

Analysis of the Wearing or Revealing of the Hijab

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Abstract. Women are blatantly portrayed as second-class citizens through the careful analysis of historical and religious writings. In modern society, young girls and women are encouraged to stand up for their basic rights. When it comes to the highly controversial question of whether or not women should wear hijabs and how it affects their personal life, opposing countries with multiple perspectives on the issue have created according to guidelines for how these women should act without paying much attention to the female community itself. These rules have led to unequal treatment of women's actions throughout the world. A Muslim teacher in France lost her job while battling for her right to wear a headscarf while teaching, while Mahsa Amini in Iran was assassinated by the morality police. Women suffer in both situations since their human rights are disregarded—whether it is her freedom of religion or clothes which attract feminists' attention. It is advised that Islamic countries stop utilizing the hijab to prevent men from harassing women and start teaching children to treat others with respect instead. Furthermore, all countries should respect women's autonomy and permit the wearing or revealing of the hijab.

Keywords: Hijab; Mahsa Amini; France.

1. Introduction

In various religions, women have always been at a disadvantage and considered second-class citizens from the dawn of humanity. According to the Bible, "woman came from man. Man did not come from woman" (1 Cor 11:8). In Christianity, men are not equal to god because they are god's creation. Women are not equal to men because they are descended from them. Men and women have not ever been treated equally since the beginning of life. In China, morals were ordered to stay away from the opposite gender (no physical contact) and even be ordered to walk on opposing sides of the road. This was claimed to benefit women—both for their own protection from other men and to avoid being labeled as nondescript. Women are expected to convey moral standards in modern society also, which includes the wearing of hijabs in Islamic nations.

A religious headscarf called a hijab is used to cover a Muslim woman's hair. It dates back to the seventh century (the beginning of Islamic culture) and encourages women to display modesty and submit to God. These scarves also serve as a barrier between the women and dangers of the opposite gender; they are also intended to stop women from being objectified and lessen the likelihood of sexual harassment; it is claimed that if the woman's body is concealed, it encourages men to evaluate women on their abilities rather than their appearance [1].

A feminist would contend that the morality police are acting in direct opposition to their stated goals of maintaining order in the country, as well as protecting its citizens. In actuality, the creation of the morality police in Islamic regions is just another way men in the nation manage women like objects by making them wear hijabs [2]. In other international cases, women might choose to wear headscarves for more private reasons, such as the sense of security it conveys, tradition, or a deep desire to connect with their culture. Instead of simply criticizing a Muslim lady for her choice to wear a headscarf, it is crucial to understand why she chose to do so [3].

However, among all cultures, the issue of whether Muslim women should wear a hijab and the relationship between hijabs and women's rights is hotly contested once more following the murder of Mahsa Amini, 22, by the morality police in Iran because of the country's severe clothing standards [4]. An increasing number of young adults have also been torn away at their headscarves, despite the possibility of death. The United Nations and other world leaders are now concerned about the death of this young girl. The guided patrol has also drawn criticism from Iran's foreign minister, who also

expressed his sorrow for the loss. Instead of being worn voluntarily, this item of clothing is now required by the persons it was intended to shield women from [5]. Many more people have come to the conclusion that their human rights are being stealthily taken away in many facets of their lives because of this one girl. Is the wearing of this spiritual clothing restricting the development of young women? Should the wearing of hijabs be banned?

Each nation has its own economies, communities, and levels of openness to the rest of the world. Therefore, it is only fair to examine the relationship between human rights and headscarves from an international perspective, where a wealth of historical and religious texts, as well as personal memoirs, allow the feminist to delve deeper into the background and motivations of the decision to wear a hijab. The following paper will discuss the highly debated topic of whether or not a woman should take place in the wearing of the hijab and how it affects a woman's human rights. Due to the topic being sensitive to many countries and individuals, more literature pieces—such as religious works, as well as the law, will be analyzed. In the end, the purpose of this paper is to inform readers of the different perspectives of the different communities involved and provide suggestions for change in the future.

2. Current Situation of Muslim Women

2.1 In Islamic Nations

According to Islamic law, males are expected to lower their gaze upon the presence of a woman, and be modest, because Allah is aware of all their actions. Females are expected to draw veils over their bosoms, cover their hair, and not reveal their bodies to anyone outside of a close relationship. Since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, women have been required to wear loose attire known as the hijab, which covers the head and neck.

The term hijab refers to a cover, curtain, or screen, and Islamic law has strongly emphasized modesty between opposite genders, admonishing any kind of body or eye contact. Women are especially compelled to wear headscarves that conceal their bodies, notwithstanding the law's admonition that both sexes dress and behave modestly. The hijab is a sensitive issue; while secular governments regularly call for its outright prohibition, religious administrations frequently urge that women wear it. Muslim women who want their voices to be heard and their right to make their own decisions respected are in the middle.

