Kuwait | 43.7 | 31.8 | 81.0 | 72.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 6.3 | 8.4 |
| Lao P.D.R. | 154.3 | 90.5 | 261.7 | 219.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 1.5 | 0.6 |
| Lebanon | 237.9 | 197.2 | 203.0 | 182.9 | 32.6 | 10.0 | 66.4 | 22.6 |
| Lesotho | 73.4 | 110.0 | 99.8 | 143.3 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 1.3 |
| Liberia | 80.6 | 39.6 | 135.2 | 83.8 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 3.9 | 1.5 |
| Libyan Ar. Jm | 220.6 | 129.6 | 348.3 | 314.6 | 4.6 | 0.6 | 11.6 | 3.7 |
| Luxembourg | 17.6 | 17.0 | 12.7 | 12.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Macau | 13.3 | 11.8 | | | | | | |
| Madagascar | 504.9 | 433.1 | 743.3 | 671.5 | 3.9 | 1.8 | 12.3 | 6.4 |
| Malawi | 227.8 | 134.8 | 487.4 | 340.5 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 1.6 | 0.5 |
| Malaysia | 895.6 | 788.7 | 1038.8 | 974.1 | 10.6 | 3.9 | 27.7 | 15.3 |
| Mali | 131.0 | 72.7 | 210.0 | 123.7 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 6.3 | 0.9 |
| Malta | 20.7 | 19.3 | 16.7 | 15.7 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 0.4 |
| Martinique | 35.1 | 33.7 | | | | | | |
| Mauretania | 23.0 | 8.9 | 60.4 | 36.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.1 |
| Mauritius | 77.4 | 73.0 | 66.4 | 63.2 | 1.9 | 0.1 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| Mexico | 4814.8 | 4433.5 | 7582.4 | 7037.5 | 197.8 | 49.8 | 589.2 | 297.3 |
| Mongolia | 57.2 | 56.4 | 73.6 | 70.1 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 5.4 | 7.8 |
| Morocco | 777.3 | 398.0 | 1379.1 | 810.2 | 13.4 | 2.7 | 76.2 | 24.6 |
| Mozambique | 328.9 | 168.0 | 797.1 | 590.1 | 1.1 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 0.3 |

| Country (or area) | Primary Level | | | | Post-Secondary level | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|---------|---------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Nepal | 279.9 | 53.0 | 761.8 | 285.9 | 14.4 | 3.3 | 40.7 | 9.0 |
| Netherlands | 745.2 | 717.2 | 674.8 | 658.5 | 167.1 | 64.1 | 217.0 | 143.1 |
| New Zealand | 206.6 | 193.8 | 195.4 | 185.8 | | | 45.5 | 31.1 |
| Nicaragua | 141.9 | 143.4 | 209.5 | 215.4 | 6.4 | 3.0 | 22.4 | 10.7 |
| Niger | 58.0 | 30.6 | 136.2 | 80.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.3 |
| Nigeria | 2216.2 | 1299.6 | 6313.8 | 5369.7 | 18.8 | 3.2 | 89.4 | 17.3 |
| Norway | 188.3 | 197.3 | 199.9 | 190.3 | 34.9 | 15.1 | 42.0 | 36.4 |
| Oman | 3.0 | 0.5 | 60.4 | 31.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | |
| Pakistan | 2931.1 | 1061.7 | 5493.4 | 1889.1 | 90.5 | 24.5 | 136.9 | 50.0 |
| Panama | 132.8 | 122.5 | 179.8 | 167.2 | 5.1 | 3.8 | 18.1 | 21.6 |
| Papua N. G. | 121.4 | 69.7 | 176.0 | 123.8 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 7.0 | 1.5 |
| Paraguay | 224.7 | 199.5 | 271.4 | 245.4 | 4.8 | 3.4 | 13.9 | 10.6 |
