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GENDER JIHAD OR RE-READING? UPON ISLAMIC FEMINISM*

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ABSTRACT

As human beings, we are women or men according to our biological sex given by birth. Moreover, we are exposed to some references for our being feminine or masculine in the society. These responsibilities, roles and duties are called gender and gender causes some limits in the life of women and men, but especially for women. The inequalities stemming from these gender roles may lead women stay behind men in the fields such as education, health, law, religion, etc.

One of these limits, religion, is claimed to keep women in the background and even ignore them from immemorial times with the effect of patriarchy. What lies in the ground of these claims is the misinterpretation of the sacred texts by men.

This study carried out with a qualitative method as descriptive analyses, aims at revealing Islamic Feminism. In this context firstly general information about feminism was given. Then the paradoxal structure and the progress of Islamic Feminism were put forth. During this study, some answers to the questions as whether the concepts Islam and Feminism can coexist and whether Islam sets women to the secondary position were also sought.

As a conclusion one of the points that were enlightened is that it is possible to use the concepts of Islam and Feminism which were regarded as being paradoxal. The concepts "Gender jihad", used widely in literature and "re-reading of the Islamic sources", one of the main aims

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of Islamic Feminism, were taken metaphorically to make the issue more understandable. Another point is that contrary to the judgments that declare Islam subordinates women do not exist in Islam. The reason for these kinds of explanations stems from the different traditions of Islamic countries.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

From the first days of our history until now, the different roles of men and women have set off gender stereotypes. Men would hunt wild animals on the land whereas women were in charge of collecting herbs and other necessities for the community to survive and bearing, raising and teaching their children. Some centuries later the concepts of freedom and individualism emerged in the West provided a basis for women to become conscious of their status and different women from different cultures started to claim their rights via different movements. Feminism is a theory that aims to change the society in order to put an end the gender pressure on women and to make the gender attitudes equal. On the other hand, feminism can be interpreted in various ways, such as hostility against men, regarding women superior to men or displaying an aggressive attitude against men. Different feminist theories can handle the situation from different perspectives. Between all these feminisms, Islamic Feminism, this is quite sophisticated because of it taking religion as a basis, its multiple names (Islamic, Islamic or Muslim Feminism) as well as the cultural and traditional gap between the Islamic countries, has started to be discussed from scientists of various fields.

The method of this qualitative study is descriptive which presents the concept of Islamic feminism. During this study, some answers to the questions as whether the concepts Islam and Feminism can coexist and whether Islam sets women to the secondary position were also sought. The term itself has a paradoxal structure to make the readers think whether Islam and feminism can coexist or not. So, some scholars name the concept as "*Islamic, Islamist or Muslim Feminism*".

When the history of the concept was taken into consideration, it can be said that after the 19th century the emergence of feminism has led Muslim women question their status. Thus, Islamic feminism can be defined as Eastern women's questioning themselves in the light of those of Eastern point of view. So, some of the scholars express this movement as "gender jihad".

Islamic feminism can be categorized into two groups as transnational and national Islamic feminism; the first of which refers to the studies carried out in English by Muslim women academics such as Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud; the latter refers to the studies in the countries as Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt.

The major objective of this movement is to reread and interpret the major sources of Islam, Koran and Hadith within the perspective of women. Many scholars and women, including Barlas and Wadud, dwells on patriarchal explanation and emphasizes that many Muslims interpret the Koran in the patriarchal and misogyny perspective. These interpretations have been exposed to critics over time. For example,

conservative Muslims set barriers by hiding themselves behind traditions and opposing to reinterpretation of Koran as this is considered as a threat to traditional male roles. Thus, conservatives disqualify women's interpretations.

