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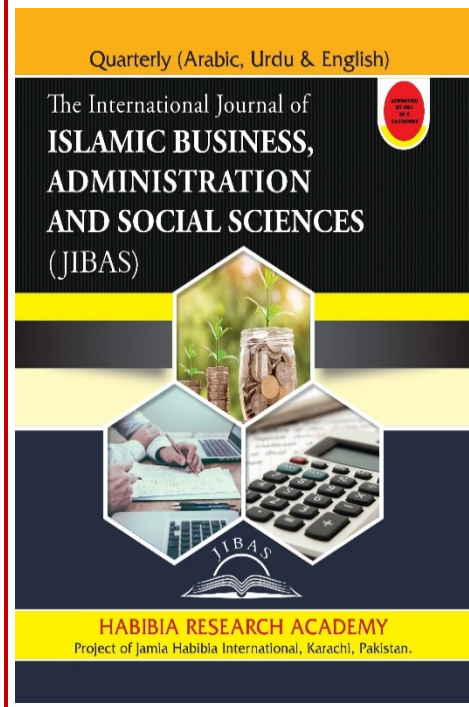
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**TOPIC:**

**“A CRITICAL REVIEW ABOUT THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY & THE VISION OF IQBAL”**

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**“A CRITICAL REVIEW ABOUT THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF GENDER  
EQUALITY & THE VISION OF IQBAL”**

*Najmul Sahar Ilyas,*

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*Amber Mehar*

**ABSTRACT:**

*Allama Muhammad Iqbal is counted among those intellects whose exceptional greatness and glory are agreed upon by the entire Muslim Ummah. Through his poetry, he blew a new spirit of awareness among the Muslims of the subcontinent and awakened in them the desire to throw off the shackles of slavery. Through his speech, he evaluated the effects of the social problems and presented the possible measures and their solutions to the public. In Iqbal's poetry, women have a special place and status. He is a great bearer of the greatness of women and a supporter of women's freedom, but Iqbal considers the concept of equality between men and women described by the West to be a delusion. According to him, women are being exploited in the West in the name of equality, while Islam better protects the rights of women and represents their legitimate rights in society.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Women's freedom, Social problems, Delusion, Equality, Muslim Ummah, Slavery*

**Literature Review:**

The following books have been used in the research paper under review.

**1) “Aurat Islami Mashray Mein”:**

Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Omari, president of Aligarh Institute of Research and Authorship, “Aurat Islami Mashray Mein ” is an important and well-known book in the Urdu language on the topic of women's status in Islam. When it was first published half a century ago, there was no book of this style in Urdu, but even now, while many books have appeared on the subject, the comprehensiveness of its discussion, the reasoning it is distinguished from other books in its power and style. Its popularity can be estimated from the fact that it has been printed thirteen (13) times in India and more than that in Pakistan.

**2) “Rooh-e-Iqbal”:**

Many books have been written in the movement of Iqbalism to understand his poetry and to identify his thinking. Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan's "Spirit of Iqbal" is also a link in the same chain, the poet of the East Allama Iqbal. In the words of Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan, this work was published for the first time in 1942. Rooh-e- Iqbal has three parts, in which Iqbal and Art, Iqbal's Philosophy of Civilization, and Iqbal's Religious and Metaphysical Concepts are highlighted in a fascinating manner respectively. This book is very coherent and complete, due to which almost all aspects of Iqbal's thoughts and poetry are covered.

**3) “Iqbal Nayee Tashkeel”:**

There is an important thematic book in the chapter of Iqbaliyat. In this book, understanding of Iqbal's art and message cannot be better than how his background is explained, Iqbal's poetry and philosophy as well as thought and art in Iqbal's style. Attempted to understand, this book is the best source to understand and explain Iqbal's Islamic orientation in the right context, which is the reason why this book is considered a very important book on Iqbalism.

