

Introduction Women in Sudan:-

The Sudan is a very vast country of multiple cultures and races, and of variable strata. Its area is 2,500,000 sq. km (one million sq miles), surrounded by nine African countries.

Sudan has been influenced by several cultures, but the one of deepest impact is the Arab Islamic culture.

There are many narratives about how Islam has been introduced into the Sudan, starting from being introduced through the current Axom area (Tigrai area) in Eastern Sudan (1), or through Dongola (2), or western Sudan or other narratives.

However, it is confirmed that the Islamic culture has struck deep roots in the Sudan, as well as its impact on the Sudanese cultural fabric, specially in northern and central Sudan.

But we can not ignore the existence of the northern Sudan Nubian, who are non Arabic tribes with their own culture that is dated back the Pharaonic culture. And southern Sudan with its multiple tribes and its purely African culture, which is also multiple, for each tribe has its own cultural feature, such as Dinka, Nuwair, Zandi, Shuluck and others.

All such diversity produced several cultures, such as the Bija culture and the Botana plains culture in eastern Sudan, the Maban in the Angasana mountains on the Blue Nile, the Fonj culture in the central parts of the Blue Nile, the Nilotics and the Zandi in southern Sudan, the Fur in the western Sudan, the Nubians in northern Sudan, the Nile people in northern and central Sudan, the Savanna region in the northern and central Sudan, and the Nuba culture in the mountains region, south of Kordofan . etc

Also, there are 115 languages, as well as hundreds of local dialects. The Arabic language is the most wide-spread. And in the south, it experienced some alterations to become Juba Arabic. There is also the Bija language, which is constituted of several similar languages in eastern Sudan, as well as the Fur language in western Sudan, the Nubian languages i.e the Mahasi, Halfawi and Donglawi languages, the Nilotic languages spoken by the Shuluk, Nuwair and Dinka, the Nilo-hamia languages spoken by the Baria and the Anoka, as well as the multiple Nuba mountains languages in Kordfan. (3)

It is true that Islam is the most widespread religion in the northern and central Sudan, but there is also Christianity, which is the oldest religion in the country, and it exists currently in the Nuba Mountains and in the south of the country, where Christians are affiliated to multiple churches, such as the Catholic, Anglican and Protestant. There are also Orthodox Copts in the northern and central Sudan. There are also some African beliefs in some remote areas such as the Kajur, Paganism, belief in magic and otherwise of beliefs.

On the other side, education in the Sudan - up to the date of Anglo-Egyptian invasion - took up the pattern of Khalwas, which were restricted to teaching the Koran. till the beginning of the 19th centuries, intermediate and higher education emerged, thanks to the contribution of the schools of the Egyptian education missions. The university education was restricted to Gordon Pasha college (later, university of Khartoum).

Girls were not blessed with education, except when Sheikh Babiker Badry opened – in a daring step - Rufaa` elementary school for girls in 1907. The girl education was restricted to the elementary stage for a period of 31 years.

However, and according to official statistics, illiteracy among females is 56.4% and 36% among males. (4)

We should also not forget the role of colonization in steering the Sudan according to its interests, for the country remained under the Anglo-Egyptian colonization for a long period of time until got through the struggle of its people (with full participation of women)- independence on the 1st of January 1956.

The reality of women position in the Sudan:-

All the aforementioned confirms the existence of a superior diversity in the culture of the Sudanese, to include the Sudanese woman, who enjoy simplicity despite the rigidity imposed by her life hardship.

The very high percentage of illiteracy among the Sudanese people is higher in the country side than that of the urban cities, specially among woman.

All such constituted a fertile soil for positioning the woman in an inferior position, rendering the society`s attitude as coercive forwards her. It is a male society that adopts the male`s logic, as well as all the tools that assist in coercing the woman.

Under a very poor awareness-raising and guided media of the Islamic dictatorships, religion has been used by resorting to the most traditional interpretations to coerce the woman, and to sanctify the religion understanding that makes the best place for a woman in the ``bottom`` of her home, thus depriving her from interacting in the society and experiencing whatever is necessary for knowledge accumulation.

Women calling for otherwise were accused of being infidel, apostate, and of being dissolute on some other occasions.

It is true that Islam has presented women with a step forward, and was deemed a victory, (for the woman was - prior to Islam - considered a part of her father`s or husband's, wealth. They also considered the birth of baby girls an evil omen, so they buried them alive for fear of shame, or poverty.

Islam inherited these atrocious traditions , so it prohibited the extreme of such, but it did not dispose of the rest of them, and could not, because the wisdom of legislation required grounded imposition of rules, for people do not live in vacuum and societies do not jump across the space, but develop slowly. Therefore,

legislation must take into consideration the society's capacity for development, and it is current requirement, where it renews its old customs, and plans its progress. At that time the woman should be treated, in the society as a human being, not a female.) (5)

However, the traditional Muslims stopped at this boundary, embalming time and the woman's position for 1400 years when Islam emerged to rectify her positions, blowing up-with their unjustified adherence to the details of letters the supreme objective that Islam intended by treating the woman, like her brother the man, as a human being respecting both of them, motivating them to effect virtues and non-exploitation, and establishing the values of honesty and justice.

Reality of the Sudan:-

It is difficult to speak about liberation of the woman, treating her as a human being, possessing her own decision, in a state governed by the military and the rifle. It was not enough for its executioners to intimidate and humiliate, but they used religion, distorted it and innovated distorted laws in its name to punish, terrorize and absolutely alienate the people from any understanding of power and wealth sharing. They effected all such to protect their interests, which rendered marginalization the prevalent policy. They also set ablaze tribal conflicts and effected seditions, in realization of ``divide and rule`` policy.

