

## Modesty Versus Stigma: International Perceptions of Muslim Women's Clothing

Hassan A. Amin

### Article Information:

#### To cite this document:

Hassan A. Amin. (2023). Modesty Versus Stigma: International Perceptions of Muslim Women's Clothing. Karachi Islamicus, 3(2), 26–37. <https://doi.org/10.58575/ki.v3i2.40>

**For Authors:** If you would like to write for this Journal, then please use our Author Guidelines 'service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit our website for more information.

#### About Karachi Islamicus:

Karachi Islamicus is a Bi-Annual Research and Referred Journal published by MANARS, Karachi. The Journal covers authoritative, topical and original research papers in all fields of Islam and Religious Studies that interests a wide range of authors symbolizing an outstanding development within an explicit field.

#### Review and Publication Policy of Karachi Islamicus:

Articles sent for publication in 'Karachi Islamicus' go through an initial editorial screening followed by a double-blind peer review. The Editorial Board of the Journal is responsible for the selection of reviewers based on their expertise in the relevant field. All the papers will be reviewed by external reviewers from outside the organization of journal.



© 2023 by the Licensee MANARS, Pakistan. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

# Modesty Versus Stigma: International Perceptions of Muslim Women's Clothing

Hassan A. Amin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.d Scholar, International Open University; University of Maryland School of Social Work, USA;

Correspondence: [imamhassanamin@verizon.net](mailto:imamhassanamin@verizon.net);

Received: 16 September 2023; Accepted: 23 November 2023; Published: 30 December 2023

**Abstract:** For a long time, Muslim women have been targeted mainly at how they are dressed. Their clothing was usually loose-fitting and not see-through, or they did not wear clothing designed for men. Many also wore a hijab head covering or headscarf. These coverings have other names, such as burqa, niqab, and chador. They wore the abovementioned clothing as a form of modesty for unrelated men and obedience to Allah. They were directed by Allah (Almighty GOD) to dress in this fashion. Allah says that we are to tell the believing females that they must lower their stares and further guard all their secluded parts. They must not display their gorgeousness, excluding whatever is generally seen, and they must cover their bosoms with their scarves. Additionally, they must not expose their adornment, except for their spouses or their fathers or the fathers of their spouses, their children, the children of their spouses, their male siblings or the sons of their male siblings, the male offspring of their sisters. Furthermore, females do not stamp their feet in a way that brings attention to what their scarves conceal. Believers may have achieved great success in response to Allah. Established worldwide policies or laws forbid or prohibit Muslim women from dressing as Allah commands them.

**Keywords:** Dress, Muslim Women, Hijab, Head Covering, Burqa.

**Introduction:** The Muslim women were responsible for their dresses. This is far from the truth. This paper provides examples of why this is not true for Muslim women. There is very little empirical research on the dress of Muslim women. This article presents the literature regarding the dress of Muslim women and the various laws for and against their dress. While efforts are being made to mitigate the dress of Muslim women, policymakers are creating a problem out of something that is not a problem. The approach presented here is radical but proportionate to the issue. This article presents why Muslim women dress the way they do and why laws are legislated, around the world, against their dress. Additionally, how these Muslim females are faced with bullying and how they are represented by the media and harassed. This study highlights the assumptions of the reviewed literature and the implications of these findings.

**Methodology:** The approach or design of this study was exploratory. This methodology allows flexibility in data and information collection. Furthermore, it allows for flexibility and different perspectives. Ten Muslim adults living in the United States were asked to complete a short seven-question questionnaire, specifically about living in the State of Maryland. They were recruited through social media and questionnaires were emailed to them. All respondents lived in Baltimore, Maryland, and other areas. This small cluster sample was provided with and completed a questionnaire. No participant's identifying information was associated with these questionnaires. Therefore, consent to participate in this study was not necessary. The researcher then created a questionnaire. There were

seven questions for each questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed over two weeks.

