

**Islamic Perspective on Women Empowerment: The Role of afarkin Tsira
Islamic Center Azare, Bauchi State, Nigeria**

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Abstract

This study explores the Islamic perspective on women's empowerment and the critical role of Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Center Azare in promoting women's empowerment for a more inclusive and equitable society. This study employs the literature study method, which involves a systematic and comprehensive approach to literature analysis. This includes searching, collecting, and evaluating relevant literature sources, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews with relevant individuals. The results of the study stated that Islam recognizes education and empowerment for both men and women as means of livelihood and religious practice. By providing equal access to Islamic, western, and vocational education, people can develop the necessary skills for knowledge sharing and business practice to play an active societal role. However, significant challenges need to be addressed, such as limited access to funds, gender bias within societies, social norms, and security challenges. The center is always trying to support the general community on such issues, especially gender equality and women's empowerment, for the betterment of society. It is recommended that with the shared commitment of governments at all levels, educational institutions, community leaders, religious scholars, and families, women's empowerment can be a driven force that encourages women's participation in businesses, vocational pursuits, and creativity to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society, as well as strengthening the role of women in society and overcoming the barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential and contribution to their quarter.

Keywords: Azare, Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Center, Women Empowerment.

A. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment, a multidimensional process comprising political, social, cultural, economic, and legal empowerment, helps one gain control of their lives by raising their awareness. The term 'empowerment' denotes the process of increasing

the assets and capabilities of individuals or groups to make purposeful choices and to transform those into desired actions and outcomes.¹

For accelerating the development process of a welfare state, women's empowerment is a matter of concern for both the developing and developed worlds. But it is necessary to develop a proper way by which empowerment could be measured quantitatively as well as qualitatively to formulate an effective action plan for the betterment of the societal condition. Plenty of research work has been carried out at the national as well as international levels, covering the multidimensional nature of women's empowerment. Most of the studies on Muslim women's empowerment are confined to Islam dominated states. Following are some reviews of significant studies.

Made a pioneering study measuring and analyzing women's empowerment. Here, six commonly used dimensions, viz., economic, socio-cultural, familial-interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological, including their potential operationalization in the household, community, and broader arenas, have been put forth.²

Quantitatively measure rural Muslim women's empowerment at the household level. Education, training, and exposure to information media have the potential to increase women's empowerment to a large extent.³ Studied women's empowerment in the Faisalabad district of Pakistan based on the socio-cultural context of the study area. The study suggests revolutionary changes in female education that will support gender awareness and self-esteem among women.⁴

An empirical analysis made by Chaudhry shows diverse results of women's empowerment in three different regions, viz., urban, rural, and tribal areas of

¹ Chakrabarti S. and Biswas, "Women Empowerment, Household Condition and Personal Characteristics," in *Developing Countries, Discussion Paper ERU*, 2008.

² Schuler S. R. and Boender C Malhotra A., "Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development, Paper Presented at the International Council for Research on Women (ICRW)" (Washington DC, 2003).

³ Parveen S. and Leonhauser IU Empowerment of Rural Women in Bangladesh: A Household Level Analysis, Conference on Rural Poverty Reduction through Research for Development and Transformation, Deutscher Tropentag-Berlin, (2004).

⁴⁴ Khan T. M. and Maan A. A, Socio-cultural Milieu of Women's Empowerment in District Faisalabad, *Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Science*, Vol. 45(3), pp.78-90, (2008).

southern Punjab (Pakistan). Besides education, access to media, socio-cultural norms of the community, the job of women, and household participation rate, a variable about the knowledge of an Islamic concept of women empowerment has an effect on the women empowerment index constructed in the study.⁵

Conducted a study of women's empowerment in Oman based on five independent variables and total women's empowerment as a dependent variable. It shows that women in Oman are better at household decision-making and economic decision-making than social empowerment. In spite of a handful of literature found on women empowerment in India, only a few of them cover empirical analysis of women empowerment among the Muslim community, the largest minority group in India.⁶