However, the Sudanese woman stills suffers double inequity that suffered by the Sudanese human being, as well as coercion and oppression as a woman. She also shoulders the largest burdens resulting from wars, such as being homeless, displaced, raped...etc.

Therefore we must consider the woman's cause from within the socio-political struggle, and with extreme privacy, taking into consideration the vast contrast, in this continental homeland, with respect to customs, traditions and a degree of education.

Whereas the woman in eastern Sudan is clad in a ``tent`` of clothes and only her eyes are seen, we find the woman in some areas of the south walk naked, save for a small cover between the navel and the knees.

Where in rejoin of the Sudan it is impermissible for man to pronounce a woman's name, in other rejoin woman is not married by a man except after he sleeps with her and her fertility is proved . Therefore it is difficult to find a sole prescription for working among women.

We, in the Sudanese communist party , seeks to enlighten and to help women to take their normal place the same as men , as well as to rise against coercion and guardianship in two methods :-

First method :-

- Unrelenting struggle to create a prepared political system , and such by holding fast to the requirement of cancelling all the freedom restricting laws, seeking to establish democracy , respect international conventions and bringing about a government that represent the people will , and such through working all the forces believing in such.

Of these laws what are called the public order laws, the legislators of which deem they are drawn from the Islamic legislations , these laws give the regime, which is represented in the man , the right to libel women in the streets, taking them to the public order courts and lashing them without trials , on the allegation that they are wearing indecent clothes .

Creation of what is called the ((guard)) who is entitled to deny admission to female student or female government departments employee if he deem that , and through close examination , the dress is not an Islamic one (i.e. not long enough, reveals the heels , transparent , or the head is not totally covered , with a plate of hair protruding here or there .)

The order proponents are entitled to punish any woman and man walking together, or together unless he proves by document that he is her husband or brother.

The woman can not travel abroad even to scientific conference, or an official business unless accompanied by her husband, or a relation within prohibited degree of marriage , or their approval in writing .

The woman cannot have travel document produced for her children or accompany them to travel with her , except with their father's approval , though the contrary is unnecessary.

- Struggle for the separation of religions from the state.
- Struggle for changing the inequitable personal affairs laws, which are drawn from the traditional understanding of Sharia, that place the woman in the inferior position, depriving her from making decision, even her herself whether in marriage or divorce, and making the man her prison keeper, whether a guardian or a husband, giving him the right to control her and supervise her going out and her dresses. These laws also allow for the house of obedience that force her to continue being married by legal coercion, and allow for hitting her in case of disobedience or for discipline, and allow the marriage of four wives. The same law gives her half the share of her brother in inheritance, and requires the testimony of another woman for the tow testimonies to be equal to that of one man, even if he is inferior to either of them in knowledge, education and wisdom
- We do not, as a Sudanese communist party guided by Marxism, have religions conceptions. We believe that religion is a personal matter that does not up-grade whosoever embraces it, nor does it down-grade others.

However, we believe that it is deep-rooted as a cultural component of the Sudanese human being. Therefore we encourage the innovative religious currents, which allow for the privacy of religion as worship apart from the state, and find a way out for woman through the interpretations that keep abreast with the age, and do not disparage her rights as a human being, the same as men.

Second Method :-

Endeavoring – at the base level – to raise the awareness of, and enlighten, woman through entering their communities, becoming close to them by adopting their causes, even on daily level, as well as persuading them that the strict laws are not Islamic, because the justice and tolerance of religions can not, for example, order hitting women in the street for not wearing what does not satisfy the personal views of whoever executes the law. whosoever assesses that this woman, or that one wears, an indecent dress, he only scandalizes himself and his animalistic way of thinking, and never pictures, in his sick mind, a woman expects as a body. (6) And this is not according to religion, and who gave them the right to assess?

The Sudanese women union had a pioneering experience at the end of the 1980`s that was aborted by the emergence of the salvation government. This experience was represented in the formation of the house wives society (Rabbat El Bioot), which created a way - in to the simple woman through their daily livelihood concerns. The society shouldered the responsibility of securing the goods, specially the necessary ones, directly from the producer (factories and farms) at the basic price, plus transportation cost only. And through the simple woman's questions of that clear difference in prices, and talking together, even under the shade of a tree in most cases, while weighing sugar, lentils tea, etc..., the idea of exploitation, additional value and using religion as a tool to coerce them, became clear . All such in the simplest of words, under the tree and by a woman who is similar to them.

- Also, convening open and closed debates to raise their awareness of their rights, taking into consideration the cultural harmony of the attendees.

I do not have but to conclude by quoting the expression of the socialist leader Rosa Luxemberge.

(O proletariat woman! The poorest among the poor! The most robbed of their will among the unable! Hurry to join the struggle of liberation of woman and humanity from the atrocities of the capitalist hegemony.) (7).

(1) Dr. Hassan Makki_ introduction of Islam into the Sudan – research papers – knowledge enlightenment centre

(2) The story of Islam – articles supervised by Raghieb Elsarjani

- (3) Asmarani forum – search fro internet – Sudanese culture
- (4) The human development report, 1999
- (5) Dr. Adil M. A. Salman – the woman – 2nd article – Ajaras Al Huriya
- (6) Taj Elsir Makki - an article published in AL.AYAM on 17.8.2009
- (7) Ridha Al. Zhahir – interaction of the "female dimension" and the theoretical achievement in the 90th anniversary of the Rosa Luxemberge's assassination, and the occasion of the word woman's day.

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