Islamic feminism is common in many parts of the world, not only in Muslim countries. The researchers in these countries hold some international congress to discuss the movement. The First International Congress on Islamic Feminism held in Spain on 27th-29th October 2005; the Second International Congress on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona on 3rd-5th November 2006; the Third International Congress on Islamic Feminism organized in Barcelona on 24th-27th October 2008; The Fourth International Congress on Islamic Feminism organized in Madrid on 22nd-24th October 2010 are some of these congress. There are also some other international events such as The Conference on Religion, Culture and Women's Rights in the Muslim World, Islamic Feminism: Boundaries and Politics, The Conference on Reformist Women Thinkers. Moreover there are some organizations such as Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE), Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI), Muslim Women's Network, Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN), Başkent Kadın Platformu, International Union of Muslim Women and Arab Women's Solidarity, Seattle's Islamic Sisterhood (SIS), Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) founded by Muslim women on this issue.

Keywords: Gender, feminism, Islamic Feminism

CİNSİYET CİHADİ MI, YENİDEN OKUMA MI? İSLAMİ FEMİNİZM ÜZERİNE

ÖZ

Biz insanlar, doğuştan sahip olduğumuz, kadın veya erkek olmamızı belirten biyolojik cinsiyetimizin yanı sıra, toplumda kadınlık veya erkeklliğimize göre birtakım atıflara maruz kalırız. Toplumsal cinsiyet olarak tanımlanan bu sorumluluklar, roller ve görevler, başta kadınlar olmak üzere erkeklerin hayatında da sınırlılıklara neden olmaktadır. Bu rollerin meydana getirdiği eşitsizlikler eğitim, sağlık, hukuk, din gibi birçok alanda kadının erkeğin karşısında ikincil planda kalmasına yol açabilmektedir.

Bu sınırlılıklardan biri olan din alanında kadının, kadim çağlardan bu yana ataerkil sistemin de etkisiyle kutsalın merkezine yerleştirilse de geri planda kaldığı, hatta zaman zaman yok sayıldığı iddia edilmektedir. Bu iddiaların temelinde, bu çalışmada dayanağını oluşturan kutsal metinlerin erkek gözüyle okunması ve yorumlanması yatmaktadır.

Nitel yöntemle yapılan betimsel analiz türündeki bu çalışmanın amacı, İslami Feminizm kavramını ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle İslami feminizm hakkında genel bilgi verilmiş, sonrasında ise kavramının gelişimi ve paradoksal yapısı anlatılmıştır. Çalışmada ayrıca İslam ve Feminizm kavramlarının bir arada olup olamayacağı,

İslamiyet'in kadını ikincil konuma koyup koymadığı gibi sorulara yanıt aranmıştır.

Sonuç yerine ortaya koyulan noktalardan biri, İslam ve Feminizm kavramlarının paradoksal olduğu düşünülen yapısının biraradalığının mümkünlüğüdür. Literatürde sıklıkla kullanılan "cinsiyet cihadı" ve İslami Feministlerin çalışma alanlarından biri olan "İslami kaynakların yeniden okunması", konunun daha anlaşılır kılınması için metaforik olarak ele alınmıştır. Bir diğer konu ise İslam dininin kadını ikincil konuma koyduğunu belirten yargıların aslında İslam'da olmadığı, İslam'ın yaşadığı farklı coğrafyaların geleneklerinden kaynaklandığıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Feminizm, İslami Feminizm.

Introduction

Women's question viewed as an issue in many areas in our age has been on the agenda of discussions for centuries. Various opinions resulting from those discussions have enriched, complicated and branched out this issue.

Feminism could be defined as a political movement aiming to change on the basis of power relations between men and women. This relation is inquired on a large scale of family, education, business world, political life, culture and history. This movement based on the discrimination between men and women develop as a political one that is aimed to feature feminine values by terminating all androcentric social norms and superiority of men (Çaha, 2010: 55).

Even though feminism is regarded as a misandry by some quarters, it is a doctrine to oppose to gender discrimination and patriarchy in the most social general medium. Supporters of feminism do not only defend that women and men should have equal rights, but also deny any hierarchical relations between two sexes and minor position of women in the society. This case objects to not only men but also women of the idea that defends minor position of women.