| Peru | 1266.8 | 1074.3 | 1659.8 | 1517.9 | 82.9 | 43.3 | 195.0 | 101.2 |
| Philippines | 3580.6 | 3388.4 | 4083.3 | 4191.6 | 289.3 | 362.2 | 597.6 | 673.1 |
| Poland | 2726.7 | 2530.2 | 2141.5 | 2025.8 | 209.2 | 188.7 | 260.7 | 328.4 |
| Portugal | 509.5 | 483.0 | 635.8 | 584.3 | 27.8 | 22.2 | 47.9 | 43.4 |
| Puerto Rico | 241.5 | 231.2 | 226.3 | 235.3 | 29.8 | 33.3 | 50.5 | 62.1 |
| Qatar | 8.3 | 6.7 | 15.4 | 14.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.5 |
| Romania | 1461.2 | 1417.5 | 1658.4 | 1578.4 | 86.5 | 65.4 | 109.2 | 81.7 |
| Rwanda | 234.2 | 184.9 | 338.7 | 314.7 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1.3 | 0.1 |
| Saint Lucia | 11.4 | 12.1 | 14.5 | 15.1 | | | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Samoa | 15.2 | 14.3 | 17.3 | 15.7 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| Sao Tome Prn. | 5.0 | 4.0 | 7.5 | 6.7 | | | | |
| Saudi Arabia | 290.4 | 132.3 | 564.9 | 365.0 | 7.8 | 0.7 | 43.7 | 15.6 |
| Senegal | 161.2 | 101.7 | 249.6 | 167.1 | 4.2 | 0.8 | 9.4 | 2.8 |
| Seychelles | 4.6 | 4.6 | 7.1 | 7.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Sierra Leone | 99.4 | 66.7 | 157.9 | 106.9 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 1.5 | 0.3 |
| Singapore | 193.8 | 169.7 | 151.3 | 138.5 | 9.6 | 4.2 | 12.5 | 9.3 |
| Solomon Is. | 13.5 | 7.7 | 16.9 | 12.0 | | | | |
| Somalia | 32.3 | 10.4 | 190.2 | 113.3 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 2.7 | 0.3 |
| Spain | 1970.0 | 1959.5 | 1856.1 | 1753.5 | 164.9 | 60.1 | 382.0 | 299.0 |
| Sri Lanka | 884.4 | 787.0 | 1082.2 | 999.2 | 7.0 | 5.3 | 13.0 | 7.0 |
| St. Christopher | | | 4.2 | 4.1 | | | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| St. Vincent | 14.3 | 13.9 | 11.1 | 10.4 | | | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Sudan | 513.7 | 311.9 | 889.0 | 621.4 | 12.4 | 1.9 | 21.6 | 7.9 |
| Suriname | 47.7 | 44.1 | 43.5 | 39.9 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| Swaziland | 35.6 | 33.5 | 54.4 | 54.7 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.4 |
| Sweden | 313.2 | 302.2 | 341.6 | 325.1 | 81.4 | 59.9 | 109.8 | 91.2 |
| Switzerland | 253.4 | 247.1 | 230.0 | 220.9 | | | 59.4 | 25.8 |
| Syrian Ar. Rep. | 589.1 | 335.9 | 886.8 | 669.6 | 34.2 | 8.5 | 87.1 | 37.6 |
| Thailand | 2859.0 | 2541.0 | 3866.6 | 3504.2 | 55.1 | 35.2 | 325.0 | 250.0 |
| Togo | 157.7 | 70.8 | 300.8 | 193.5 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 4.2 | 0.9 |
| Trinidad Tbg. | 114.5 | 111.2 | 83.3 | 82.2 | 1.5 | 0.9 | 4.8 | 3.1 |
| Tunisia | 570.8 | 364.9 | 616.1 | 437.9 | 8.2 | 2.1 | 21.5 | 10.5 |
| Turkey | 2891.6 | 2120.3 | 3223.3 | 2707.5 | 137.8 | 32.8 | 279.9 | 91.5 |
| Uganda | 663.7 | 446.3 | 889.6 | 656.2 | 3.5 | 0.7 | 5.9 | 1.9 |
| UK | 2972.5 | 2833.9 | 2517.7 | 2393.0 | 401.5 | 199.8 | 529.3 | 302.8 |
| Ukraine SSR | 3398.0 | 3270.0 | | | 420.6 | 386.0 | 422.5 | 408.8 |