Bharathamma's study of rural women empowerment in Gadag district of northern Karnataka, found that education, land holding, income of the family, social participation, and mass media participation have highly significant associations with women empowerment. As per rural women's perception, lack of education, being overburdened with dual responsibilities, a lack of proper training, family restrictions on mobility, and a lack of sufficient finance are the root constraints of poor women's empowerment.⁷ Deininger's study of women's empowerment in rural India, evaluated the Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project (APDPIP) upon women's empowerment and found that APDPIP not only improved access to credit and risk diversification but also significantly increased women's empowerment.⁸

Das's identified various constraints to women's empowerment among Muslim communities, which include social, political, economic, technological, and

⁵ Chaudhry I. S. and Nosheen F. (2009). The Determinants of Women Empowerment in Southern Punjab (Pakistan): An Empirical Analysis, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 10(2), pp.216-229

⁶ Varghese T. Women Empowerment in Oman: A Study based on Women Empowerment Index, *Far East Journal of Psychology and Business*, Vol. 2(2), pp.37-53, (2011).

⁷ Bharathamma G.U. Empowerment of Rural Women Through Income Generating Activities in Gadag District on Northern Karnataka, M.Sc. (Agriculture) Thesis, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, (2005).

⁸ Deininger K., Galab S. and Olsen T. Empowering Poor Rural Women in India: Empirical Evidence from Andhra Pradesh, Selected Paper prepared for presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association. Annual Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, (2005).

psychological constraints. He further argues that ‘lack of knowledge about new technology and information’ was the main reason behind the poor empowerment of such tribal women.⁹

Another relevant study is a study conducted by Rumana Ahmed and Ghaffar Nelia Hyndman-Rizk in Bangladesh in 2018. This study explores the impact of Islamic education on women and how Islamic education has improved women's knowledge, skills, and confidence. The results show that Islamic education has dramatically enhanced women's empowerment and assisted them in actively participating in life. Another study that can be mentioned is the one by Lynda A. Tyer-Viola and Sandra K. Cesario, which focuses on the role of education in curbing gender inequality and creating an environment that supports women's empowerment.¹⁰

The results show that inclusive and gender-informed education can positively impact society's view of women and give them more significant opportunities in various aspects of life. Similar studies have been conducted in various countries around the world. The research covers various aspects of Islamic education, ranging from religious understanding to educational access, social and cultural barriers, and the impact of technology.¹¹ All of these studies provide valuable insights into how Islamic education can be used as a tool to promote women's empowerment. This past study offers a vital reference frame for understanding the various dimensions of the role of Islamic education in women's empowerment.¹² By understanding the results and findings of previous research, this review will continue efforts to delve deeper and integrate a more

⁹ Das S.KAn Analysis of Constraints in Women Empowerment in Tribal Area: Evidences from Assam, *Asian Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, Vol. 2(4), pp.61-74. (2012).

¹⁰ Lynda A Tyer-Viola and Sandra K Cesario, (2010). Addressing Poverty, Education, and Gender Equality to Improve the Health of Women Worldwide,” *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* 39, no. 5, 580–89,

¹¹ Samina Malik and Kathy Courtney, “Higher Education and Women’s Empowerment in Pakistan,” *Gender and Education* 23, no. 1 (2011): 29–45,

¹² Nuraan Davids, “Are Muslim Women in Need of Islamic Feminism? In Consideration of a Re-Imagined Islamic Educational Discourse,” *British Journal of Religious Education* 37, no. 3 (2015): 311–25

comprehensive understanding of the ways Islamic education can promote women's empowerment in a variety of social, economic, and cultural contexts.

In our world today, women's empowerment can be treated as a process by which women can enjoy greater control over material and intellectual resources that will enable them to have greater autonomy over household decision-making and economic resources. Women's empowerment has been taken as a priority area in the UN Millennium Development Goals; it is direly needed to take into account the inter-relationship of various predictor variables that together contribute to the women's empowerment process in a particular region under the study area.