To feminists, people bear different roles regarded as gender in society. While bearing this social status, gender discrimination should not be applied and feminism objects to the case in which women and men should be directed irrespectively to private sphere and public sphere, whereby the difference between these spheres should be removed.

To the perspective of Berktaş, if women are to struggle with a group of problems and oppose to these problems, the basic reason results from the postulates formed by the society and culture in the field of identities and roles of women and men, gender stereotypes and gender. These stereotypes for women and men formed by the society are quite important for our existence and offspring of traditions having originated in the cultures and religion for long ages (Berktaş 2012: 16).

According to some individuals, since women's question turns out to be an economic and political 'problem', the institutional feminism has emerged as an academic discipline and a movement looking for solutions in order to figure out this problem.

The concepts such as freedom and individuality emerged from the transformation of intellectual movements in the West after the 19th century has changed to the movement of global right claiming. "The Feminist Movement" which defends the equal right among sexes, has gradually ramified over the years and laid the basement of spreading the different feminist movements by integrating with other approaches, cultures and religions.

When it comes to the 20th century, Muslim intellectual women began to discuss over the problems of Muslim women under the influence of all the expressions of western feminists. The discussions which broke out in the countries such as Turkey (Ottoman), Egypt and Iran dealt with the title of Islamic Feminism inclusively due to the problems stemming from different experiences and countries of Muslim women. In this context, differences come forward unavoidably on the subject of 'secular' and 'religious' perspectives in the studies for women in Islam. In this research, these two groups are not differed from each other but dealt with entirely.

The Concept of Islamic Feminism

The concept of "Islamic Feminism" was brought into the literature in 1990s by some Iranian and Arabic academicians and writers. According to Amina Wadud¹, the definition of Islamic Feminism firstly took place in the work 'Women, Islamisms, and The State: Contemporary Feminisms in Egypt' by Azza M. Karam (İngün 2005: 108). The academicians and writers such as Asaneh Najmabadeh, Helh Afshar and Mai Yamani expressed this concept in their works; however there have been some other academicians who used that concept in many countries over time (Çaha 2010: 344). It turned out to be a term used in "Feminism and Islam" in 1996 by an Arabic scientist, Mai Yamani, and by the Turkish scientists, Yesim Arat, Feride Acar and Nilufer Gole (Badran 2002:4).

It is seen at the examination stage of this research that this kind of feminism could be named as "Islamic, Islamist or Muslim Feminism". "There are subtle yet substantial differences among these terms. Islamic feminists ground their arguments in Islam and its teachings, seek the full equality of women and men in the personal and public sphere and can include non-Muslims in the discourse and debate. Muslim feminists consider themselves Muslims and feminist but may use arguments outside Islam, for example, national secular law or international human rights agreements, to counter gender inequality. Islamists are advocates of political Islam, the notion that the Qur'an and *hadith* mandate an Islamic government. Some Islamists advocate women's rights in the public sphere but do not challenge gender inequality in the personal, private sphere" (http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Islamic_feminism). Since the resources, which are mainly referred in this research, originate in Western and are written in English Language, and 'Islamic Feminism' as a term is encountered in the process of scanning in Turkish Language, this term is used overall of this study.²

Feminist discourse has become systematized since 19th century through orientalist and colonist men and influenced non-western societies, particularly Islamic cultural zone. The problematic status of Muslim women has guided working and intellectual life of intelligentsia supporting modernism and westernization of Islamic countries by the way of influence of the colonist and orientalist expressions, and critical approaches and explanations from Muslim women have been evaluated in the perspective of feminism. Thus, women question turns out to be a topic that has been discussed until now thanks to the specific importance of national movements and nationalism process. In sum, the women become one of the elements in the social transformation today and the participation of women in society is regarded as an indication of social development (Güç, 2008: 651).

¹ Working as a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University on Islamic Studies.