**The Beginning of Women’s Liberation Movement:**

The mutual relationship between man and woman has been established on the principle of

distribution according to natural principles and the system of life has continued on this principle for thousands of years. According to this, the man does the work outside and the woman takes care of the system inside the house. But as a result of the industrial revolution in Europe, women also left the responsibilities of the house and started participating in the economic struggle alongside men. When women became self-sufficient, the idea arose in their minds that they should not be under the influence of men and come out of the restrictions of men and make their own lives. As a result of this thought, the movement which is known as the women's liberation movement was initiated.

The women's liberation movement is associated with the industrial revolution in Europe because it first started in the countries where the industrial revolution took place first.<sup>1</sup> The history of liberal feminism suggests that it first started in England. The first notable book demanding equal rights for women was published in London, entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, by Mary Wollstonecraft" (1792)<sup>2</sup>

### **Iqbal's Vision of Gender Equality:**

Allama Iqbal was not convinced of the complete equality between men and women in the Western style, he was fully committed to the teachings of the Qur'an and Islamic teachings that is why he was a supporter of the principle of division between men and women in the Islamic style. He calls a man a woman's guardian; this is explained by his poems.

اک زندہ حقیقت مرے سینے میں ہے مستور

۳ کیا سمجھے گا وہ جس کی رگوں میں ہے لہو سرد

A living truth is hidden in my chest, but only those whose blood is not cold in their veins can understand it, that is, whose emotions have not died. What is that fact is described in the next verse

نے پردہ، نہ تعلیم نئی ہو کہ پرانی

نسوانیت زن کا نگہبان فقط مرد

The living reality that the poet has mentioned in the first stanza. And which only people with living emotions can understand. The fact is that if anyone can be the protector of a woman's femininity, it is only a man. If the man is devoid of the spirit of guarding her, then neither veil nor education, be it new or old, can maintain the femininity of a woman. In such a case, a woman will not remain a woman and will become something else.

جس قوم نے اس زندہ حقیقت کو نہ پایا

اس قوم کا خورشید بہت جلد ہو ازرد

Iqbal says that the living reality which was hidden in my chest and which I have clearly explained in the above-mentioned poem is the living reality that if there is a guardian of femininity, it is only a man, because if a man lives his humanity. Only if he keeps it, he can protect the woman's femininity, otherwise, the wife will be the same as he will be because a melon catches its color by looking at a melon. A nation that cannot find this secret should understand that the sun of this nation is about to set soon. The nations that have accepted

women's freedom as the freedom from the responsibilities as a mother have rebelled against nature and those who rebel against nature must be punished.

This need and weakness is the point due to which the man has some superiority over the woman and this is the requirement of nature. Acting against it leads to chaos in society.

#### **Education for Women & Iqbal:**

Iqbal considered the education of women very important and emphasized it, he said that women should be educated because it is the woman whose existence makes the nation, if she is not educated, then the whole nation will be destroyed. He writes under the title of Women and Education.

تہذیبِ فرنگی ہے اگر موت اس وقت  
ہے حضرتِ انسان کے لئے اس کا ثمر موت

If the civilization of the people of the West teaches women that they should not become a mother, not give birth to children, and then understand that the fruit of this civilization will be nothing but death for a human being. That is, if mothers stop giving birth to children, then the human being will be destroyed from the world and the Western culture is encouraging the woman not to become a mother, the result of which is nothing but the death of human beings.

جس علم کی تاثیر سے زن ہوتی ہے  
کہتے ہیں اس علم کو اربابِ ہنر موت

All the animate or inanimate creatures created by Allah, each of them has their own basic attribute or essence. If that essence is removed from it, then that object will definitely be that object in vision, but in reality, it will become something else. For example, the main essence of fire is heat and burning, if this attribute is taken away from it, it will be fire in appearance and not fire in reality. Similarly, a woman also has a basic essence and that is her attribute of womanhood which is based on her modesty. If the essence of modesty is removed from a woman, then she will definitely be a woman in appearance, but in reality, she will no longer be a woman. Allama says that modern knowledge is the knowledge that by reading and accepting its influence, a woman has lost her femininity.

