

Women in Islam - Supplementary Notes for Teachers
Slide 2 of 18 – Think. Pair. Share.
<p>(A) Knowledge and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some important rights for women? <p>(B) Ideas and insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should discuss the question with the person next to them. Answers could include the right to an education, to property, to earn an equal wage, to seek a divorce, to live free from discrimination. Collate responses and display on a white board for the whole group.
Slide 3 of 18 – Aims and Objectives
<p>(A) Knowledge and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the aims and objectives of this topic, as listed on the slide. <p>(B) Ideas and insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before we begin this topic, ask Students to share what rights they feel Muslim women have, and what rights they do not have. For example, consider property rights, right to an education, right to earn and keep their earnings, right to seek a divorce.
Slide 4 of 18 – Key Vocabulary
<p>(A) Knowledge and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the Key vocabulary on slide 4. <p>(B) Ideas and insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reinforce understanding, ask students to write a sentence in their books using each of the Key Vocabulary words.
Slide 5 of 18 – In what year did these rights become law in Britain for women?
<p>(A) Knowledge and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to vote – 1928 • This was driven by Emmeline Pankhurst, (born July 14 1858, Manchester, England—died June 14, 1928, London). She was a militant champion of woman suffrage whose 40-year campaign achieved complete success in the

year of her death, when British women obtained full equality in the voting franchise¹.

- The right to seek divorce – 1937
- Before The Matrimonial Causes Act 1923, men could divorce women on the basis of adultery, but women were required to prove that their male partners had undertaken adultery *and* additional offences, such as incest, sodomy, cruelty (roughly equivalent to domestic violence) and other possible reasons. A. P. Herbert (1890–1971) was elected as an Independent MP for the Oxford University constituency in November 1935 and subsequently took the Matrimonial Causes Bill to parliament where it was passed in 1937²
- The right to inherit from a husband – 1926
- Women who held property of any kind were required to give up all rights to it to their husbands on marriage. However, a long-running campaign by various women's groups led in 1870 to the Married Women's Property Act. Under legislation passed in 1926 women were allowed to hold and dispose of property on the same terms as men.³
- The right to keep own earnings – 1870
- Prior to this law all a wife's possessions, her wealth and her property were controlled by her husband. She could not dispose of any belongings without his consent.
- Millicent Fawcett, feminist and politician and other women who were trying to pursue careers in medicine, education and politics formed the Kensington Society primarily to debate Parliamentary reform and the right of women to vote. They also took up the cause of the property rights of married women and their hard work won over various members of Parliament to enable the act to reach the statute books.
- The Act reads: A married woman shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, be capable of acquiring, holding, and disposing by will or otherwise, of any real or personal property as her separate property, in the same manner as if she were a feme sole, without the intervention of any trustee.⁴
- The right to attend university – 1878
- In 1864 a Schools Enquiry Commission surveyed secondary education and saw a general deficiency in girls' education and recorded only 12 public secondary schools for girls in England and Wales. The Education Act of 1870 set the framework for the elementary education of children, but secondary education was largely unavailable to working class girls. Girton College, Cambridge, opened in 1869 as the College for Women, was the first residential college for women. Other universities began to offer courses for women which did not lead to degrees. In 1878, the University of London was the first university in the UK to accept women students on equal terms with men and award degrees to female students.⁵

(B) Ideas and insights

- Which of these, if any, were rights given by Islam to women? (Answer: all of them. See next slide)

Slide 6 of 18 – Islamic teachings on rights for women

(A) Knowledge and understanding

- From the very outset, Islam has guaranteed the rights of all women. Islamic teachings liberate women and establish their true status and honour.
- Slide 6 lists some of the key rights that Islam has given to Muslim women, together with their reference from the Holy Qur’an. Students should be reminded that these rights were given to Muslim women long before they were afforded to women in the West.
- Islam not only gave women rights, but it also elevated their status. Such is the highly revered status of a mother in Islam that the Holy Prophet^(pbuh) has said: “Paradise lies at the feet of your mothers.” (Reference: Ibn Majah)

(B) Ideas and insights

- Prepare a poster showing the rights awarded to women in Islam and when the equivalent rights became law in England.

Slide 7 and 8 of 18 – Pre-Islamic Arabia

(A) Knowledge and understanding

- In pre-Islamic Arabia, and in the rest of the world, the condition of women was equal to that of slaves and chattels with no rights. Women could neither own nor inherit property. In domestic affairs, they had no rights over their children or themselves; in fact, they could be sold or abandoned by their husbands at will. If they were abused by their husbands, they had no recourse to divorce. They had no real status in the society, not being respected as wife, mother or daughter. In fact, daughters were considered worthless and were often killed at birth. Women were given little or no education, and had no say in religious matters, being regarded as limited in spirituality and intellect.
- These abusive conditions existed well into the 19th century in most parts of the world, even in the United States, where some basic rights were given to women only in the beginning of the 20th century.
- In Arabia, in the 6th century, with the advent of Islam the condition of women changed dramatically. Almost overnight, women were endowed with equal rights and put on the same level with men.
- In the Holy Qur’an, Allah makes it clear that He created men and women as equal beings. We read in Chapter 39, Verse 7: “He has created you from a single being; then of the same kind made its mate.” (39:7)
- The Holy Qur’an further ensures woman’s equality on the spiritual, intellectual, social and economic level. In addition, women’s rights were

safeguarded by the Holy Prophet^{pbuh}, as he himself carried out the commands of Allah and treated women with great honour, kindness and dignity.

