
Women in Leadership Between Religious and Cultural Concepts**Ali Saleh****Abstract**

The study aims to investigate women in leadership between religious and cultural concepts. The study approached the literature as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The significance of this recent study is the first which dealt with this theme. This is because Palestine in the latest period has started to step clearly to support and enhance the women's role in the Palestinian's society, in the establishment process of the modern state, especially after the Palestinian's women has placed an important position, in the parliament, ministerial and local councils seats as well as a lot of progressive centers in the Palestinian community. The findings revealed that Palestinian women are still subject to many forms of obstacles that has negatively affected their leadership role in a society of patriarchal patterns of kinship, legalized inequality, social subordination, and ingrained male dominance. Also, this is in addition to the high fertility rate among Palestinian women which increased their family responsibilities.

Key words: Leadership, women, patriarchal society, religious, kinship, culture.

Introduction

Humanity as a whole belongs to our prophet, Adam "the father of humanity", who did not make the human crowds alone independently without our mother, Eve. However, good deed basically refers to both of them together. The woman is half of the society who is upbringing the rest half. She is a mother, a wife, a sister, a daughter, and she is the source of love and sympathy in life. God, the almighty, makes her a dwelling for the husband and make among them mercy and love. In the holy Quran, almighty God respects mothers and charges us to take care of them. If she does well, the whole society will be good.

Subsequently, she is also the leader who holds high rank positions in all fields on an average as the man does. This, however, results in the fact that women are brothers and are rivals of men in this life. Nobody can survive without another and there is no preference of someone on another as God's says, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of

you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Al-Hojorat: 13). This assumption is pointing to the importance of cooperation and collaboration concept between all human beings, men and women, for the upgrading of humanity and to high rank it to reach the summit of Shiny civilized standards. God has made human being his deputy (Khalifa: people who succeed each others, century after century and generation after generation) on earth, man or woman, when the Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority" (Al-Bakara: 30). However, God gave a request to both Adam and Eve to settle and inhabit the earth, and share in developing his society and homeland. This, however, requires thousands of general and specific specializations. Some of them were fit men and others were fit women.

The old habits culture for woman is a logic that didn't stand in front of the history movement since the ancient times. How can it stand now in this century? This pushes her to entitle and play a modern role. Consequently, the speech was about the woman's role in the present and in the future and not her role which is semi lost one throughout the past ages.

Hence, the study explores the issue of women in leadership between religious and cultural concepts as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which addressed both theoretical and applied research.

Leadership Concept

The successful leadership is a necessary base for any organization, starting from the family and ending by the state or a group of states. The leader is a person who leads a group voluntarily. Consequently, the leadership concept means the effect of any person on others which makes them accept his leadership voluntarily and without any legal compulsion (Qarioti, 2000).

Furthermore, leadership means a process through which an effect on the individuals and groups behavior might take place in order to provoke them to work with a desire to most clearly achieve specific objectives (Ramadan, 2003).

According to Alak (2008), leadership is an expression that points out to the process by which an individual is affected in thoughts and other behavior, or feelings. This effect may happen through the individual's works, writings, drawings, creations or inventions, or through talking

or discussion. It is an orientation for others behavior towards a specific purpose. However, the main sources of leadership include official authority: among a distinguished characteristic, a strength of reward, a strength of compelling "forcing", and the legal authority. It also involves the effect of strength among its characteristics specialization strength and admiring strength.

Styles of Leadership

Styles of leadership can be classified as follows: autocratic Leadership which is distinguished by the authority centrality, the leader's dictatorship, and the setting of the working plan by himself and the request from employees to execute it; democratic leadership where a leader carries out a consultation process with his employees and shares them in decisions making; and laissez – faire leadership where he allows his employees to behave freely and specify their objectives; and his effect on the individuals' behavior is limited (Robbins & Stephen, 2003).

According to Badawi (2002), not every director is a leader but every leader is a director because the leader's employees obey him voluntarily without any obligation or commitments. However, the director's employee obeys him through the effect of the empowered authority driven from the law and is not a must to be voluntary. However, the most important characteristics that should be allotted to the good leader are the ability to use the recent scientific styles in analysis and decision making; the personal, psychological and health ability necessary for carrying out the leadership work responsibility; the ability to follow up the technological development and the information systems revolution; the ability to communicate with the team work; the ability to solve emergency problems; and the ability to plan and organize.