Although the present world has given much more attention to achieving equity of power between men and women, women in developing countries are still in a darker position. To ensure empowerment among women, it is necessary to change long-standing traditional socio-cultural norms along with redefining the concept of patriarchal societal patterns.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the literature review method with systematic data collection and evaluation of the sources that are relevant to the subject matter through a review of the books, published journal articles, printed and online sources, as well as a semi-structured interview with pertinent people. In addition to this, content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. In this context, the study was designed based on the idea of how Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare in Bauchi State, Nigeria, handles its empowerment programs as well as its recorded success, especially among women. The knowledge, skills, and values of the women empowerment program were taken into account in the creation of the document review form. While analyzing the data during the research process, descriptive analysis was used to classify written materials containing information about the phenomenon or facts aimed at being investigated during the literature review. The researchers also add direct quotes to dramatically reflect the views of the individuals they interviewed or observed. The main purpose of this type of analysis is to present the findings to the reader in a summarized and interpreted form Yıldırım dan Simsek. Content analysis was also used to identify some situations by organizing,

classifying, comparing, and reaching theoretical results.¹³ As a result, the obtained findings were evaluated by comparing them with other information in the literature presented.

C. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare of Bauchi State Nigeria: Programs and Objectives

Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare is an educational and religious Centre established and registered with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution under the companies and Allied Matters Act 1990, Pursuant to Section 659 dated 10th March 2020. The Centre is located at No 2 opposite Ummul-Qura Science Academy Azare to run the following programs:

- a. Nursery Schools.
- b. Primary Schools.
- c. Secondary Schools.
- d. Islamiyyah Section.
- e. Tahfeez Section.
- f. Adult Education Section.
- g. Matrimonial Life Training and Counseling Section.
- h. Special Training and Interventions.
- i. Islamic Leadership Training Section.
- j. Publications.
- k. General Educational services.¹⁴

The Centre has a number of staff and students with several responsibilities across the programs. The current number of staff in the Centre is 22, which includes the director, three Sectional heads and classroom teachers, counseling masters,

¹³ Cavitt, M. E. A content analysis of doctoral research in beginning band education, *Journal of Band Research*, 42(1), 1958-2004, (2006)

¹⁴ tafarkin Tsira Et Al., "The Impact Of Infaq Fisabilillah Program For Vulnerables Under Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare, Bauchi State-Nigeria," *Al-Hikmah Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 4 (2021): 1-11.

trainers, centre general secretary, cashier, food vendors, and watchman. While the total enrollment of the students the center had from its inception to date is 122.¹⁵

The purpose of which is:

- a. Inspire women and youth to be the best they can be and aim for excellence through capacity building and mentoring.
- b. Support the development of social and emotional skills including self-esteem, leadership and assertiveness in our beneficiaries.
- c. Provide information and capacity building on health, political, economic and social issues through our various information dissemination platforms and programs.
- d. Training and mentorship on vocational skills and entrepreneurship knowledge across the genders and ethnic groups with soft support and supervision.
- e. Advocate for and encourage Girl-Child education to relevant stakeholders and religious bodies, encouraging higher enrollment, retention and completion rates for girls and women in science and information technology education towards accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶

The Programs is:

- a. Women and Adult Education (WAE) Program
- b. Islamic Leadership Training (ILT) Program
- c. Matrimonial Life Training and Counseling (MLTC) Program
- d. Qur'anic Memorization Training (QMT) Program
- e. Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Training (WEET) Program

Islamic education has a vital role in society, not only in the religious context but also in social and economic development. Islamic education, as part of the educational system, significantly impacts the development of the individual and society. Islamic education teaches the moral values, ethics, and social norms that

¹⁵ Adamu Abubakar Muhammad, "The Success of Entrepreneurship Education in Ta Farikin Tsira Islamic Center Azare of Bauchi State, Nigeria" VII, no. I (2024): 76–87.