(B) Ideas and insights

- Students could carry out the tasks in **Slide 8**. Students can work in pairs/groups. If a copy of the Holy Qur'an is not available, use: <https://www.alislam.org/quran/app/>
- Invite students to share their views on the discussion topic.

Slide 9 of 18 – Portrayal of Muslim Women in the Media

(A) Knowledge and understanding

- The Muslim council of Britain researched the portrayal of Muslims in the UK media. The Centre for Media Monitoring analysed more than 48,000 online articles and 5,500 broadcast clips from 34 media organisations that mentioned Islam and Muslims between 2018 and 2019. The report revealed that 59 per cent of online media outlets associated Muslims and Islam with negative aspects or behaviour.
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-media-muslims-islam-islamophobia-b1976742.html>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/7/9/uk-medias-portrayal-of-muslims-misleading-and-negative-study>

(B) Ideas and insights

- Invite Students to consider the following:
 - How do you think Muslim women are portrayed in the Media? How do you think this makes them feel?
 - Based on what we have learnt about the rights of Muslim Women, do you think the Media is correct in its portrayal of Muslim women?
 - What effect does negative media portrayal have on shaping our views, and the views of future generations?

Slide 10 of 18 – Examples of well-known Muslim women

(A) Knowledge and understanding

- The Muslim Women Power List - unveiled at a ceremony in Manchester 24/03/2009- was chosen by a panel of judges led by Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The judges were asked to select women who had demonstrated significant results through strong leadership, successful performance in their chosen career, and had inspired their colleagues and peers
- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/gallery/2009/mar/25/muslim-women-power-list>

- Baroness Sayeeda Warsi: Member of the House of Lords, has been named as Britain's most powerful Muslim woman.
- Other examples of prominent Muslim women in the Media include Nadiya Hussain, winner of The Great British Bake Off, who baked for the late Queen Elizabeth II and Malala Yusafzai, a young campaigner who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her fight for the right of every child to receive an education.

Slide 11 of 18 – Muslim women: Serving their Faith and Serving their communities

(A) Knowledge and understanding

- Islam teaches Muslims to utilise their skills for the service of the wider community. Muslim women practice in a variety of professions including Medicine, Science, Engineering, Media, Teaching and Law.
- Students may have Muslim Teachers or have a Muslim GP they visit.
- The important point to note here is that contrary to what the Media may portray, Islam empowers Muslim women to excel in all spheres of life - whether this is as mothers and homemakers, or professionals or indeed both. Muslim Women are proud to serve their Faith: they worship Allah and observe modestly. They are also proud to actively participate and integrate in their local communities whether as professionals, charity workers or simply offering their time and skills to help those in need.

(B) Ideas and insights

- Explain the Task on **Slide 12**. The Task can be completed as homework or as part of the lesson.
- INDIVIDUAL/HOMEWORK TASK: Each student can have a printout of the fact files and use it to complete the table (which they can copy into their books).
- CLASS TASK: Split the class into 5 groups. Provide each group with a fact file. Students could read the fact file and make a summary, including the four points in the table. Each group must present their responses to the wider class. In this way, all students in the class would gain an understanding of all 5 Muslim Women mentioned in the fact files.
- At the completion of the task, ask students to consider: How do these women compare to the 3 words you thought of at the start of the lesson?

Slide 13 of 18 - MUSLIM WOMEN: KHADIJAH AL-KUBRA Fact File
Slide 14 of 18 - MUSLIM WOMEN: A'ISHAH SIDDIQA Fact File
Slide 15 of 18 - MUSLIM WOMEN: NUSAYBAH BINT KA'AB Fact File
Slide 16 of 18 - MUSLIM WOMEN: FATIMA AL-FIHRI Fact File
Slide 17 of 18 - MUSLIM WOMEN: MARIAM AL-ASTURLABI Fact File

Slide 18 of 18 – Topic Recap – Test Your Knowledge Quiz

Further Information for teachers of this topic can be found in the following resource:

<https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Woman-in-Islam.pdf>

Footnotes-

1. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emmeline-Pankhurst>
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matrimonial_Causes_Act_1937
3. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/relationships/overview/propertychildren/>
4. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/45-46/75/enacted>
5. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/collections/special-collections/our-collections/archives-and-manuscripts/ioe-archives/women-and>

Notes - After saying the name Prophet Muhammad^{pbuh}, as a sign of respect, Muslims say or write 'peace and blessings be upon him', throughout the presentations 'pbuh' is used to represent this phrase.