There have been several incidents of women being killed in nations with Islamic culture, not just because they did not wear hijabs but also because of Christian and LGBTQ activism. Despite the fact that morality police are responsible for maintaining order, societal norms appear to be more stringent for women. For example, occurrences of women driving in cars being drenched in acid have been happening regularly.

However, in recent years, many have eschewed the traditional chador, which covers the entire body, in favor of tight garments or jackets that reach the mid-thigh and a tiny veil that barely covers the hair—an ensemble frequently criticized by conservatives as "bad hijab." As punishment, morality police have been doing "acid attacks" on these women for "bringing shame to their family honor" and committing "indecent" behavior [6]. A frightened citizen of the city was quoted by ISNA: "I roll the windows closed, and I panic every time I hear the sound of a motorcycle approaching" [6].

In addition, Iran's morality police allegedly murdered Mahsa Amini after arresting her for illegally donning her headscarf. Mahsa was pummeled into a coma, which was captured on the CCTV cameras, and eventually died. Amini, however, suffered a heart attack, according to a police statement, and was taken to the hospital, where she died on Friday. Despite speculations to the contrary, the police claim that they did not make physical contact with Amini. Iran's protesters flocked to the streets in response to Amini's passing. Women protesters burned their hijabs while denouncing how unfairly the government targeted them for retribution. More blood and gore have been shed as a result of the protests. In just over 60 days after they started, the estimated number of children suspected to have died in Iran's protests has surpassed 60. The administration has made an effort to curtail free

expression. For the first time, women in Islamic countries are debating the chastity of the hijab, which is prompting more and more young women to decide against donning a headscarf.

2.2 In Western Countries – Take French as an Example

In Islamic nations, wearing a headscarf is required; in France, the opposite is true. Following the French Revolution, France developed "secular" laws to focus on separating church and state, and the French government passed a law prohibiting the wearing of garments seen as part of the Muslim hijab in 2004, and it went into effect in September of that year. The hijab can be any garment that protects a Muslim woman's modesty, ranging from a scarf that covers the hair to a burka that covers the entire body. Certain religious symbols, including the hijab, are prohibited in state-run schools.

French beaches have also banned the wearing of burkinis. According to the BBC, a burkini is a mix of the words "burka" and "bikini". This type of swimwear covers all parts of the body except for the face, feet, and hands. National Geographic quotes the government suggesting that burkinis are "a symbol of radical Islam and a threat to the nation's values [7]. Sadly, this ban restricts a number of Muslim people from enjoying the water like everyone else.

A case of a Muslim teacher who was fired because of her religious beliefs also sparked debates. She refused to shake hands with her male colleagues and refused to remove her Islamic hijab during her teachings. She reported the unfair situation to the court and was only responded with the school's win in the case. The French government believes that the objectiveness of government workers overweight personal beliefs, thus ignoring the Muslim teacher's freedom of religion.

This brings up a new question. Is banning the wearing of hijabs and burkinis another form of suppressing the rights of Muslim women? The French government is hindering the development of many young girls who have chosen to keep their headscarves on. This action taken by France is a form of tearing human rights away from Muslim women. The ban on wearing religious clothing affects their freedom of religion and allows the government to shape a woman's identity

3. Analysis of different perspectives

3.1 Historical analysis

The first record of the hijab in history is found in an Assyrian text from 13 B.C. A "veiling" was mentioned in the text and was later defined as something worn by elite or "respectable" women. The act of "veiling" was prohibited for other women in the community, such as prostitutes or those from lower social classes. In ancient Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Pre-Islamic Iranian, and even Chinese societies, women of higher authority and class also engaged in the practice of "veiling" [8].

In Iran, the basis for covering women's faces comes from the same ancient religious and cultural sources—both the Quran and the Hadiths. However, the hijab is required by law and is enforced by the Gasht-e Ershad, also referred to as the Morality Police or Guidance Patrol, under the current regime. Mandatory veiling was mandated in July of 1981, and the Islamic Punishment Law later made wearing the hijab in public a requirement, including for non-Muslims residing in and traveling to Iran. Since the Revolution, this law's application has fluctuated, becoming less onerous under President Hassan Rohani (2013-2021). However, President Ebrahim Raisi was elected in August 2021—although some contend this was a fraudulent election—and he pledged to impose more restrictions. Former Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution chairman Raisi recommended that the 2006 "hijab and chastity" bylaw be fully implemented [9]. His idea resulted in the promotion of the hijab's importance and the employment of increasingly militant techniques to ensure its wear.