بیگانہ رہے دین سے اگر مدرسہء زن  
ہے عشق و محبت کے لئے علم و ہنر موت

If a woman's education and training is in a seminary in which there is no interference of religion, then every knowledge and every skill she will learn will be a cause of death for her feelings of love and affection and the woman will not achieve her goal. He will be completely oblivious to creation and duties. If women, especially Muslim women, are to be educated in modern madrassas, it is necessary for them to first strengthen the foundation of their religion so that Western science cannot force them to build on it a misguided and false edifice.

In Iqbal's opinion, if she can achieve a great achievement in the field of knowledge and skill, then her status does not decrease. It is a great honor for her that personalities who have achieved outstanding achievements in every field of life grow in her lap and no person in the world is not grateful for her kindness.

Dr. Iqbal certainly encourages women's education, but according to him, education should be such that it improves the personality and does not lead to the adoption of Western civilization. This knowledge shouldn't promote immorality and irresponsibility. Allama says in his poetry:

لڑکیاں پڑھ رہی ہیں انگریز  
دیکھ لی قوم نے فلاح کی راہ  
یہ تماشا دکھائے گا کیا سین  
پردہ اٹھنے کی منتظر ہے نگاہ

The girls are learning English  
the nation prosperity's way has found

the ways of the West are in view  
Eastern ways of sinful are found

what scenes will this drama produce?  
On the curtain's rising this will be found

#### **Interpretation of the above poetry:**

English here does not mean that there is any defect in the English language, but Iqbal is against the civilization and culture that is associated with this language. Iqbal believes that if an uneducated, uncivilized religious woman raises a child and as a result, a pious Muslim comes into existence, then she is little better than a modern, cultured, and irreligious woman. It is said in the Holy Quran that:

"A believing slave is better than a polytheist free woman, no matter how much you like her."<sup>5</sup>

This shows that Iqbal is a supporter of worldly education as well as religious education – he wants to make a woman a caretaker of the house, family, and children. He believes that if she becomes a fantasy figure, it will cause problems.

By raising the slogan of equality between men and women, women had to come out of the house and join the economic struggle, which had very harmful effects on society.

Professor Sar Dakken Puri, surveying the whole society after the Women's Liberation Movement, says:

"We now eat in hotels and restaurants, our bread comes from bakeries, our clothes are washed in laundries, earlier people turned to families for entertainment but now they turn to cinemas, theatres, and clubs." Early family was the focus of our interest and comfort was sought in family life. But now family members are scattered and even if some stay together, the purpose is lost. He spends most of the day alone. Live in worry of livelihood. The

nighttime in which the family members used to gather is now also spent in separation. Now our homes are no longer a place of rest for us, wherever we are at night, it is at night. Just mentioned, now people don't like to stay in their homes even for a whole night.”<sup>6</sup>

Man is made superior to women:

In Surah-e-Nisa Allah Says:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ط - (القرآن)

Translation: Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially.

This is the general principle according to which Islam gave women the rights that men enjoyed at that time fourteen hundred years ago. This decision was principled.

Social financial rights are in their place in Muslim but to keep the family unit balanced and stable, the man has been appointed as the manager of the house. Declaring it as a unit, a man has been appointed as its head. For which he has used the word "Qawaam" which means the one who supervises and manages all kinds of things. A house manager is appointed so that the house system runs on strong and healthy lines. Give two reasons for making a man an administrator so that the misunderstandings created in the mind of a woman can be resolved. First, men are created stronger and superior to women mentally and physically. The second reason is that the responsibility of protecting the wife and children and their expenses has been put on the man. So that a woman can live a life of peace, serving her husband, training children, and being a fragile woman, avoiding external entanglements. If you think carefully, a woman's domestic duties are so much that she cannot even look at outside work. Even if the dual responsibility of employment or business is put on her.

