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### **Abstract**

In my Thesis I investigate the following Research Question i.e` Is Islam inherently biased against Women`?

In this thesis, I search for an academic response to this question by carefully reading what the Muslim women thinkers and writers say on this question. I have chosen to study the writings of the following people. They are Zainab al Ghazali, Maryam Jameelah, Fatima Mernissi, Asma Barlas, Amina Wadud and Farhat Hashmi. I chose them as they came from different parts of the world; some right from Muslim countries and the rest from western academic setup. So they represent different backgrounds of the world academic as well as religious. I have tried to analyse their work thematically. The themes that I have chosen are mostly cultural and social themes like Gender equality, Veil, Polygamy, Divorce, the upbringing of children, Knowledge, Islam versus West.

Zainab al Ghazali wished to re-establish the society of Tawhid, knowledge, learning and real relationship with Allah. For she believed that Allah`s way is the right way and expressed her desire to clean the earth from the earthly gods and the ruler with total power especially one who uses it in cruel way. Ghazali gave stress to Dawah work and strong Islamic children upbringing. Maryam Jameelah has played an essential role in the revivalism of Islam and rejection of West. She is considered significant in the development of revivalist thought across the world. Fatima Mernissi writings reflect the oppression women faced in Morocco society as well as in the Muslim world. She wishes to facilitate a silent woman with a voice to express about her own account clearly. However, the effects of this environment were negative on her in the sense that she targeted Quran verses and hadith. Asma

Barlas says that ignorance is cultivated against Islam in America and the western world. She also claims that interpretation done by Male Muslim Scholars encourage the male to oppress women. She calls for the reinterpretation of the Quran and also assures that Muslim man and woman must make efforts of equality within the Islamic structure. Amina Wadud calls for attention towards the fact that most men have at one time or another heard, or perhaps even believed that women are “inferior” and unequal to men. She argues with regards to social justice. She says that it is necessary to fight against patriarchy nor for matriarch, but for an efficient, co-operative and egalitarian system that allows and favours maximum participation of each member of society. Farhat Hashmi works to bring people towards reading the Quran as Arabic text and its translation. She has brought far-reaching effects on the social structure of the Muslim society. She believes that one must improve his link with Allah. Thinking and intentions should be to please Allah.

After reading carefully the works of these eminent women I came to recognize and I am convinced that Islam is not biased against women. My research work led me to find that these authors convincingly argue that Since the outset of Islam, under the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), women played an important role in Muslim societies. Difference is not of genes, the difference is of relationships. Mother has higher status than father. There should be a balance in the relationships. Islam has linked both, society as well as individuality. Both man and woman should practice rights and duties then only things can be better.

Quran gives different responsibilities to man and woman. They complement each other. One is not higher than the other. It must be said that by complimenting one another they (man and woman) fulfill the will of God. It's a pity that in many geographical regions where Islam has taken roots, a number of negative patriarchal, hegemonic mindset has seeped into Islamic practices in those regions. I locate the problem in the practice of Muslim way of life, not in the sources of Islam.

The final conclusion that I draw from my studies is that Islam dignifies woman and the accusation that Islam is inherently biased against women can't be sustained.

