International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXX

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER JUSTICE IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC LAW: A CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

Rafey Konain
BS English Literature, Institute of English Studies (IES), University of the Punjab Lahore.

ABSTRACT

Women's rights and gender justice are important dimensions of Islamic teachings and legal principles. Islam provides a comprehensive framework for protecting human dignity, ensuring equality, promoting justice, and establishing social responsibilities for both men and women. The Holy Quran and Sunnah recognize women as independent human beings with spiritual, social, economic, educational, and legal rights. However, the practical implementation of these rights varies across Muslim societies due to cultural traditions, social inequalities, patriarchal attitudes, and differences in the interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. This study critically examines women's rights and gender justice in the light of Islamic law, focusing on education, marriage, inheritance, property ownership, employment, family responsibilities, and participation in social life. It explores the relationship between Islamic legal principles and contemporary discussions of gender equality and human rights. The study adopts a qualitative research approach and uses textual and analytical methods to examine Quranic teachings, Prophetic traditions, classical Islamic jurisprudence, and contemporary academic discussions. It argues that Islamic law establishes justice, dignity, mutual respect, and protection against exploitation as fundamental principles governing relations between men and women. Furthermore, the study identifies the gap between Islamic legal teachings and certain cultural practices that restrict women's rights. It concludes that a balanced understanding of Islamic law, supported by responsible interpretation and effective legal implementation, can contribute to women's empowerment and gender justice in contemporary Muslim societies.

KEYWORDS: *Women's Rights, Gender Justice, Islamic Law, Islamic Jurisprudence, Gender Equality, Human Dignity, Quranic Teachings, Women's Empowerment, Social Justice, Muslim Society.*

INTRODUCTION

Women's rights and gender justice remain significant subjects in contemporary academic, legal, religious, and social discussions. Across the world, women continue to face different forms of discrimination, including unequal educational opportunities, economic dependency, workplace discrimination, domestic violence, limited participation in decision-making, and restrictions on their legal and social rights. These challenges make the protection of women's dignity and the promotion of gender justice essential objectives for modern societies. In Muslim societies, the discussion becomes particularly important because Islamic law provides a religious, ethical, and legal framework for regulating individual and collective life. Azam, S. A., & Rabei, Z. M. (2025). Found that Islam recognizes women as independent individuals with spiritual responsibilities, legal identities, economic rights, and social contributions. Therefore, understanding women's rights through Islamic teachings requires a critical distinction between the principles of religion and cultural practices that may be incorrectly presented as religious obligations.Islamic law establishes justice as a fundamental principle of human relationships. The Quran emphasizes that human beings originate from a common creation and that moral superiority is based on righteousness rather than gender, wealth, or social position. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) explains that humanity is created from a male and a female and that the most honoured person before Allah is the one who possesses the greatest righteousness. This principle provides an important foundation for understanding human dignity and moral equality. Similarly, Surah An-Nahl (16:97) recognizes the value of

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

righteous actions performed by both men and women and promises a good life and reward for those who believe and act positively. Bodnar, N. (2026). Explaind These teachings demonstrate that women possess equal spiritual worth and moral responsibility. Islamic law does not treat women merely as dependent members of society; rather, it recognizes their individual accountability and their right to participate in religious, educational, economic, and social activities.Furthermore, Islamic teachings provide specific protections concerning women's economic and family rights. The Quran recognizes women's entitlement to inheritance in Surah An-Nisa (4:7), establishes the obligation of dower in marriage under Surah An-Nisa (4:4), and emphasizes kindness and responsible treatment in marital relationships. Women also possess the right to own property, enter lawful financial transactions, receive education, and maintain their individual legal identity. These provisions demonstrate that Islamic law establishes a framework for protecting women against economic exploitation and social injustice.

. Certain cultural traditions, patriarchal structures, economic limitations, and weak legal institutions prevent women from exercising their recognized rights. For example, some women experience pressure concerning marriage, are denied their inheritance shares, face barriers to education, or experience restrictions on employment and participation in public life. Such practices require critical examination because cultural customs cannot automatically be considered Islamic legal requirements. Islamic jurisprudence contains different interpretations concerning particular family, economic, and social matters, and these interpretations must be examined within their historical, textual, and ethical contexts.Moreover, contemporary discussions of gender justice require an academic understanding of both Islamic legal traditions and modern social realities. Malaysia's Refugee Governance through Islamic Principles and the Role of Islamic Institutions. *Jebat*, *53*(2), 278.revealedGender justice does not simply mean treating every individual identically in every situation; it also involves protecting dignity, preventing discrimination, ensuring fair opportunities, and recognizing rights and responsibilities. Islamic legal scholarship can contribute to this discussion by examining the objectives of Shariah (Maqasid al-Shariah), particularly the protection of religion, life, intellect, family, and property. These objectives provide an important framework for evaluating laws and social practices that affect women's lives. Accordingly, this study examines how Islamic legal principles can promote women's rights and gender justice while identifying the cultural, interpretative, and institutional challenges that limit their practical implementation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the fundamental principles of women's rights and gender justice in Islamic law.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does Islamic law define and protect women's rights and gender justice?