| Untd. Arab Em. | 16.5 | 9.4 | 46.3 | 42.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| U. R. Tanzania | 558.4 | 363.7 | 1826.0 | 1624.3 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 3.4 | 0.7 |
| Uruguay | 184.9 | 169.2 | 169.2 | 159.3 | 12.2 | 9.0 | 19.0 | 20.7 |
| USA | | | 14087.0 | 13361.0 | 4991.0 | 3507.2 | 5874.4 | 6222.5 |

| Country (or area) | Primary Level | | | | Post-Secondary level | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1970 | | 1980 | | 1970 | | 1980 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| USSR | | | | | 2333.7 | 2247.0 | 2405.4 | 2448.6 |
| Venezuela | 890.8 | 878.9 | 1271.6 | 1241.7 | 59.7 | 41.1 | 169.1 | 144.4 |
| Vietnam | 3787.2 | 3305.2 | 4215.5 | 3892.8 | 96.0 | 31.6 | 135.9 | 50.1 |
| Yemen | 79.9 | 8.3 | 403.4 | 57.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 5.4 | 0.8 |
| Yugoslavia | 825.3 | 753.7 | 739.5 | 692.1 | 158.2 | 103.0 | 225.0 | 187.0 |
| Zaire | 1952.4 | 1135.6 | 2384.9 | 1893.9 | 11.7 | 0.7 | 30.3 | 6.2 |
| Zambia | 385.7 | 309.0 | 546.1 | 485.4 | 1.2 | 0.2 | 10.4 | 1.8 |
| Zimbabwe | 404.9 | 330.9 | 604.0 | 503.3 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 0.5 |

14. Enrolment ratio, combined primary and secondary levels

| Country (or area) | 1970 | | 1980 | | Country (or area) | 1970 | | 1980 | |
|----------------------|------|-----|------|-----|----------------------|------|----|------|-----|
| | M | F | M | F | | M | F | M | F |
| Afghanistan | 32 | 5 | 41 | 10 | Eq. Guinea | 57 | 39 | | |
| Albania | 90 | 81 | 97 | 89 | Ethiopia | 15 | 7 | 37 | 20 |
| Algeria | 57 | 34 | 74 | 54 | Fiji | 84 | 79 | 92 | 93 |
| Argentina | 80 | 83 | 91 | 95 | Finland | 91 | 93 | 94 | 99 |
| Australia | 101 | 100 | 99 | 100 | France | 90 | 93 | 92 | 100 |
| Austria | 84 | 84 | 80 | 82 | Gambia | 23 | 10 | 42 | 22 |
| Bahrain | 94 | 71 | 85 | 75 | Germany, F.R. | 78 | 78 | 78 | 80 |
| Bangladesh | | | 48 | 26 | Ghana | 61 | 43 | 61 | 44 |
| Barbados | 90 | 88 | 96 | 99 | Greece | 90 | 81 | 94 | 89 |
| Belgium | 93 | 92 | 94 | 95 | Guatemala | 38 | 32 | 48 | 41 |
| Benin | 33 | 15 | 55 | 25 | Guinea | 34 | 14 | 35 | 16 |
| Bhutan | 7 | 0.4 | 10 | 4 | Guineabissau | 40 | 18 | 82 | 36 |
| Bolivia | 72 | 50 | 76 | 64 | Guyana | 80 | 79 | 77 | 78 |
| Botswana | 44 | 49 | 66 | 79 | Haiti | | | 47 | 40 |
| Brazil | | | 76 | 77 | Honduras | 58 | 58 | 69 | 69 |
| Bulgaria | 95 | 94 | 94 | 93 | Hong Kong | 79 | 73 | 80 | 82 |
| Burkina Faso | 9 | 5 | 14 | 8 | Hungary | 70 | 74 | 78 | 82 |
| Burma | 59 | 49 | 54 | 49 | Iceland | 97 | 92 | 94 | 86 |
| Burundi | 24 | 11 | 19 | 12 | India | 63 | 35 | 65 | 41 |
| Cameroon, U. R. | 59 | 41 | 72 | 56 | Indonesia | 55 | 43 | 78 | 65 |
| Canada | 87 | 86 | 94 | 94 | Iran | 67 | 37 | 81 | 55 |
| Cent. Af. Rep. | 51 | 22 | 55 | 28 | Iraq | 68 | 29 | 101 | 78 |
| Chad | 28 | 9 | 29 | 10 | Ireland | 91 | 93 | 95 | 100 |
| Chile | 86 | 89 | 95 | 96 | Israel | 83 | 83 | 86 | 91 |