² The resources that the term "Islamic Feminism" was taken as a basis are: Aksu Bora, "Hatırlananlar ve Unutulanlar: İslam Coğrafyasında Modernleşme ve Kadın Hareketleri", *Bilig*, 53, (Bahar/2010), 57. ; Ayşe Güç, "İslami Feminizm: Müslüman Kadınların Birey Olma Çabaları", *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 17/2, 2008, 651.; Nayereh Tohidi, "İslami Feminizm" Tehlikeler ve Ümit Vaad Eden Unsurlar, İhsan Toker (trans.), *AÜİFD*, 45, (2004), 283-285. ; Nazife Gürhan, "Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve İslami Feminist Söylem", *Uluslararası Bilim, Ahlak ve Sanat Bağlamında Çağdaş İslam Algıları Sempozyumu*, Samsun Canik Belediyesi, 26-28 Kasım 2010, 369.

Islamic Feminism, on one hand, could be defined as the idea of the orientalist in the West that Eastern women has a subordinate position that should be removed, whereas, on the other hand, the Eastern women opposes this process and starts to criticize their own East.

“Both dynamics brought up by modernism of Muslims and opportunities currently emerged from enriching results of modernism transformation create new cases in response to Muslim women’s social status and their self-perceptions. Expressions of ‘gender jihad’³ and ‘Islamic Feminism’ are two important examples of this case but not in an aggregate scale.” (Toker, 2010: 380).

Mulki Al-Sharmani divides Islamic Feminism into two groups: transnational and national. The transnational projects are the studies in English which are carried out by Muslim female academics such as Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud. The national projects are those that emerged in Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt at research centres or universities in national languages (Al-Sharmani 2014: 83-94).

Gender jihad is defined as a struggle for the sake of Allah towards gender parity that is recognized and institutionalized by public. This specific jihad aims to reorder the traditional Islamic paradigm. According to Hibba Abugideiri, gender jihad is based on The Koran and pursues more complementariness between sexes. It represents the struggle on gender parity in Muslim society for the sake of the divine justice. It is also “the struggle to terminate the gender regime having paralyzed Muslim women for a long time by preventing them to be Muslim leaders.” (Toker, 2010: 380).

On the other hand, although Islam and Feminism conflict and are never related with each other, some state that Islam subordinate the position of women as compared to that of men and women and men were created within roles to complete with each other. Nevertheless, it is necessary that Islamic disciplines should be reinterpreted according to both ideas. While Islamic Feminists are supported by Islamic world, they are exposed to some negative critics in some points.

Setting thinkers of the idea that concepts dealing with Islam and Feminism conflict each other aside, while some point out that Islam treats women as a second class human and adopts the men ‘superiority over women, and women is engaged within the titles of ‘motherhood’ and ‘housewife’, some defend that women and men were created within the roles to ‘complete’ with each other. However, both ideas point out that Islamic disciplines should be reinterpreted and emphasize that the body of a women is a bio-cultural creature but biological one.

Islamic Feminism includes various and colorful lines in the respect of focusing on the ‘women’, who is one hand a concept on the orbit of ‘religion’ and the other hand takes an important place in the present and history of thought. Even though women who study about Islam and Women adopt themselves as ‘Islamic Feminists’, which is thought to point a paradoxical concept, Islamic Feminism turns out to be a concept that is getting enriched within all of these differences day by day.

According to Wadud’s definition on ‘Islamic Feminism’, Islamic feminists adopt that Islam bring forward patriarchal approaches and add that it is not a means of pressure that suppresses the women. Furthermore, a Muslim man is a householder but should not be a tyrant at home. To Islamic Feminists, the real nature of a woman is to be a housewife and a good mother for her children and working in a paid-job is of secondary importance. Wadud also brought up another definition apart from Islamic Feminists: Muslim Feminists of the idea that Islam should be reinterpreted. Instead of promoting the equality between men and women, they share the idea that misogyny of Islam and patriarchy are widespread and began to emerge in pre-Islamic age of ignorance. There is a hierarchical

³ The phrase “Gender Jihad” in Amina Wadud’s book named “Inside the Gender Jihad-2008” represents the struggle against the subordinated status of women stemming from the misinterpretation of Kor’an. For more detailed information, see Amina Wadud, “Inside Gender Jihad”, islam-and-gender.blogspot.com.tr/2012/07/amina-waduds-inside-gender-jihad.html, (24.01.2018).

classification and we need to take this fact into consideration while practicing this in our lives and social order. To Islamic Feminists, Islam is captured by the man who is of the opinion of patriarchy. According to them, Islam could liberate women from the opinions that a woman is attributed to a secondary position (İngün 2005: 108-109). In sum, according to ones supporting this type of feminism, Islam allocates women with any right. If a woman is at a negative place, it is raised from traditions.