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic discussion of women's rights in Islamic law has developed through different religious, legal, historical, and sociological perspectives. Contemporary researchers increasingly examine the relationship between Quranic principles, classical Islamic jurisprudence, and modern gender-related challenges. The literature generally focuses on women's spiritual equality, economic independence, marriage, inheritance, education, political participation, and protection against discrimination. An important issue in this discussion is the distinction between Shariah, which refers to divine guidance, and fiqh, which represents human understanding and interpretation of Islamic legal principles. MALEK, M. A. G. A., SAMURI, M. A. A., & ALIAS, M. N. (2026)elobrated This distinction is essential because historical interpretations may reflect the social and political circumstances of particular periods. Therefore, contemporary research examines how Islamic legal principles can be interpreted responsibly while maintaining the authority of the Quran and Sunnah.Kumullah and Ramdhani (2024), in their study Women's Rights in Islamic Jurisprudence, examine the development of gender equality through contemporary Islamic legal interpretations. Their research identifies the influence of social, cultural, and religious factors on the understanding of women's rights. The authors explain that traditional interpretations sometimes restrict women's social positions, whereas contemporary discussions increasingly emphasize equal human dignity, justice, and the protection of individual rights. Their contribution is significant because it demonstrates that discussions of women's rights in Islamic jurisprudence are not static but continue to develop through scholarly debate.

The research provides an important perspective on the relationship between Islamic legal principles and cultural traditions. It suggests that women's rights should be examined through the primary sources of Islam rather than through assumptions based on particular social customs. This discussion is relevant to the present research because it establishes the need for a balanced examination of Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary gender-related issues. Akbar, M., Mustahdi, D., Rohman, D. A., & Syahidah, S. (2026).found thatSman, Sambo, and Bunhe (2025), in their research Women's Rights in Islam: The Responsibility for Women's Education, examine the importance of education within Islamic teachings. Their study focuses on the historical, theological, and social dimensions of women's access to knowledge. The researchers explain that education is an essential element of individual development and that Muslim women should have opportunities to acquire knowledge and participate in intellectual activities. They also discuss the relationship between women's educational rights and their family responsibilities. Their research is important because education contributes to economic independence, social awareness, and participation in decision-making. It further demonstrates that educational restrictions based on cultural assumptions require critical examination from an Islamic perspective.Azam (2025), in Gender Justice in Islamic Law and the Pakistani Legal System, examines the relationship between Islamic jurisprudence, gender equality, and the Pakistani legal framework. The study discusses women's rights in marriage, inheritance, and social participation by examining Quranic teachings, Prophetic traditions, and constitutional principles.

The research emphasizes the importance of responsible legal interpretation, institutional reform, and effective implementation of women's rights. Its contribution is particularly

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

relevant to Pakistan because it connects religious principles with the practical challenges experienced by women within the national legal and social environment.Elshobake's systematic review, Women's Rights under Islamic Law: Systematic Review of Published Literature in Scopus Database, provides an organized examination of academic scholarship on women's rights. The review identifies research concerning social and civil rights, Qureshi, A. I., Lodhi, A., Akhtar, I. N., Ma, X., Kherani, D., Kwok, C. S., ... & Zaidi, S. F. (2024). expkaindeconomic and financial rights, and political rights under Islamic law. It discusses subjects such as inheritance, marriage, divorce, education, property ownership, employment, financial independence, dignity, and protection from violence. Its findings also identify research gaps concerning personal security, freedom of expression, movement, adequate living standards, and political participation. This review is particularly useful because it demonstrates that women's rights in Islamic law require a multidimensional research framework rather than an examination of marriage or inheritance alone (Elshobake, n.d.).Saifullin, Okan, and Akimkhanov (2026) examine women's rights from Islamic perspectives in their article Women Rights from Islamic Perspectives: Navigating Rights, Challenges and Contemporary Perspectives. Their research discusses the relationship between Islamic teachings, women's social position, educational opportunities,