Before the Islamic revolution, the decision of a Muslim woman to cover herself was a voluntary expression of her religious faith, identity, and desire to be modest before the Iranian Revolution, while familial pressure was frequently a factor in her decision to wear the veil. The hijab was strengthened after the Revolution by a tight legal system under the more orthodox and conservative leadership.

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3.2 Sociological perspective

From a social standpoint, it is not necessary for hijabs to signify that these women are under oppression. Opposing governments are debating and arguing, and some are enacting strict laws on how these women should represent themselves. The headscarves' proponents argue that wearing them teaches women to be modest and lowers the rate of rape. This is alarming. According to the government, rather than the men's hasty decisions, it is the women's beauty that is causing the commotion. Therefore, the "male gaze," the practice of objectifying women and exploiting them for sexual purposes, is the most significant issue in Iran and other Islamic nations [10]. From this perspective, the hijab does indeed contribute to gender inequality in Iran, with the purpose of controlling women. The most significant purpose of wearing this item of clothing in contemporary society is to symbolize that these women will not appeal to males because it conceals much of a female's body. Although Islamic law stipulates that both men and women must maintain modesty and refrain from making eye contact, it offers no guidelines for men's attire while allowing women to wear only one type of clothing when going out.

Muslim women appear to be treated unfairly in other nations as well. Beach patrols by French police require people wearing burkinis to remove their clothing in plain view. This is disseminating a message from the government that women must expose their bodies. This is another harmful law that is affecting the country's residents, especially given that more than 9 percent of the population is Muslim [11]. According to the government, burkinis and hijabs are a symbol of Iranian terrorism and harm the neighborhood.

4. Suggestions

There are some preliminary recommendations aimed at the two viewpoints debating this matter—for and against the wearing of the hijab—as was mentioned above. The objective is to lower the number of rape cases committed in Islamic areas where head scarves are strictly prohibited. In order to conceal a woman's beauty from men, hijabs cover her entire body. This issue will not just be pointless; it also will not get to the root of the issue. Therefore, the nation ought to address the problem from both a male and female perspective. The nation should bring up the issue to public awareness, then educate the next generation to deprive of the outdated views, which suggest women should cover themselves, or else they are trying to attract men into making unholy decisions. The law that permits many wives to one man should be banned so that young men and women are able to marry those they love and maintain a healthy relationship. Those who long for the opposing gender's love will earn it through time, not crudely harassing a woman in the streets. Children should be taught to treat everyone with respect beginning in primary school, and their parents should present themselves as role models for their children. It is expected that if a child witnesses abuse of a woman at home, they will inform their teacher, who will then report the incident to the police. The countries must remove the requirement for hijabs and give women the freedom to decide whether or not to wear one after educating both children and adults.

Additionally, the western nations that forbid the wearing of hijabs should respect women's right to self-determination. Women who cover themselves do not do so to hide their oppression by their families or to hide their attractiveness to men. Perhaps wearing a hijab signifies her relationship with her family or a connection to an aspect of her identity. Western nations have a responsibility to

acknowledge this and to treat these women as unique individuals rather than as members of a stereotypical group.

It is important for everyone to understand that there are many factors influencing a woman's choice, and those factors do not always have to be positive, nor does it always have negative effects on the Muslim woman. As long as here women are healthy both mentally and physically, it is their own choice to make, and it is no other person's duty to manage the wearing or banning of the hijab on those individuals. These women should fight for their rights if they are being controlled by men or other women, but they are not expected to risk their lives in the process as Mahsa Amini did. Young women are expected to band together to defend their ideals and share their experiences on social media to gain support.

Last but not least, the issue of hijabs and how it affects women is a controversial issue and should gain more attention in worldwide collaborations like the United Nations, where all nations are able to discuss the problem logically and with objectivity. According to the U.N.'s meeting records, the controversial debate about the hijab has never been addressed to this day.

5. Conclusion

As the well know feminist and feminist and judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg states: Women's rights are an essential part of the overall human rights agenda, trained on the equal dignity and ability to live in freedom all people should enjoy. As for the wearing of the hijab, women have faced immutable consequences and even death.

In several law records and religious documents, unfair moral standards are being put into action, while those who do not follow are facing unfriendly labels from others who choose to obey. The constant objectification and doubt coming from opposing perspectives of the hijab debate are leaving these women in stress and with a stronger desire to chase after their beliefs, some gaining global support. Although historical research states that the wearing of face coverings and veils commonly conveys social hierarchy, the representation of oppression by governments may be one of the first impressions of the face veil today, either for or against women's decisions. In this rapidly evolving world, the importance of moving on from outdated and stereotypical beliefs is increasing day by day, allowing women to make their own decisions about whether or not they choose to disclose their appearance.

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