Among these prominent recommendations that the related studies have pointed out in terms of the Palestinian women participation in all field of life, were the necessity to widen the base for women participation in the leadership frames (Othman, 2003).

The Cultural Concept and Women's Leadership

The origin of the word “culture” in Arabic language is the source abstracted from the third verb “cultured” which means clever and remembered person. Subsequently, the Arabic

Language Forum (1972) identified culture as a group of scientific knowledge and arts which is clever.

Culture includes all aspects of life either for men or women. There is no justification for getting in confrontation between the Arabic Women movement and those callers for originality and heritage protection. As the liberation of the women in the west did not request the rejection of the western culture and adoption of another culture, it is keenly requested not to criticize the Arabic culture to liberate the Arabic Women or rejection to it or the adoption to other culture on the way that frighten those defenders of originality and heritage (Bahlool, 1998). For example, the Israeli education system cannot be described as a multi-cultural system where it does not work to accept the Palestinian's human culture which differs from the majority culture. By this, it puts obstacle against the presence of leadership due to gender issue in the Arab society (Zughbi & Biatrara, 2007).

The cultural factor is considered as an important factor in specifying the women's role and their role in the society, where the negligence of the cultural role leads not to give a woman the chance to be an effective and working person and not a mere working tool inside the house or the house field (Qattamesh, 1999). Therefore, the view towards woman as a complete and comprehensive human being will transform the society into a comprehensive and collaborative stage towards all cases. By this, the woman's rights, which is political, economic or social, is in its origin and is abstracted from human rights (Saeed, 1996).

Nowadays, we notice that the women's cases in all society fields in most Moslem majority and others witnesses a tangible activities against oppressive practices in relation to their cultural restrictions. From North Africa to The South East Asia, we find the parliaments in most of these societies which always discuss cases related to the women's right along with the democracy adaptation (Rostami, 2007). The differences in terms of gender resulted from the social bringing up that define the individuals behavior by their gender which differs from society to others, and from a time to another. Here, men and women carry out new roles. As a result, the gender is the thing we socially grow by. This, therefore, signifies that the acquired characteristics and behaviors from society, either be males or females, have social differences which the society specifies for male and female.

Many establishments are targeted to all the individuals' society in seeking jobs. Majorly, these job applications, especially the directors, managers or high ranks jobs ask by the male

expression, points out to the fact that woman is not capable of practicing the administration. This applies also on the accounting jobs. For secretary, they are always asked by female expression. In spite of the required specifications in all these jobs, almost all of them need a university qualification which include graduate from both sexes. Therefore, this reflects the society's view about the role of the woman and the man (Thaher, 2006).

Coinciding with what is so called etiquette (a French word means too high neatly behavior such as self respect and others respect, good treatment. It is the art of good talent, and high acceptable behavior by society) which require the recruitment of a female secretary instead of a male in most companies and establishments, it justifies the fact that the secretary makes the visitors happy and comfortable. Also, she shows the visitor that this place is modern and prestigious. If we look closely to the job advertisement enclosed for recruiting a secretary, we will discover that the requirement is that she should be young, with good looks, attractive single, speak English, and then finally have certificates and experiences (Mohammad, 2001). On the other hand, especially that which is related to the Arabic Media jobs, we notice the competition now between the Lebanese ones and the rest of the TVs' announcers such as Tunisians, Moroccans, and Egyptians. Here, the shape standards alone do not satisfy the competition game. More culture and strong personality, and language perfection as well as the wide knowledge were also requested (Qadri & Harb, 2002).

Some of the media females described how difficult to be a wife and a mother, and at the same time a media person, Donia Al-Amal says, "I always remember the cost which I paid for trying to succeed in my house and in my work. I rejected many projects and works and I lost them for I was pregnant or a baby care taker" (Thawabta, 2008).

The statistical significances indicate a great congregational discrimination which is a giant for the occupation field of the West Bank and Gaza Strip Women. In fact, they are isolated to some extent from many positions such as; "legislators, directors, employees in services centers, and employees in markets". The discrimination segregation affect various scopes in the occupational field in that some of them at least are specified by a group of local cultural and social customs which specify the accepted Gender's roles. Therefore, it is not by the differences between the working capacities for man and woman which are not connected to a specific social and cultural pattern (Euro- Mediterranean Program, 2005).