Society is witnessing women who work out of compulsion or simply to augment the household budget. They have to hire a maid to take care of the house and children. Otherwise, their household becomes chaotic, and they don't even have time to cook. Such couples also bring food from the hotel while coming home from their duties. Due to these problems, the woman has been made the queen of the house and the husband has been made responsible for difficult matters. Ever since Muslim women started to participate in the responsibilities of men without coercion in the style of Western women, since that time, with the emergence of independence and arrogance in women, the Muslim society has become a victim of vandalism, the peace of homes has been destroyed, and the children of their parents have been destroyed. Disobeyed. How much better it would have been if we had handled our responsibilities according to the distribution of Allah Almighty if we would have been protected from the disobedience of children, destruction of homes, and social immorality. Two qualities should be prominent in the role of a righteous wife. She should be obedient to her husband and protect his honor, wealth, and children. Just as Allah has ordered her to supervise the house. If a woman comes against a man and rebels against him, She should be advised in better words and a better manner. In case of conflict, the home life will suffer from anxiety and imbalance and will also have bad effects on the children. It has very negative effects, especially on the future of daughters.

It should be kept in mind that overall; the male sex is better than the female sex, not that every man is better than every woman. Some women are more than many men in knowledge and wisdom, like Umm Al-Momineen Hazrat Aisha Siddiqa Radiya Allahu Ta'ala Anha, and millions of men follow her teachings. No one is equal to her in status and honor. Likewise, Many Sahabi women are better than non-Sahabi elders.

Islam gave a high status of dignity and honor to women. After the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ, Ummat al-Mu'minin performed scholarly services for almost half a century. Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqa, may Allah be pleased with her, holds a high rank and position in terms of knowledge. The great Jalil-ul-Qadr Companions used to come to your Majlis to acquire knowledge. She contributed significantly to the academic, practical, social, individual, and collective education and training of the Muslim Ummah.

Prof. Aziz Ahmed writes about this in his book "Iqbal Nai Tashkeel".

“According to Iqbal, both men and women together create the universe of love. And from the warmth of this fire, evolving human beings are born. From the conscience of a woman, new possibilities for human life are created. According to Iqbal, a woman needs solitude, and a man needs to be surrounded”<sup>8</sup>

## WOMAN

وجود زن سے ہے تصویر کائنات میں رنگ

اسی کے ساز سے ہے زندگی کا سوز دروں

The picture that this world presents from a woman gets its tints and scents'; she is the lyre that can impart pathos and warmth to the human heart.

شرف میں بڑھ کے ثریا سے مشمت خاک اس کی

کہ ہر شرف ہے اسی درج کا درکنوں

Her handful clay is superior far to the Pleiades that so higher are for every man with knowledge vast like gem out of her cask is cast.

مکالمات فلاطون نہ لکھ سکی، لیکن

اسی کے شعلے سے ٹوٹا شرار افلاطون

Like Plato cannot hold discourse, nor can with thunderous voice declaim but was a spark that broke from her fire that blazed like a flame.

(Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah)

### Role of Man & Woman in the light of Iqbal's thought:

Dr. Yusuf Hussain Khan writes in "Rooh-e-Iqbal". "Iqbal says that a woman has the same human rights as a man, but both of them have different spheres of action. He (Iqbal) was not convinced of complete equality of men and women. "<sup>10</sup>

According to Iqbal, it is a great honor for a woman that the great personalities who make achievements in every field of life grow up in her arms and there is no person in the world who is not blessed by her.

Islam has specifically emphasized women's rights and otherwise threatened the wrath of God. Islam gives very high status to women as a mother. According to the saying of our Holy Prophet (PBUH)

11 إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَقُوقَ الْأُمَّهَاتِ

"God has forbidden you from disobeying your mothers."

The building of the nation depends on the education and training of the mothers and the people of the nation can be elevated by the virtues of morals and actions through their mothers, who are endowed with high morals and character. Nations are raised in the arms of mothers. Therefore, the Holy Prophet said:

12 "الْجَنَّةُ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِ الْأُمَّهَاتِ"

"Paradise is under the feet of **mothers**".

Islam has appointed women for her children at the place where greatness ends.