| China | | | 98 | 77 | Italy | 85 | 77 | 85 | 83 |
| Colombia | 66 | 67 | 81 | 86 | Ivory Coast | 47 | 25 | 61 | 36 |
| Comoros | 26 | 12 | 77 | 52 | Jamaica | 82 | 82 | 75 | 79 |
| Costa Rica | 76 | 77 | 79 | 81 | Japan | 93 | 92 | 97 | 98 |
| Cuba | 75 | 76 | 91 | 90 | Jordan | | | 93 | 90 |
| Czechoslovakia | 73 | 78 | 74 | 82 | Kenya | 49 | 33 | 78 | 68 |
| Dem. Yemen | 59 | 15 | 73 | 29 | Korea, Rep. | 80 | 71 | 97 | 91 |
| Denmark | 89 | 86 | 102 | 101 | Kuwait | 84 | 66 | 87 | 79 |
| Ecuador | 64 | 62 | 77 | 76 | Lao P.D.R. | 36 | 21 | 63 | 51 |
| Egypt | 69 | 40 | 77 | 51 | Lebanon | 85 | 68 | 86 | 80 |
| El Salvador | 61 | 58 | 63 | 63 | Lesotho | 49 | 74 | 58 | 85 |

| Country (or area) | 1970 | | 1980 | | Country (or area) | 1970 | | 1980 | |
|----------------------|------|----|------|----|----------------------|------|-----|------|----|
| | M | F | M | F | | M | F | M | F |
| Liberia | 43 | 20 | 58 | 33 | Rwanda | 47 | 36 | 48 | 43 |
| Luxembourg | 82 | 81 | 78 | 79 | Saudi Arabia | 42 | 18 | 59 | 39 |
| Madagascar | 55 | 46 | 58 | 50 | Senegal | 31 | 18 | 36 | 22 |
| Malawi | 30 | 17 | 52 | 36 | Sierra Leone | 28 | 17 | 32 | 20 |
| Malaysia | 66 | 57 | 72 | 69 | Singapore | 79 | 74 | 79 | 80 |
| Mali | 20 | 10 | 25 | 13 | Somalia | 11 | 3 | 31 | 17 |
| Malta | 80 | 76 | 92 | 87 | Spain | 91 | 85 | 96 | 97 |
| Mauritania | 13 | 4 | 31 | 15 | Sri Lanka | 72 | 69 | 74 | 73 |
| Mauritius | 65 | 59 | 73 | 72 | Sudan | 30 | 18 | 42 | 29 |
| Mexico | 70 | 63 | 89 | 86 | Suriname | 93 | 92 | 79 | 77 |
| Mongolia | | | 93 | 95 | Swaziland | 65 | 61 | 82 | 81 |
| Morocco | 42 | 22 | 59 | 36 | Sweden | 90 | 90 | 90 | 94 |
| Mozambique | | | 55 | 39 | Syrian Ar. Rep. | 78 | 43 | 87 | 64 |
| Nepal | 30 | 6 | 64 | 23 | Thailand | 61 | 55 | 67 | 62 |
| Netherlands | 91 | 86 | 98 | 96 | Togo | 55 | 24 | 98 | 53 |
| New Zealand | 94 | 92 | 91 | 92 | Trinidad | 82 | 84 | 77 | 80 |
| Nicaragua | 54 | 54 | 74 | 80 | Tunisia | 79 | 48 | 75 | 53 |
| Niger | 10 | 5 | 18 | 10 | Turkey | 80 | 53 | 82 | 60 |
| Nigeria | 27 | 16 | | | Uganda | 31 | 19 | 38 | 28 |
| Norway | 85 | 89 | 98 | 99 | UK | 89 | 88 | 90 | 92 |
| Oman | | | 54 | 27 | Untd. Arab. Em. | 75 | 48 | 84 | 91 |
| Pakistan | 37 | 13 | 50 | 18 | U.R. Tanzania | 30 | 19 | 66 | 58 |
| Panama | 76 | 75 | 90 | 91 | Uruguay | 85 | 86 | 81 | 83 |
| Papua N. G. | 40 | 24 | 46 | 33 | USA | 99 | 101 | 99 | 99 |
| Paraguay | 70 | 64 | 69 | 64 | Venezuela | 69 | 70 | 75 | 73 |
| Peru | 78 | 66 | 93 | 84 | Vietnam | | | 84 | 71 |
| Philippines | | | 91 | 93 | Yemen | 14 | 1 | 49 | 7 |
| Poland | 88 | 87 | 92 | 92 | Yugoslavia | 81 | 73 | 91 | 86 |
| Portugal | 84 | 77 | 89 | 88 | Zaire | 67 | 37 | 72 | 47 |
| Qatar | 80 | 71 | 84 | 93 | Zambia | 69 | 53 | 73 | 61 |
| Romania | 89 | 85 | 94 | 92 | Zimbabwe | 52 | 42 | 60 | 52 |

Source: Women: A World Report (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 368-374.