No matter how this approach is called; Islamic, Islamist or Muslim Feminists, its major objective is that the Koran, which is the divine book of Islam religion, the Hadith, which consists of speeches of the prophet Muhammad and all resources dealing with Islamic law, interpretation and related points should be reinterpreted and explained in the perspective of women. The Koran, which is divine and regarded as fairness since it has never been changed, causes different interpretation and subsequent arguments as its original texts were written in Arabic, and makes differences on viewpoints dealing with 'women' who is the major character of Islamic movements at present.

However, Çaha takes arguments of Islamic Feminisms to another reference which is linked to the postmodern approach developed in the West. Postmodernism makes an extension for Islamic feminists on two points. Firstly, it develops an approach of multi-existentialist by defending the differences of groups against the understanding of universal essentialist in the light of experience. Secondly, it develops an approach to question the relation between women and power. While this research suggests how the power reproduces itself depending on the definition of gender, Islamic feminists who are influenced by this case have made the following comments in Postmodernism's shadow: As a matter of the fact, the power in the history of Islam subordinated women through the comments on gender. The current interpretation of Koran is historical and should be reinterpreted in the perspective of women (Çaha 2010: 348).

Cihan Aktaş reminds humanity of women's humanistic status and expresses that he has explained about the protective principles on this status. He recommends women not to obey their husbands without any conditions but men and women also not to have hostile attitude with each other. Women and men, faithful women and men should know to be friends and supportive with each other in the frame of peace and understanding, and never apply preemptory, oppressive, tyrannical and vindictive attitudes.

On making summary of the women whose names took place in the rumors on the age when Islam spread, Tuksal depicts that "the present conventions and social structure exempted the women from capturing power means individually. She mentioned that the status of women in that age was related to cultural and historical bases by finding out that one of the major reasons is that 'women was regarded as 'more unfit' for the struggle to overcome life conditions of the age in physiological and social manner as compared to men.'" (Şefkatli Tuksal 2012: 55)

Koran equates women and men in response to educational right and does not discriminate between sexes as leading people to science. In Judaism and Christianity, it is the women to induce the fundamental sin and there is a common belief that Eva misled Adam. However, there is not any expression like the mentioned in the verses of Koran.

Nevertheless, some defend the opinion that Koran subordinates women.

Asma Barlas, who is one of outstanding names of Islamic Feminism, dwells on patriarchal explanation and emphasizes that many Muslims interpret the Koran in the patriarchal and misogyny perspective. These interpretations have been exposed to critics over time. For example, conservative Muslims set barriers by hiding themselves behind traditions and opposing to reinterpretation of Koran as this is considered as a threat to traditional male roles. Thus, conservatives disqualify women's interpretations. According to Wadud, while the tradition outstands more than the original text, traditional role structures get ahead of the real interpretations of Koran (Barlas 2004).

After the advent of women-men equality as the first viewpoint of Islamic Feminism, it is likely to mention a second viewpoint with the creation.

The point that woman was created from a rib of the man is not in the Koran. As it is not, that the human was created in mud is mentioned in the sura of Hicr with no:26 as to the follow: “We created the human with dry mud, fully formed clay” (Piriş 2010: 122).

Moreover, the thought that it was Eva who tricked Adam and made him eat the apple is quite common. Both thoughts also belong to Christianity.

