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## THE FUTURE STUDIES OF WOMEN FOR MUSLIMS

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### Abstract

There are many studies about women which have been done by Muslim scholars. The issue of women working outside home and holding public office positions is also still being debated by Muslim scholars nowadays- in fact it seems as a never ending issue in the Muslim world. Researchers have concluded in their research that a woman is permissible to work outside home as well as to hold any public office positions as long she follows Islāmic guidelines. In fact, a truly Islāmic society actually must comprise of women who join the working forces. A part of discussing those Islāmic guidelines; this paper also will highlight some future studies of women that scholars should focus in moving towards a better nation and Muslim civilization.

**Keywords:** Women, future studies and Islām

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### Introduction

It is accepted norm for Muslims that *Sharī'ah* is valid for every time, place, custom and situation. Its validity has been indicated by Allāh in His verse: “*today I have completed your religion (Islām), My favor on you and I have chosen Islām as your religion*” (al-Qur'ān, al-Māidaḥ, 5: 3). The debate about women going outside home to work or to hold any public office positions is still on-going. Basically, there are two main opinions of the issue; they are 1- the opponents and the other is 2- the proponents or the supporters of the idea that women go out home to work. Analytical review of the literatures done by the researchers found that the on-going argument is much related to fanaticism among the adherents of *madhāhib* (Muslims sections of *fiqh*), current patriarchal culture and lack of profound understanding of the related texts (Asar AK & Bouhedda, 2015).

Researchers have concluded in their research<sup>3</sup> that there are slip records in the arguments of the opponents and proponents. They are as follows:

### **Opponents' slips (errors)**

1. They focus a lot on *qiwāmah* verse<sup>4</sup>; whereby the verse indicates the *qiwāmah* of husbands to their wives. They don't discuss much about other verses that relate to the leadership such: i. The story Ṭālūt who had been chosen by the God because his knowledge and physical strength<sup>5</sup> and ii. The story of prophet Shu'aib's girl who asked her father (Shu'aib) to hire prophet Mūsā who was trustworthy and strong person<sup>6</sup>.
2. They circulate rule preventing women from all types of leadership positions according to the āḥād ḥadīth which refers to Caliphate or the highest position in a country; does not be consistent with the spirit of Islām.
3. They do not look at the reality in the Muslim community and other communities in the world. They have forgotten the *maṣlahah* concept of the nation due to their exaggeration in exercising *sad al-dharā'i*.

### **Proponents' slips (errors)**

1. They do not discuss the nature and specific circumstances of women, as if the women are like men in all things. This error is clear and sane imagined.
2. They argue with some weak possibilities, to the extent they compare a just female leader to an unjust male leader. Such reason is not being accepted since its well known to all Muslim scholars that necessity permits prohibitions.
3. They do not understand the story of the Queen of Saba' Balqis in a real way.
4. They do not discuss the verses of al-Qur'ān that related to the story of Ṭālūt and prophet Shu'aib's girl.
5. Most of the evidences provided by the proponents are based on reason; they are not strong

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<sup>3</sup> PhD dissertation which is entitled: "An Analytical Study of Women's Public Office Positions in Islāmic Jurisprudence: The Case of Malaysia" (in Arabic).

<sup>4</sup> Al-Qur'ān, sūrah al-Nisā', 4: 34.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Qur'ān, sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 247.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Qur'ān, sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 23

enough to cope with texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, which provided by the opponents. In fact, there is no need to hold to the reasons by leaving the revelation evidences.

The survey done by the researchers, shows that most of Muslim community in Malaysia (61.3%) approves of women going out to work.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the respondents who agree that women have to work.

1.1.	1.2.	1.3. Male	1.4. Female	1.5. Total (Frequency)	1.6. Percent	1.7. Total Percent
1.8.	1.12. Strongly Does Not Agree	1.13. 7	1.14. 6	1.15. 13	1.16. 3.5	1.17. 1.18.
1.9.						
1.10.						
1.11. Women work	1.19. Does not Agree	1.20. 47	1.21. 17	1.22. 64	1.23. 17.3	1.24.
	1.25. Not Sure	1.26. 33	1.27. 33	1.28. 66	1.29. 17.9	1.30.
	1.31. Agree	1.32. 74	1.33. 113	1.34. 187	1.35. 50.7	1.36.
	1.38. Strongly Agree	1.39. 12	1.40. 27	1.41. 39	1.42. 10.6	1.37. 61.3%
1.43. Total		1.44. 173	1.45. 196	1.46. 369	1.47. 100.0	1.48.

