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Together for Empowerment: Dialogue with future

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Empowering Muslim Women

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“Women empowerment” should be taken in a very broad sense with a broad vision. Women empowerment should be meant to mobilize and utilize women potential for the development and progress, may be at home, society or community. It is very often mistaken for ‘to compete with men’ which is disastrous. As it is various divisions and diversions existing, further bifurcation is meaningless and useless. What is required is understanding, tolerance and dedication for a purpose.

Women empowerment is highly essential and need of the hour, particularly Muslim women. Muslim community has been shattered at all levels and it is high time to come down to realities. It should be reconstructed and repudiated. What is at stake is its dignity of life. Community has been taken for granted either for atrocities to be exerted upon or humiliation, bigotry and harassment. No use lamenting over or complaining. Pause, think and plan to regain what has been lost. To recollect ourselves we need to come together and remain adhere to the cause. We should make use of all the resources available. Thus 50% of the power, potential and resource embedded in women should never be allowed to go wasted. We have to pay more attention to the empowerment of Muslim women as they are lagging behind compare to others in spite of having very high potential. Their potential has become dormant due to negligence, isolation, non recognition and various other reasons. It is a major set back to the community which has not been realized. It is necessary for all round development of the society and the community. Women should be involved in community development and make them share the responsibilities for the progress to compete with every thing which concern our rights towards dignified life. A woman should have the caliber to face and tackle any challenge, any problem, any issue, or any situation of the surroundings.

Is it possible is the question. It is certainly possible provided we work to give proper shape to women force at various levels. It is possible first with firm determination and then strategies to explore all possible resources.

EDUCATION SHOULD BE THE PRIME FOCUS:

Minds are nurtured in the bosom of mother. She should have the caliber to cherish the growing minds with healthy and standard thoughts and bring forth the quality

based generation. How can she be the capable women unless educated and empowered with knowledge. She should be financially sound, mentally strong, brave and bold, wise and patient.

-2-

STATUS OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN INDIA

BACKGROUND:

There are 160 million Muslims in India, second largest population in the world, next to Indonesia. The demographic spread of Muslims covers almost every state and union territory of India. In certain areas they constitute a majority as in Lakshadweep (94.31%) and in Jammu and Kashmir (67.13%). Muslims in three states in North India, Uttar Pradesh (23.73%) West Bengal (15.21%) and Bihar (12.58%) comprise 52.13% of the Muslim population of India. Four southern states, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, account for 19.6% of the total Muslim population, Assam forms 28.43% of the total population.

STATUS OF MUSLIM WOMEN:

The status of Muslim women in India is worse than that of Muslim men. Because they are women, they are significantly marginalized group.

A study done by Prof. Zoya Hassan and Ritu Menon highlights important issues related to the status of Muslim women in India. This survey was conducted in 2000-2001 covering 40 districts in 12 states. Although all women suffer gender based inequities in marriage, autonomy and mobility across communities, Muslim women fare lower than the national average in certain key areas. These include socio-economic status, occupational distribution/labor force participation, and education.

Educational status: Across the country, illiteracy among Muslim women (59%) is higher than the national figure (40%). Less than 10% of Muslim women have completed higher secondary schooling.

25 % of Muslim children in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out. Out of this 25% more than 50% are girl children. In premier colleges one out of 25 under-graduate students one out of 50 post graduate students is a Muslim (data highlighted by Prime minister's High Level Committee Report on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim community of India (2006)) Obviously percentage of girl students be less only although direct data about girls is not available.

Participation in work force: The unemployment rate among Muslim graduates is the highest among all socio-religious communities and same is the case with the feminine Muslims. But of course 14% of Muslim women are working in poorly paid home-based work. (" Unequal Citizens A Study of Muslim Women in India")

The overall economic backwardness and disadvantage of Muslims in India, combined with prevailing social and cultural norms about women and patriarchy, reinforce the subordination of Muslim women. This has led to complete isolation of

Muslim women from the community concerns and responsibilities. Her potential is restricted to four walls of family care.

Does it mean that women should be exempted from family care?

Certainly not, Women alone are the primary care takers of the family. They should be empowered to raise their family to be sustainable to the maximum level and should shoulder the responsibility of the community too.

-3-

What are the means methods of empowering Muslim women in the existing circumstances?

1. Accept and utilize government scheme of compulsory education for children, girls equally with boys.
2. Informal education for women and oral education to imbibe knowledge which would empower as well as motivate them to think and develop vision. They should be made to fit at all levels, let it be family, society or broad spectrum of life.
3. Financial assistance is also essential for from feminine gender to cope with the changing circumstances.
4. Liberty should be given at higher level to take up a job or business. This is not for luxury or lavishness but for a cause towards the empowerment of the community. At lower level also commitment to community welfare should be imprinted in the minds along with their earnings for livelihood.
5. Capable members of the community should come together to plan their charity, alms giving, Zakat etc to empower women for self employment and improve their financial condition. Prevent begging, poor not to become beggars and find ways of earning a dignified living. Constant efforts will surely yield results.
6. To achieve this purpose perpetual awareness is recommended.
7. At all levels character building should be insisted upon. Character itself is an institution of education.
8. Women should also be encouraged to participate in politics. Demand for women reservation is already prevailing and sure to come into force any time, any day. If Muslim women are not prepared to play a significant role in politics, community will lose horn in politics too.
9. Girls of present generation who are moving toward education should be motivated for professional and higher education.
10. With all the measures mentioned one should never ignore the practical aspects of religion and women should not be allowed to float in the theoretical stream of mere customs
11. This purpose perpetual awareness is demanded.
12. Jobs are required for the purpose of place position and power where as business is essential for strengthening the economy of either individuals or community, also helpful in providing employment to desirable candidates. Networking among community members is also of advantage for business development.
13. Sharing of information goes a long way in progress.

14. Initiation of aim and objectives certainly lead towards achievements.

THINKING IS A TONIC OF POWER

THINKING IS A TREASURE OF STRENGTH

THINKING IS A ROAD TO ACHIVEMENTS

THINKING A SEED OF SUCCESS.

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