¹⁶ Adamu Abubakar Muhammad, "The Role of Zakat and Waqf for the Development of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Gombe State," *International Journal of Small and Medium Enterprises and Business Sustainability* 7, no. 3 (2022): 102–27.

shape an individual's character. In the context of women, Islamic education can serve as a tool to provide a better understanding of their rights in religion and society. This is important because there are differences in religious and cultural interpretations that often hinder women from accessing their rights. Islamic education can help women understand the teachings of their religion better and fight for their optimum rights.

2. Islamic Education and its Role in Women Empowerment

Islamic education with regard to promoting women's empowerment can also be viewed as a yardstick for solving various social problems, such as poverty, gender inequality, and social injustice. Women with a good focus and vast knowledge and experience have a better chance of achieving economic independence, which can help solve the aforementioned problems. By producing robust research and data, we can motivate policymakers, community leaders, and educational institutions to invest more in Islamic education for women. In addition, Islamic education as an instrument of women's empowerment is also in line with humanitarian principles that underlie all the teachings of major religions in the world.

Universal principles such as justice, equality, and compassion are values embodied in religious teachings and can be applied in the context of Islamic education. Therefore, understanding and applying these principles in Islamic education is becoming increasingly important. In addition to religious understanding, Islamic education can provide women with broader knowledge.

In an ever-evolving society, knowledge is critical to understanding the world and competing in an increasingly competitive labor market. Providing quality Islamic education makes women better prepared to face social and economic challenges. They can become leaders in various fields, such as education, business, and politics, which in turn will positively contribute to the development of society as a whole. However, effective Islamic education in promoting women's empowerment is a matter of curriculum and should include social and cultural aspects. Often, women face discrimination and social barriers to their access to education. This is why there is a need to create an educational environment that

supports women's empowerment. It involves the active role of community, family, and society in supporting women's education.

It is also important to note that Islamic education must be inclusive, allowing women from different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds to access it. Gender equality is an underlying principle of human rights, and Islamic education should reflect this principle. Thus, women's empowerment through Islamic education is not only a matter of women's development but also a matter of social welfare and the progress of society.

3. Women Empowerment Program under Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare

In Nigeria, the effect of women's empowerment can be measured using indices such as education, literacy rate, employment, and leadership roles. In looking to achieve the Millennium Goal of women's development, the Nigerian government initiated the Women's Fund for Economic Empowerment and Business Development for women entrepreneurs, while "second chance" was meant to re-introduce dropped-out women due to pregnancy back to school. Nigeria was also working to improve the education of girls by recruiting more female teachers, creating skill acquisition programs for girls and women, and providing textbooks for free or at subsidized rates, among other measures.¹⁷

Women's empowerment is essential to their ability to build resilience to climate change and, by extension, the resilience of their households and communities. By building assets, women can better respond to family needs and mitigate risks and the effects of climate change and other shocks on livelihoods. Gender disparities in earnings hold back the Nigerian economy in general and women and their households in particular.¹⁸

Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Center Azare is considered a house of different skills and moral learning and training centers in the host community and its nearby localities. Its teachers have a central role, as they have a strong impact on the attainment of

¹⁷ Akudo Chinedu Ojoh, *Empowering Nigerian Women in the 21st Century* (Nigeria: Measuring the Gap. GRIN Verlag, 2013).