Source: A sample data collection of 369 respondents

### **Islāmic guidelines for women to work outside home and to hold public office positions**

Women are different from men by nature and culture. A woman will undergo deficiencies in certain periods, where the mood is incomplete and dysfunctional equilibrium such in the menstruation, pregnancy and postpartum. Therefore, Islām does not oblige a woman to be the breadwinner for herself nor her family. Her main roles are connected more at home, i.e. becoming a good daughter, wife and mother (Abu Fāris, 1420H/ 2000M). A Muslim woman should value thoroughly all the advantages and disadvantages of her work outside home; does it really worth to work outside home or to hold those public positions?

In general, the Islāmic guidelines for women to work outside home could be categorized into three main sections, they are (Asar AK & Bouhedda, 2016): **Those guidelines that related to women themselves;** they are: 1- it should be out a permissible need in Sharī'ah as what has been explained by al-Qarāḍāwī (1418H/ 1998M). 2- The permission of the husband or guardian. 3- Adhering to the Sharī'ah rulings related to Muslim women outside home. **B- Those guidelines that related to work itself;** they are: 1. The work must be permissible under Sharī'ah. 2. The work must not prevent her from fulfilling the rights of the husband and children. 3. The work must not lead her to travel without a *mahram* or believing women. 4. Work that is suitable for the nature of the woman. **C- The community/ society environment is Islāmic or friendly with Islām.** For those Islāmic guidelines for women to hold public office positions; the researchers have concluded that it is permissible for a woman to hold any public office positions except the highest position in a country such becoming the head of state and it's alike due to the existing authentic hadīth that clearly prevents it. She also should not hold those positions that clearly require manhood strong body and mental, such as Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Homeland Security, etc. However, the ruling is based on some new guidelines to the existing Islāmic guidelines for women to work outside home such the approval of her Muslim community/ society.

### **The future studies of women for Muslims**

Sharī'ah texts also state that women are different from men, Allāh says in al-Qur'ān: *"So when she brought forth (the baby), she said: My Lord! Surely I have brought it forth a female and Allāh knew best what she brought forth. And the male is not like the female and I have named her Maryam*



*(Mary) and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from the accursed satan”* (Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3: 36). The difference also may be seen in their compatibility in holding various works or public office positions. However, man and woman are completing each other, each has his or her own strength; there is no such thing to compete against each other as what is being promoted by some movements nowadays. The main issue here is giving the right person with the right position/ job; this is the essence of this issue.

A man is stronger in his physical body compared to a woman, even in the world of animals. However, a woman is naturally more eligible than a man to the feelings of others. That is why we find women are more superior than men in those works which related to nursing, educating, health and social work activities. This is a gift that Allāh gives to all women in her nature. For this reason, we see most of the Malaysian women involves in the field of education and welfare and social service as shown by [Department of Statistics Malaysia](#) (2014)<sup>7</sup>. Hence, the urgent future studies of women that Muslim scholars should focus in detail are those related to the jobs which suit the nature of women and how the government or her society could help them to work and deliver their best. The studies must concern about a woman’s responsibilities as a wife to her husband and a mother to her children. Those studies could be as follows:

- 1- The study of the ability of a woman in holding certain jobs or positions with objective evaluation from experts and workers of the jobs.
- 2- The study of the positive and negative effects to the woman and her family based on respective Muslim societies, each society or environment is different from others.
- 3- The study of all state current laws and guidelines which related to women for each job in Islāmic pespective.
- 4- The study of those needs and facilities that a society or a government should provide for a woman to work outside home.

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<sup>7</sup> [Department of Statistics Malaysia](#), *Labour Force Survey Report 2013* (Putrajaya: Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2014), pg. 84-85.

## Conclusion

It is pointless for a woman to get money or to get her dreamed job/ position/ status in stake of her children. Muslims Ummaḥ does not benefit much from those problematic generation resulted from their busy parents especially from the busy working mothers. This is one of the main problems faced by Western nowadays. However, we also do not deny those problems made by irresponsible men (husbands) and the current high cost of living that gives no option for a woman except to work outside home in order to get a better life. There is no generalization a fatwā to all Muslim world since each country has its different environment. Some countries may not suit for women to work outside home nor to hold public office positions due to some conditions such security, war, etc... Hence what matters to Muslims and people all over the world is to study on how women can work outside home and hold those public positions in the best way.

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