

Book Review

Book Entitled: “Barr-e-Sagheer Hind mein Muslim Khawateen ki Haisiyat (*The Status of Muslim Women in the Indian Subcontinent*)” edited by Prof. Farida Siddiqui and Sheikh Abdul Taha, MANUU, Hyderabad, 2023; ISBN: 978-93-95203-62-3

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Date of Submission: 13/02/2024; Date of Acceptance: 14/02/2024

INTRODUCTION

“The Status of Muslim Women in the Indian Subcontinent” presents a multifaceted examination of the status, challenges, and progress of Muslim women in the Indian Subcontinent. The book, which originated from an international conference organized by the Al-Biruni Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, offers a diverse array of perspectives from scholars and researchers. Edited by Prof. Farida Siddiqui and Sheikh Abdul Taha, the book delves into various aspects, including media representation, feminism, socio-economic conditions, and cultural challenges faced by Muslim women.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The book begins with a preface by Farida Siddiqui and Sheikh Abdul Taha, which sets the stage for the subsequent discussions. It highlights the importance of recognizing the contributions of Muslim women in diverse fields and acknowledges the need for scholarly attention to their status.

The chapters within the book cover a wide range of topics, starting with a critical analysis of the representation of Muslim women in Indian media. The discussion highlights the disparities and challenges faced by Muslim women in achieving adequate

representation, particularly in electronic news media. The data presented in tables offers quantitative insights into the underrepresentation of Muslim women in media organizations.

Subsequent chapters delve into the evolution of Islamic feminism, exploring its historical roots and contemporary manifestations. The nuanced discussion encompasses intellectual debates, societal shifts, and the evolving role of women within Islamic contexts. It provides a rich understanding of how Islamic feminism has emerged as a response to gender inequalities within Muslim communities.

The book further examines the concept of Islam empowering women, challenging prevailing misconceptions and highlighting the positive changes brought about by Islamic teachings. It emphasizes the need to distinguish between cultural practices and genuine Islamic principles, shedding light on the rights granted to women in Islam.

Another significant aspect addressed in the book is the impact of socio-economic factors, particularly slum living conditions, on Muslim women. The analysis underscores the global concern regarding the segregation of minority groups in urban slums and its adverse effects on marginalized communities.

The representation of Muslim women in Hindi cinema is also scrutinized, revealing the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms and the stereotypical portrayals prevalent in Indian films. The discussion incorporates feminist theories of cinema, offering a critical lens through which to analyze the representation of women on screen.

Furthermore, the book also examines the socio-economic challenges faced by Hyderabad Muslim women engaged in Zardozi work, providing insights into their economic struggles and cultural identity.

Lastly, the comparative analysis of the socio-economic position of Muslim women in India and Saudi Arabia offers valuable insights into the contrasting situations in the two countries. It underscores the importance of government initiatives and societal efforts in improving the status of women.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

“The Status of Muslim Women in the Indian Subcontinent” offers a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the multifaceted issues surrounding Muslim women in the Indian Subcontinent. The diverse range of topics covered provides a holistic understanding of the challenges and progress experienced by Muslim women in various spheres of life.

One of the strengths of the book lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which draws from fields such as sociology, gender studies, media studies, and Islamic studies. This interdisciplinary perspective enriches the discussions and offers a nuanced analysis of complex issues.

Moreover, the inclusion of empirical data, case studies, and qualitative analysis enhances the credibility and depth of the arguments presented. The use of tables and figures to illustrate key findings adds clarity and facilitates a better understanding of the quantitative aspects discussed.

The book also succeeds in highlighting the intersectionality of factors influencing the status of Muslim women, including religion, culture, socio-economic status, and media representation. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of these factors, the text provides a holistic framework for understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by Muslim women in the Indian Subcontinent.

Furthermore, the book offers practical recommendations and insights for policymakers, researchers, and activists working towards gender equality and social justice. It calls for improved representation of Muslim women in media, greater awareness of Islamic feminism, and targeted interventions to address socio-economic disparities.

CONCLUSION

“The Status of Muslim Women in the Indian Subcontinent” is a timely and insightful contribution to the literature on gender, Islam, and social inclusion. Its comprehensive exploration of diverse issues, coupled with empirical evidence and interdisciplinary perspectives, makes it a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the complexities of Muslim women’s experiences in the Indian Subcontinent. This book serves as a catalyst for further research, advocacy, and action aimed at promoting gender equality and empowerment within Muslim communities.