Iqbal in his poetry says that,

کوئی پوچھے حکیم یورپ سے!  
ہندو یونان ہیں جس کے حلقہ بگوش  
کیا یہی ہے معاشرت کا کمال!  
13 مرد بے کار وزن تہی آغوش

In this poem, Iqbal has criticized the social system of Europe. Thus, European rulers made great progress in science and philosophy. Therefore, the people of the East and the West are imitating their ideas. But their wisdom did not teach Man how to live and did not establish a proper system of society. And this is the result of this mistake. That men are suffering from unemployment and women do not have the tendency to reproduce. That is, they are afraid of giving birth to children because they consider their upbringing to be a burden for them.

Iqbal also opposes Western education for women because it weakens the tradition of motherhood and women lose their natural characteristics. In the eyes of Iqbal, the origin of all the activities of the world is the mother's character, the mother's character is the best possibility, and the revolutions of the world can be nurtured in the lap of mothers. That is why the mother's personality is the most valuable possession of a nation. A nation that doesn't value its mothers will soon disintegrate.

جہان را حکمی از امہات است  
نہادشان امین ممکنات است  
اگر این نکتہ را قومی نداند  
14 نظام کار و بارش بی ثبات است

Mother's personality is so high that the present and future of the nation depend on her training. The role of the mother is fundamental in shaping the destiny of nations, so a woman should spend her full abilities fulfilling the duty of motherhood her self-reliance comes from this source.

اس بحث کا کچھ فیصلہ میں کر نہیں سکتا  
<sup>15</sup>گو خوب سمجھتا ہوں کہ یہ زہر ہے، وہ قند

In this poem, the discussion of Azadi-e-Naswan (women's freedom) has become an important issue in the modern era. The poet says that I cannot pass any judgment on this debate because I understand well what poison is and what sugar is. In other words, there is a clear difference between the poison of a woman's freedom and the sweetness of her original and natural feminine state.

کیا فائدہ کچھ کہہ کے بنوں اور بھی معتب  
 پہلے ہی خفا مجھ سے ہیں تہذیب کے فرزند

In the first stanza of this poem, Iqbal has said that I cannot decide on women's liberation, it does not mean that he is not qualified to make a decision, but the secret behind it is mentioned in the second stanza. He says that if I have given the right decision that women should not be free to such an extent that it creates disorder in the society, then the followers of the current civilization, who have already acknowledged my veracious words and decisions against Western civilization. They will be angry with me even more

اس راز کو عورت کی بصیرت ہی کرے فاش  
 مجبور ہیں، معذور ہیں، مردان خرد مند

Wise men who can give a correct judgment on the issue of women's freedom are silent under the constraints of circumstances and disabilities because in the present conditions the unrestrained freedom of women has become so common that if anyone tries to stop it, women and women Freedom bearers will be criticized. I leave this decision to the woman who nowadays considers herself very wise to reveal this secret with her wisdom as to which of the two things is right and desirable and which is wrong and undesirable. I cannot say anything

کیا چیز ہے آرائش و قیمت میں زیادہ  
 آزادی نسواں کہ زمرہ کا گلو بند!

Allah Ta'ala who has created two separate physical and characteristic statues of man and woman. It is said in the Holy Qur'an that we have made man superior to woman. That is, the man has been made to protect the woman and fulfill all her needs while sitting at home. Now, to the woman who wants to live her own independent life free from men, Allama asks that she should tell me that according to her, her unrestrained freedom is more valuable than her adornment or the diamond necklace around her neck and that the man has given

to her for her adornment( without the financial struggle of her). From this questioning style, a wise woman will get the same answer that from my freedom in which I have taken on the responsibilities of my desires more than my natural responsibilities, therefore, the limited freedom that I have at home is better for me. Sitting down. And in which man is giving me all the blessings of life without my hard work and effort.

The summary of the arguments of the feminists was that the difference between men and women in ancient societies was not caused by nature but by society. A woman can do anything a man does or can do. But the ancient social conditions did not give women a chance to emerge. If this social pressure is removed, women will work side by side with men in every field. She will never be behind a man.