In spite of the Palestinian's authority effort to support the establishment of various departments to support woman, where a number of women were appointed as general directors, directors and managers, the size of the total support, for example, that is presented to the woman's sector was among the top ten countries which reached ten million dollars for 2002. Furthermore, it constitutes only five out of thousand of the total aids presented to the Palestinian Authority (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2002).

Besides, we could not neglect the United Nations report which is related to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for 1993, which included more than two thousand Arabic women who were specialized in various fields from western Asia countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, and Egypt (ESCWA, 1993). Therefore, we can say that the current culture spread among the society is working on specifying the leadership hope level for the woman and the competition with man to hold a leadership positions in all fields and without discrimination.

The Religious Concept and Women's Leadership

A human being is created in an ideal way in order to ensure his dignity and reserve his humanity and personality. Nevertheless, what is happening with sorrow is the separation of the human into parts, such as the dehumanization of women specially. At the same time, the heavenly legislations as a whole forbid any assault whatsoever, the human rights international declaration, and the basic law and other doctrines. There is no international treaty or agreement which does not speak about the treatment of a woman as a human and they should be given all rights (Abu Assab, 2005).

The Islamic religion has ensured the woman's right as a man. However, this is with a consideration of the house holding. Al-Qawama; which means that the man is responsible towards the woman, i.e., the dependency, protection, care taking of any abuse, as God says, "Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth" (An-Nisa: 34). Therefore, this is versus his exemption physiologically from pregnancy and delivery problems. Also, they share in occupational roles in spite of the fact that both jobs are separated; therefore, they are complimented, and nobody is higher or lower than the other (Hassan, 1999).

Many doctrines are gotten from scriptures in the Holy Qura'n and the Sunna as well the women's status in Islam. For example, we can say the following evidences: allotting a complete sure which is the longest Quran's ones and most famous by the "Women" "An-Nisa". This asserts their rights without diminishing or diversion or distortion. On the contrary, no sura "scripture" calls men textually or verbally. This thereby allots a complete sura in the name of the Virgin "Mary" explaining her status and debating the refutes that was faced, and explaining to what extent she bears, she is patient, and she is stable and steadfast. Furthermore, the Holy Quran's pointed out that the woman was able to reach, in some old ages, a distinguished status when it speaks about "Balqees" the Saba's Queen. This Queen was characterized by cleverness and far sight with the acceptance of consultation and advice. Her name was connected with Suleiman, peace be upon him. Quran says, She said, "O eminent ones, advise me in my affair. I would not decide a matter until you witness [for] me". They said, "We are men of strength and of great military might, but the command is yours, so see what you will command" (An-Naml: 32-33). However, woman was demeaned in other religions such as Judaism, Greece, Romans, and Persians and other ancient civilization, until Islam came to put a woman in her natural status and to change the picture totally (Haj, 2013).

Religious Misconceptions about Women

The religions misconceptions are the most prominent reasons that hinder the woman's progress in many fields, mostly, the miss-interpretation for the men in charge of women. In terms of this issue, Idrees (2009) clarify that the man in charge of a woman in Islam is not just a mere taking care of her or forbidding her from doing things that are inappropriate, but instead taking care of her as a whole, and see what she is interested in her affairs of like, expenditure, protection, security against dangers, and defending her in order to be respected and not abused. However, this issue adds upon her father, brother, uncle, or husband as an additional consequences that he couldn't bear because he adds extra burdens upon the man's life. Islam requests from the man to carry so as not to be lost in this life. Accordingly, this charge does not have any kind of punishment, and male dominance on the woman as that of some ignorant people may assume nowadays.

When the prophet Mohammad, Peace be upon him, said, "The woman was created from the curved ribs", he meant that the woman is mostly intimate and more emotionally in her behavior than man and that coincide with her role in regard to up bringing children and to be a dwelling for her husband which increase her honor and do not decrease her status or level.

Despite the woman has arrived to a position and semi leadership posts, she is still – with sorrow- based on some points of view "lacks in mind and religion" (Abu Assab, 2005). Sheikh, Mohammad Sharawi explained the prophet's Mohammad, peace be upon him, saying: "Woman are lacking mind and religion". Therefore, woman is characterized by emotion because of what she faced during pregnancy and in taking care of her children who could not express their need. The specification and the inhibited talent in the woman is an emotion. This leads to spoil reason. Since emotion in the woman is stronger, she makes judgments on things by her natural emotion. As a result, women are lacking in mind or reasoning because their emotion is stronger. Thus, when the father force his son to follow a specific way of life, the woman haste to prevent him by her rapture. Human beings need passion and emotion from their mother. Thus, this is clearly seen during her pregnancy, her delivery, and in taking care of the child. No men can bear what women bears. All of us are witness this reality because men are not subject to pregnancy, delivery, neither do they have a period.