Researches of Islamic Feminists are not only restricted with the re-reading of the religious texts and ones based-on Koran. The group *SIS (Sisters in Islam)* in Malaysia was involved in activities depending on women rights, social status of women, gender, and violation against women. Besides these, some campaigns were organized in favor for women to hold the position of being judges in Egypt and women struggled in the pursuit of improving the working conditions for a long time in South Africa.

Another example of Islamic Feminist movement could be given that Amina Wadud performed prayer in the community of women and men together. Acts in the mosques in South Africa in 1994 in first time and then in Virginia, the USA quickly spread all the Muslim communities in the world (for instance, Iran, Bahrain, Morocco, Egypt and Turkey).

Nilüfer Göle made the following expression about the relation between Islam and Feminism:

Similarity between movements of Feminist and Islam is crucial in respect to explaining the understanding of democracy comprehended by participants of formal public sphere and the reaction acted against its natural dismissive in both the West and Turkey. In spite of the ideological differences between the movements of Feminists and Islam, they are similar with each other in response to points of their outbreak. One of these similarities is the effort of the actors of both movements so as to be recognized as subjects (Göle 2013: 78).

In contrast to feminist movements in the West mentioned in the previous chapter, the movement of Islamic movement tends to priorities religious identities. Still, Western Feminists deny the religion since it is seen as the resource of patriarchy. Besides, the concept of family is exposed to severe critics in the West, whereas family union still remains its respectability. The demands of Western Feminists such as sexual freedom, abortion dealing with the related discussions of women body are not lionized by Islamic Feminists (Gürhan 2010: 381).

To Magrot Badran, who has a great share of using the concept of Islamic Feminism, Muslim women who may be regarded as Islamic Feminists or not participate in the production of Islamic feminist expression through their different understandings of Islam. Ones in Islamic societies who are involved in the discussions on Islam and Feminism, Women and Islamic Movements produce this expression. According to this approach, some writers such as Fatima Mernissi from Morocco and Nevvalel-Saadavi from Egypt, who deny the identity of ‘Islamic Feminists’, also made contribution to Islamic Feminisms thanks to their work (Gürhan 2010: 373).

Starting from the point of this view, Tohidi compared Feminism in the West when evaluating Islamic Feminism or Muslim Feminism:

Muslim feminism is a discussion of modernism, adopting modernism (which emerged firstly in the West) but an alternative presentation which is regarded to differ from the West, Western Modernism and “Western Feminism”. (...) In other words, it is adopted that Muslim Feminism or Islamic Feminism is a discussion on old facts (traditional patriarchy) and new facts(modern and postmodern) and an answer based on faith of Muslim women in their struggle against them. In addition to this, its limits and

potentials in respect to women's strength as like other ideological feminists' movements should be explained on the scope of its successes and practices rather than its strong sides or contradictions at theological or theoretical aspect (Tohidi 2004: 283-285).

International Studies within the Frame of “Islamic Feminism”

Women's studies have begun to be researched more comprehensively currently. In both social and academic fields, the researchers carry out some researches on this topic. Islamic Feminism has become one of the heading topics dealing with women's studies in international platforms.

Lots of international congresses have been organized about Islamic Feminism. It is “First International Congress on Islamic Feminism” in Spain held on 27th-29th October 2005 that is regarded as the most important one as it was the leading congress to be firstly organized. The second one, which was the Second International Congress on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona on 3rd-5th November 2006, highly focused on the points dealing with Islamic Law/Shari'ah. The Third International Congress on Islamic Feminism was organized in Barcelona on 24th-27th October 2008. It involved the economic and political points (democracy, social rights, liberty of conscience and gender equality in Koran). The fourth one, which was organized in Madrid on 22nd-24th October 2010, debated over the terms of gender inequality and social gender that were the discussion points of the congresses which have been organized until now, and the essential improvement of Islamic Feminists by pointing out the relation between Sufism and Islam⁴.