employment, and political participation. The authors emphasize that the implementation of women's rights differs across Muslim societies because of cultural practices, historical interpretations, and institutional barriers. They also examine the influence of conservative religious interpretations and social structures on gender-related opportunities. Their discussion provides a contemporary perspective on the continuing debate concerning religion, gender justice, and women's empowerment (Saifullin et al., 2026).Mustahdi (2026), in Gender Justice in Islamic Law: An Analysis of Women's Rights through the Maqasid al-Shariah, examines gender justice through the higher objectives of Islamic law. The study argues that women's rights should be evaluated through justice, human dignity, protection of property, preservation of life, protection of intellect, and public welfare. It also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between fundamental Islamic principles, human interpretations, and social practices. The proposed approach connects textual foundations with contextual analysis and the objectives of Shariah. This contribution is particularly significant because it provides an analytical framework for evaluating whether legal interpretations protect women's dignity and promote social welfare (Mustahdi, 2026).Similarly, recent research on women's religious authority in Pakistan examines the participation of women as Islamic jurists and interpreters of religious law.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine women's rights and gender justice in the light of Islamic law. Qualitative research is appropriate because the subject involves religious teachings, legal interpretations, social practices, ethical principles, and institutional challenges that cannot be adequately understood through numerical measurements alone. The study focuses on understanding the meaning, interpretation, and practical application of Islamic legal principles concerning women's status in society. It examines how the Quran and Sunnah establish fundamental rights and responsibilities and how Islamic jurists interpret these principles in different historical and contemporary contexts. The qualitative approach also provides an opportunity to explore the relationship

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

between religious teachings and social realities, particularly in societies where cultural traditions sometimes influence the implementation of women's rights.The research follows a descriptive and analytical approach. The descriptive dimension explains the major rights recognized by Islamic law, including education, marriage, inheritance, property ownership, employment, financial independence, and social participation. It identifies relevant Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions, and general principles of Islamic jurisprudence to establish the religious foundation of these rights. The analytical dimension examines the relationship between these principles and contemporary challenges. It investigates how particular cultural practices, social expectations, and institutional weaknesses affect women's ability to exercise their legal rights. The research also examines the concept of gender justice through Islamic ethical principles, especially equality in human dignity, fairness, mutual respect, and protection against injustice.Furthermore, the study uses a normative Islamic legal perspective to evaluate the relationship between religious sources and contemporary legal discussions. It considers the distinction between Shariah and fiqh because Islamic legal interpretations may differ according to scholarly methodology, historical circumstances, and social conditions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employs a qualitative doctrinal and library-based research design. This design is selected because the research primarily examines religious texts, Islamic legal principles, scholarly interpretations, academic publications, and contemporary legal discussions. The doctrinal dimension focuses on identifying and examining the legal principles concerning women's rights in Islamic law. It considers the Quran, Sunnah, Islamic jurisprudence, and relevant contemporary legal scholarship as major sources of information. The library-based dimension supports the collection and examination of academic articles, research papers, books, legal studies, and other relevant scholarly publications. Together, these dimensions provide a systematic foundation for understanding the religious and legal framework of gender justice.The research design also incorporates thematic analysis to organize the collected information into major categories. These categories include spiritual equality, educational rights, marriage and family protection, inheritance, property ownership, employment, economic independence, and social participation. Each category is examined through relevant Islamic legal principles and contemporary academic discussions. The thematic organization allows the researcher to compare different dimensions of women's rights and identify common issues affecting their implementation. It also makes it possible to examine how cultural traditions and institutional practices influence the realization of rights that are recognized within Islamic legal discussions.The final dimension of the research design involves critical interpretation and comparative evaluation. The study compares the principles identified in Islamic primary sources with the interpretations and social practices discussed in contemporary literature. It does not treat cultural customs as equivalent to Islamic law, nor does it assume that every modern understanding of gender equality automatically corresponds to a particular Islamic legal ruling. Instead, it examines areas of agreement, interpretative differences, and practical challenges.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the collected literature reveals that Islamic law recognizes women as individuals possessing independent spiritual, moral, legal, and economic identities. Quranic