As for their lack of religion, it means that she is refrained from doing things that men do during the monthly periods (PMS). Man can't be exempted from fasting or praying, but woman can be. She has a specific day during the month. She is also exempted from fighting with armies and praying in a crowd, and also on Fridays. Therefore, the religions requirements for women are less than men. This is a destiny for her and it is her nature, and not a deficiency; however, she sometimes exceeds the man in a lot of things such as in their reasoning and religion (Abu Assab, 2005).

Different Models of Women Leaders

1. Historical Leaders

There are still some of their kingdoms presented as follows; Balqees, a queen of Saba'a, Zanobia, a queen of Tadmor, who is considered as one of the characters who affected the human history. Niverty, Phorohon's queen, which name means the beautiful came. Mrs. Khadeja, the mother of believers. She is the most prominent model regarding the woman's personality, "active Moslem one", starting from a business woman well known in Quraish, directing her financial matters by herself, passing through her heroic acceptance with the prophet, peace be upon him, until her sacrifice with all she had in order that the Islamic call "Dawa" was spread widely. Furthermore, the companion Nosaiba Al-Mazinia, the prophet

Mohammad, peace be upon him, had praised her when she didn't hesitate in defending him in Ohod's Gazwa, by saying, "I never turned right or left until I saw her defending me", along her work in medication of wounds. Additionally, Egyptian queen "Shajar Al-Durr", was throwned to Egypt more than three months after her husband's death, and she was the last Ayoobian Kings. She was able to seize strongly the whole affairs and she directed the country's affairs successfully on political and military levels (Wikipedia, 2009).

2. Political Leaders

One of the political women leaders in the Islamic world is Mrs. Migawatti Sukarno Botry, the former president of Indonesia (2001-2004). In spite of that, it is the major Islamic country in terms of population (about 200 million, 87% Moslems). Mrs. Banazeer Butto, became the first woman holding a prime Minister position in 1988-190. In 1993-1996, it was the second major Islamic country in Pakistan. In addition to Sheikha "Husseena Wajid", a former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the third major Islamic country after Indonesia and Pakistan, which its parliament includes (45) female among (345) seats. Here, the woman succeeded there in reaching positions not reached in many countries. She now represents: Head of state, head and a member in the Parliament as an opposition leader, Minister of Interior, and the Minister of foreign affairs (Al-Quds Newspaper, 2004).

3. Palestinian Woman Leaders

Although the Palestinian history of the conflict with Israel has long been dominated by men, there have been several high-profile women figures, often fighters and activists, and occasionally politicians and leaders. However, Hanan Al-Hroob won the world best teacher competition in 2016. Dalal Mughrabi and her Palestinian Militants (Fedayeen) unit of eleven members, including one other woman landed on an Israeli beach and seized and killed a bus filled with passengers. After a gun battle with Israeli soldiers, she blew up the bus, killing thirty-six people on board. This operation came against the assassination of the three Palestinian leaders; Kamal Odwan, Yusef Al-Najar and Kamal Nasser, which was executed by Ehood Barrack who is currently the Minister of Defense. This happened when he disguised as a women using a woman costume so as to take real revenge.

Sameeha Khalil, a Palestinian Struggler, who established the family Reviving society was the chief of the society. She died in 1999, and she nominated herself against the passed away

president Yassir Arafat. Her Majesty, Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, is the youngest queen in the world nowadays, (Genius records), born in Kuwait for the Palestinian family from a small village in Tulkarm called Thinaba. Alia Tokan, the late queen, the second wife of his majesty, king Hussein Ibn Talal, died by a helicopter falling accident in 1987. Intessar Al-wazeer, the wife of the late Palestinian leader, Abu Jihad "Khalil Al-Wazeer", was the first woman who held a Minister of Social Affairs in the first Palestinian Government. Dr. Hanan Ashrawi was a parliament member and a previous Minister of Higher Education. Olla Faris was the youngest broadcaster in the Arab world, working in the Arabic satellite station.