This movement has been around for two and a half hundred years now. In modern developed countries, it has been completely successful in its goal that there are no longer the social conditions that, according to the pioneers of this movement, would allow women to achieve equal status. This freedom became an obstacle for women to gain respect and honor in society. Equality laws have been made in every country. There is absolutely no hindrance left in the way of a woman in terms of law or custom. Despite this, women still lag behind men. She could not achieve the equality of men in any field.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* summarizes what it says about women in modern society:

In the economic sphere, women who work outside the home are heavily concentrated in the lowest paying work and that having the lowest status. Women also earn less than men in the same kinds of jobs. The median pay of women workers in the US was 60 percent of that of men in 1982. In Japan, the percentage of average pay was 55. Politically, women are greatly underrepresented in national and local government and political parties(X/732)<sup>16</sup>

According to the Current statistics based on the data of 2022 given by “The American Association of University Women”.

Women working full-time in the U.S. are still paid just 83 cents to every dollar earned by men (per hour) and the consequences of this gap affect women throughout their lives. The pay gap even follows women into retirement: As a result of lower lifetime earnings, they receive [less in Social Security and pensions](#). In terms of overall retirement income, women have only 70% of what men do.<sup>17</sup>

#### **The Gender pay gap situation in the EU:**

According to the official website of the European Union

Women in the EU earned on average 13% less per hour than men in 2020. Still, there are huge differences between the EU countries.

The gender pay gap in the EU stands at 12.7 % in 2021 and has only changed minimally over the last decade. It means that women earn 13.0 % on average less per hour than men.<sup>18</sup>

Iqbal describes the role of Hazrat Fatima as an example and ideal for Muslim women. Hazrat Fatimah's life as a daughter, wife, and mother is a role model for all women in the world.

مزرع تسلیم را حاصل بتول رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہا

19 مادران را اسوه کامل بتول رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہا

Meaning: Hazrat Fatima (RA) is the recipient of Peace cultivation, she is the perfect role model for Muslim mothers.

فطرت توجذبه با دار و بلند  
چشم ہوش از اسوۂ زہر امند

Meaning: O Muslim woman, your nature is full of high spirits. So, keep your eyes fixed on the example of Hazrat Fatima, so that your offspring also bears character like Hussain, and the spring comes again in the garden of Muslims.

Addressing Muslim mothers, Iqbal says:

اگر پندے زدر ویشے پزیری  
ہزار امت بمیرد تونہ میری

Meaning: If you follow the advice of a dervish (i.e, Iqbal), you will live forever, the nations of the world may die, but death will not be able to spoil you

بتولے باش و پنہاں شوازیں عصر  
کہ در آغوش شبیرے بگیری

Meaning: Become a virgin and hide from this age so that Shabbir (like a man) can be raised in your embrace

In view of Allama Iqbal, a righteous family, and society will be created by implementing these things. Islam also provides such an environment for women in which they can use all their abilities in a better way. This is what Allama Iqbal said that it is by nature, its violation inevitably leads to distortion and chaos in the society.

جس قوم نے اس زندہ حقیقت کو نہ پایا  
اس قوم کا خورشید بہت جلد ہو اورد

A nation that cannot find this secret should understand that the sun of this nation is about to set soon. The nations who have accepted women's freedom as the freedom from the responsibilities of a mother and father have actually rebelled against nature, and those who rebel against nature must be punished.

### Conclusion:

Iqbal's ideas are based on Islamic teachings, and he is a supporter of the same limits and restrictions regarding women that have been set by Islam. Allama Iqbal was convinced of the protection of women and wanted to create a society where men guard and protect femininity because, in the society, anti-woman wolves are found at every step, from which the honor and dignity of women are in danger at every moment.

If we take the example of a state, qualified people are appointed to various positions to run the administration of a country, for example, Prime Minister, President, Foreign Minister, Interior Minister, Chief Justice, Chief of Army Staff, etc. If a country has two

Prime Ministers or two Presidents, instead of running the country, most of their time will be spent in the division of powers and fighting for their status and rank. Similarly, the family is also an institution in which men and women are bound by their spheres, and the family system can suffer destruction by the violation of powers and affairs.

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