¹⁸ James A Ojobo, "Education: A Catalyst for Women Empowerment in Nigeria," *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2008).

their learners; they keep their practice under constant review and adjust it in the light of desired training outcomes and of the individual needs of students. Developing contemporary, relevant, competent, well-recognized, and profitable empowerment through entrepreneurship is the key vision of the center and its staff, with an absolute priority to the betterment of our future generation.¹⁹

One aspect that has become the focus and attention of Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare in Bauchi State, Nigeria, is how Islamic education can be a means to promote women's empowerment in the study area. Women are an integral part of society and have tremendous potential to contribute to social and economic development. However, women often face challenges and obstacles that limit their potential economically, socially, and politically due to their inability to access formal education and training. Therefore, it is essential to explore the role of the Islamic education program run by Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare in Bauchi State, Nigeria, in promoting women's empowerment so that they can participate actively in the development of society.

This program serves as one of the most important sections in the center, with more emphasis on women and youth. It is formed, designed, and initiated in order to address the issues of unemployment, collapse of businesses, and entrepreneurial challenges recorded in society, which serve as the most serious danger in the lives of our future generation.²⁰

No meaningful and recognized society can emerge without an effective, successful, and sustainable human life mentorship. Islam as a complete way of life is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for the economic, political, and social development of human species in general and women in particular. The study area accommodates a number of ethnic groups and people from different backgrounds and beliefs, as well as people with different expertise, business challenges, and entrepreneurial aspirations. The center gives equal opportunity to its clients where applicable, but places more emphasis on women's empowerment.

¹⁹ Tsira et al., "The Impact Of Infaq Fisabilillah Program For Vulnerables Under Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare, Bauchi State-Nigeria."

²⁰ Tsira et al.

Therefore, the issue of having competent, qualified, and expert mentors in society becomes necessary; this cannot be found without a designed and relevant training program in our localities.²¹In this regard, Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare developed the idea of each and every individual becoming a supporter of others on the basis of goodwill, mentorship, and kindness in order to achieve the desired goals

After focusing on many issues from different angles and perspectives, it has been realized that our societies face a number of challenges that are either unknown to many or neglected directly or indirectly by their leaders. As a result of many factors, if care is not taken, our youth, women, and other members of society may fall into danger, especially those who are living in rural areas.

Cases like marital conflicts, neighborhood conflicts, inter-family crises, school drop-outs, immoralities, sexual assaults, and rape, as well as insecurity challenges that are facing the study area, are among the major focused problems that forced the center to introduce this program of women enlightenment and empowerment (WEE) as the mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of our great communities to address the existing challenges in society.²²

Therefore, our empowerment program is a guiding process that influences the members of society to display initiative and love for the available businesses that they neglect, abandon, and consider of no value. By doing so, trainers, family members, and members of the general community would be able to attain happiness in their future lives.

D. CONCLUSION

Empowerment is one of the main ceremonial concerns when addressing human rights and development. In regard to women, empowerment has become necessary and needs to be strengthened across communities. According to the United Nations Millennium Campaign, women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, including growing food, cooking, raising children, caring for the elderly, maintaining a house, etc., and are universally accorded low status with no

²¹ Muhammad, "The Success of Entrepreneurship Education in Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Center Azare of Bauchi State , Nigeria."

²² Muhammad.

pay. In the paper dealing with the pragmatic measurement of women empowerment within the Muslim community according to Islamic perspective and the role of Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare in Bauchi State, Nigeria, about nine independent variables were observed, which are accessing any type of media for learning and training, family structure, family headship, household income, paid work, duration of marital life, poverty, insecurity, and culture. Education, as a major determinant of women's empowerment, serves as a major hindrance in many Nigerian communities. This may be due to the backwardness of the previously less educated women in the area. The findings of the research revealed that about 26.3% are either school dropouts or do not attend any formal school, and about 52.3% of Muslim women in the study area have only primary and secondary school education, which can hardly give them government jobs. Even the remaining 21.4% with tertiary education are either housewives or about to marry and have not escaped from some of the identified variables. Educational centers like Tafarkin Tsira Islamic Centre Azare that have presently emerged as learning and vocational centers for women in rural areas play a vital role in empowering this deplored class by rendering various governmental as well as non-governmental aids and training them to earn on their own, which can further change the gross socio-economic condition of Muslim women across the communities.

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