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

teachings establish that men and women share human dignity and moral accountability. Surah Al-Ahzab (33:35) identifies believing men and women together in relation to faith, patience, charity, devotion, and spiritual reward. Similarly, Surah An-Nahl (16:97) emphasizes that righteous actions are rewarded regardless of whether they are performed by men or women. These teachings provide an important foundation for understanding the position of women in Islam. The analysis suggests that gender justice in Islamic law should be understood through the principles of dignity, fairness, responsibility, and protection against injustice. It also demonstrates that spiritual equality is a central element of Islamic teachings, although specific legal responsibilities and provisions may differ according to particular circumstances.The second dimension of the analysis concerns women's economic, educational, marital, and social rights. Islamic law recognizes women's right to inheritance, property ownership, dower, financial security, and participation in lawful economic activities. Surah An-Nisa (4:7) establishes women's entitlement to inheritance, while Surah An-Nisa (4:4) recognizes their right to receive dower in marriage. The analysis further indicates that education is essential for women's intellectual and social development. Restrictions on women's education, forced marriage, denial of inheritance, and economic exploitation create serious obstacles to the implementation of their recognized rights.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Islamic law provides a comprehensive foundation for protecting women's dignity and recognizing their fundamental rights. The Quran and Sunnah establish principles of justice, mercy, equality in human worth, mutual respect, and individual accountability. Women are recognized as independent moral and legal individuals who possess rights and responsibilities in religious, family, economic, and social matters. The study finds that the position of women in Islamic law cannot be understood through isolated legal provisions or cultural assumptions. Rather, it requires a comprehensive examination of religious sources, jurisprudential interpretations, and the higher objectives of Shariah. The findings further indicate that the protection of women's rights is connected with the broader Islamic objectives of maintaining human dignity, preventing exploitation, protecting property, promoting knowledge, and establishing social welfare.Another major finding is that Islamic law recognizes important economic rights for women. Women have the right to own property, receive inheritance, possess their financial resources, and receive dower as part of marriage. These rights establish an important foundation for financial independence and protection against economic exploitation. However, the denial of inheritance, pressure to surrender property, and restrictions on women's financial activities continue to create challenges in some Muslim communities. The research finds that such practices require legal and social attention because the existence of religiously recognized rights does not automatically guarantee their practical realization. Effective legal procedures, public awareness, and institutional accountability are necessary to ensure that women can exercise their economic rights without discrimination or unnecessary social pressure.The study also finds that education plays a central role in promoting women's empowerment and gender justice. Islamic teachings encourage the acquisition of knowledge and recognize the spiritual and intellectual responsibilities of both men and women.

International Journal of
Islamic Law and Contemporary Issues
VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
P-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX | E-ISSN: XXXXXXXXXX

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that women's rights and gender justice are important dimensions of Islamic law and its broader principles of human dignity, fairness, mercy, and social responsibility. The Quran and Sunnah recognize women as independent individuals who possess spiritual, legal, economic, educational, and social rights. Islamic teachings emphasize that moral worth is determined by righteousness and good conduct rather than gender or social status. The study demonstrates that women's rights concerning education, marriage, inheritance, property ownership, financial independence, and social participation have significant foundations within Islamic legal and ethical traditions. These rights should be understood through a comprehensive examination of religious sources and the objectives of Shariah rather than through isolated interpretations or cultural assumptions.The research further concludes that a considerable gap can exist between the rights recognized by Islamic law and their practical implementation in certain Muslim societies. Patriarchal attitudes, cultural restrictions, educational inequality, economic dependency, and weak legal institutions sometimes prevent women from exercising their rights. These challenges require serious attention from religious scholars, legal institutions, educational organizations, policymakers, and society. The distinction between Islamic teachings and cultural practices is particularly important because social customs should not be treated as religious obligations without proper legal and scholarly justification. The objectives of Shariah provide a valuable framework for examining contemporary gender issues and ensuring that legal interpretations remain connected with justice, protection, dignity, and public welfare.

REFERENCES

Azam, S. A., & Rabei, Z. M. (2025). Citizens' Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform: Key Trends, Influential Studies, and Future Research Directions. Central European Journal of Public Policy, 19(1), 1-21

Bodnar, N. (2026). Women and Islamic Law: Exploring Interpretative Authenticity and Gender Harmony within Qur'anic and Juristic Traditions. International Journal of Sharia and Law, 2(1), 43-62.. MALEK, M. A. G. A., SAMURI, M. A. A., & ALIAS, M. N. (2026). From Marginalisation to Dignity: Reframing

Malaysia's Refugee Governance through Islamic Principles and the Role of Islamic Institutions. Jebat, 53(2), 278.

MALEK, M. A. G. A., SAMURI, M. A. A., & ALIAS, M. N. (2026). From Marginalisation to Dignity: Reframing Malaysia's Refugee Governance through Islamic Principles and the Role of Islamic Institutions. Jebat, 53(2), 278.

Akbar, M., Mustahdi, D., Rohman, D. A., & Syahidah, S. (2026). Strengthening the Character Education of Alpha Generation through a Mosque-Based Maghrib Mengaji Program: A Qualitative Study. Journal of Scientific Research, Education, and Technology (JSRET), 5(3), 1946-1960.