Moreover, the woman has been capable of entering the civil judicial world since a very long time. She has been appointed as a legal judge when two first judges were recruited in the first of February 2009. The names of these judges are: Kllood Al-Fakheeh and Asmahan Al-Waheedi. This is clear evidence based on the understanding of the religion for the women's leadership subject, i.e., her entitlement as heads of states for the three major Islamic countries: Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In addition, she reaches, in most Arabic and Islamic countries and in Palestine as well, to high rank ministerial positions on all levels. Even the council of the institution protection in Iran's Islamic Republic which is considered one of the most extremist countries towards woman has lifted restrictions against women in participating in the upcoming elections in Iran that is to be conducted on 12 of June 2009, in spite of the fact that the constitution says that only men can apply for elections (Al-Quds Newspaper, 2009).

The development of the progress process needs the sustaining of the woman's position as a citizen and as a basic element for development. Here, her participation in work should be taken with new quality scopes and should be presented within a comprehensive development plan going side by side with the employment of all human resources of women to participate in the developments process according to a studied plans and orientations based on the importance of this study in the general production process (International Amnesty Organization, 1999: 44-45). It is not an exaggeration when we say that women in the Arab world are the most neglected powers in the development process. Still, they don't rise up to the present— in most Arabic societies- by the same rights that man gets. Consequently, the major view which is spread widely is to look at the woman as an entity who is not valid but that which is used for the production of human raw material. However, among other reasons behind retarding in the Arab society is its limitation in its developmental efforts on the man's

strength, neglecting the woman's role, and isolating the importance of her role (Holwa, 2007; Arab Human Development Report, 2009).

According to Qara'a (2009), there is no way but to activate the women's role and encourage them to proceed to hold more affairs and responsibility in the first rows. By this, they may elevate the extremity of men's role nowadays. In addition, there is an urgent need to be in front after they suffered a lot from the male's society dictatorship.

Many studies have pointed out that the social heritage works on not accepting the males for the woman's leadership, which passively affects in hindering her arrival to a leadership positions. Accordingly, customs and traditions restricted the woman's freedom to work, and if she is allowed to, she is restricted by specific restrictions. The widely spread belief is that men is more capable and more effective and valid which makes women to become afraid of proceeding to a leadership position. This may refer to the society incontinence in her power or the presence of priorities for her and her family (Bashabsha, 2008: 137).

By the same token, Saddat (1987) has worked on generating and activating the woman's role even in her official visits. This, however, is seen as an example when she accompanied her husband, Al-Saddat, to Saudi Arabia where she intended to raise this issue. The conservatism of the Saudi woman, when she had a meeting with a group of royal family women, declared her call to liberate the woman from chains imposed by customs and tradition and legislations set forward. She was too courageous and she asserted she calls for Saudi women to demand their rights without decrease.

To support and enhance the woman's role in the political arena effectively, one female researcher in regard to woman's scope is calling to establish apolitical parties related to woman only without man. Here, the women's organization can become successful if it includes women from all social sectors. Also, with their independent organizations, they can raise their voices loudly and follow up their rights accomplishment. Women can get rid of the Quota (to allot seats for women either in Parliament or municipalities, and it is considered a technique to face the woman's negligence in all legislations and rules and in the places of decision making and in the civil society organizations) system and can be able to enroll in the Parliamentary elective campaigns and leagues by independent lists (Labbadi, 2004). Nevertheless, the researcher tends to make the "Quota" system to be a temporary procedure for woman's participation in the political life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study addressed women in leadership between religious and cultural concepts. The study pointed out that the type of the spread portioning culture in the society works on identifying the aspiration level for the woman's leadership. Also, what supports and helps the woman to hold a top leadership positions is about the extent she practices the creative skills, such as: fluency, self confidence, flexibility, communication, and public relations.

To sum up, the study revealed that Palestinian women are still subject to many forms of obstacles that negatively affected her role in leadership in a society of patriarchal patterns of kinship, legalized inequality, social subordination and ingrained male dominance, in addition to the high fertility rate among Palestinian women which increased their family responsibilities. Based on the findings and conclusions in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Empowering women in the Palestinian Arab society is an essential component for leadership.
2. It is important to work on building leadership confidence among woman through increasing awareness, culture, and knowledge of leadership concept.
3. Policymakers and curriculum developers should give the concept of women leadership the utmost importance in the Palestinian curriculum.
4. Further research is essential to expand the understanding of women leadership role and its measurable impact on personal aspects of the life of women using the case study and qualitative research design.

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