Furthermore, it was the first time to draw attention on the Islamic Feminism during the meeting of Roundtable on Identity Politics and Women held by Valentine Moghadam in Helsinki in 1990.⁵

The other conference was “*The Conference on Religion, Culture and Women's Rights in the Muslim World*” which was held by Menhaz Afkhami,⁶ an Iranian activist. “*Islamic Feminism: Boundaries and Politics*” which was held by Stephanie Latte Abdullah in 2009 still focused on the expression of gender equality and social rights (<http://remmm.revues.org/6284>).

The Conference on Reformist Women Thinkers held and directed by Helh Esfandiari in 2009 gathered lots of women scientists and it was underlined the fact that Islamic world claim the rights of both Muslims and Non-Muslims. In 2010, Islamic Feminism and Beyond was held as the subsequent conference of the above-mentioned.

In addition to these, the other organizations which were founded by women were *Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE)*, *Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI)*, *Muslim Women's Network*, *Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN)*, Başkent Kadın Platformu, *International Union of Muslim Women and Arab Women's Solidarity*, *Seattle's Islamic Sisterhood (SIS)*, *Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)*.

Another study on Islamic Feminism on the scope of international platform was the report issued by Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2012 about Muslim women in Europe. The most driving point in the report, which consists of the details that Muslim women living in European Countries, where Muslims do not form the majority of population, are exposed to lots of discriminations, most of which have to do with health, education and employment, was the chapter of movements of Islamic Feminists (Multiple Discrimination Against Muslim Women in Europe: For Equal Opportunities”, 2010).

⁴ These information was taken from “International congress on Islamic feminism”, <http://southasia.oneworld.net/news-you-can-use/event/international-congress-on-islamic-feminism> ; “Spain: IV International Congress on Islamic Feminism”, <http://www.wluml.org/node/6478> (20.05.2019).

⁵ A Persian and American sociologist. The meeting was held at WIDER.

⁶Mahnaz Afkhami is the president of “Sisterhood is Global Institute SIGI”.

Women's rights were mentioned in the report with the title of "*Declaration Islamique Universelle des Droits de l'Homme*", which was declared by Salem Azam, General Secretary of Islamic Commission for Europe, in a meeting of UNESCO in Paris on 19th September 1981 (Islamic Declaration of Human Rights).

On the other hand, there are several international declarations which do not recognize equal rights between men and women.

Cairo Declaration of Islamic Human Rights issued by *Organization of Islam Countries* in 1990 stated that all rights are bound to Islamic Laws (Shariah) and deprived women of the opportunity that they would be equal before the acts by leaving out the equal rights between men and women.

Another work is the organization named *Muslims against Violation to Women Initiative* which was founded by the individuals, who primarily feature themselves with the Muslim identity, in Istanbul in February 2013 in order to develop an Islamic expression and perspective on the purpose of preventing the violation to women. The Initiative Islam never agrees with the violation to women and defends that women should fight against the violation to women by men. For this reason, the Initiative includes women and men acting on this way and purpose (Kadına Karşı Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar İnisiyatifi).

As a Conclusion

Feminism which objects to discrimination between sexes in society and defends the equality in such social, economic, political fields between women and men was judged within misandry and the idea of superiority of women by men.

This study tried to prevent the probable prejudices by indicating that feminism is not only an approach to defend misandry or the superiority of women but also it focuses on claiming equal rights between sexes.

Islamic Feminism has taken place in the literature since 1990s as a term consisting of many arguments even in conceptual naming process. While the arguments on coexistence between Islam and Feminism still proceed, the studies in this field have raised by creating a tremendous impression all over the world.

The conflicts of this approach, in which different thoughts even between themselves exist, emerge in two ways: While the first way is referred to the thought that Islam has restricted women in private sphere, does not entitle them in the fields such educational and public area and politics, and subordinates women by means of many examples. The second one is of the thought that Islam considers women and men equal depending on the expression that both sexes complete with each other in the Koran.

In the light of these documents and data, the coexistence of Islam and Feminism is proved to conceptualize the "Islamic Feminism" although it appears paradoxical. The other finding is that Islam never subordinates women in the field of either creation or equality and supports her to emerge in public sphere.

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