### Questionnaire:

Are there policies that restrict Muslim women?	
Gender	
Age	
Ethnicity	
Do you know of policies that restrict Muslim women from wearing their Islamic dress?	Yes No Maybe
Types of policy restrictions	Head covering Wearing long clothing Face covering None Other:
Which country(ies) restricts Muslim women's dress?	
Who restricts Muslim women?	Governments Businesses Both None Other

**Literature Review:** This article will examine the existence of multiple attacks on Muslim women. Additionally, it will look at the worldwide legalized attacks on women's dress while practicing the Islamic faith. In addition, it will look at the fines and jail time associated with failure to obey laws and policies related to Muslim women's dress bans. As mentioned, Allah directed earlier Muslim women to lower their gaze, not look at forbidden things, and to protect the private areas of their bodies from illegal sexual activities. Likewise, they must not show their good looks except for what must typically appear, such as their hands and faces, and they should draw coverings over their bodies. However, virtually no documentation acknowledges any Muslim women requesting dress-saving or covering oppression by Muslim men. Muslim men also make Muslim women dress the way they do. However, neither is true. Other reasons for the barring or banning of face and head coverings are that the law or policies are for security reasons, or that the veil look does not fit the cultural norms of society. The following are brief explanations of some face and head-covering terms.

There are several types of veiling among Muslim women. Burqas, sometimes spelled burkas and niqabs, describe a portion of the outfit covered by Muslim women's apparel. A burqa covers the face, along with the eyes but on the other hand, a niqab covers the complete face but it doesn't cover the eyes. The hijab indicates the Muslim veils that encase the hair and head, leaving the face uncovered.<sup>1</sup> Also, wearing the veil is significantly encouraged by Muslim women. Veiling wearing defines the borderline of the sexes by requiring women to attract as little sexual courtesy as possible, which customarily helps to maintain harmony in the community or society.<sup>2</sup> Many Governments and organizations issued laws banning the veils like hijab and burqa. The term "hijab" has been identical with terror, exposing Muslim women who use it for racial and religious discrimination. "Anti-Muslim hate crimes rose 17-fold in 2001 compared to 2000." In addition to the shrink from hates of terrorism, the association of the hijab with oppression, inequality, and slavery can paradoxically evoke sympathy and a strong urge to help among people.<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, women in other countries are forced to wear their hijabs regardless of what they choose to do with them, stigmatizing and barbarizing the "hijab" culture in the process of achieving value export and colonization.<sup>4</sup>

Some feminists and liberals believe that Muslim women need savings. For example, in Norway and other areas in the West, many groups, such as feminists and liberals, focus on the veil as a visible representation of the Islamic faith and a symbol of the domination of Muslim women.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the banning of the Muslim woman's veil is a form of saving her from her oppressive code of dress, which also helps them to become members of the global sisterhood and redemption by feminists in the West.<sup>6</sup> In a further effort to save Muslim women, a cyclical argument for forcing a ban is that it is necessary to encourage fairness flanked by both women and men and fight the domination of (Muslim) women who are forced to wear religious heads or face coverings by Muslim men. In addition, the burqa, hijab, and niqab are emblems of the persecution of Muslim women and their fundamental rights and freedoms. A position taken by many feminists, who agree with the implementation of the covering ban, is that they consider emancipators of Muslim women and girls from their enslavers, Muslim men.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, in Belgium, part of the Parliamentary debates regarding the negative impact of the displaying of the face-covering cloak was considered a symbol of the subjugation of women and that this face-covering offense impacted the dignity of all women.<sup>8</sup> Persistent oppression causes veiled women to avoid places in affluent, central, and crowded districts, especially when they are by themselves or with their kids. The embodied strategies of veiled women have also been altered by experiences of oppression. These women now feel the need to be more discrete and less noticeable, especially through their clothing, or strong and integrated. When faced with geopolitical events, Muslim women in veils reimagine new mobility and embodied practices; these activist strategies showcase the astute reactions of Muslim women within the framework of feminist geopolitics and the politicization of their religious beliefs.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, veil restriction is mandated by Allah (Almighty GOD) and not by Muslim men. However, numerous laws and policies have prevented Muslim women from obeying the Creator. For instance, not all government employees in France, including teachers in state schools, are allowed to display religious representation while working. In 2004 France implemented a law regarding both elementary and secondary schools that prohibited the display of brazen signs or dress whereby students could agreeably mark as a religious attachment. The Islamic head covering is considered or is commonly seen as a flashy symbol. The French ban bill was proposed and passed in 2010, and wearing face covers in open places was enforced in 2011.<sup>10</sup> In European societies, the niqab sparks a contentious debate and fosters intolerance towards women who wear it. Various justifications for criticizing this Muslim attire include the notion that women wear it as a means of patriarchal oppression; in addition, the niqab is perceived as a symbol of religious radicalization and various forms of acumen, including bias, individual attacks, and social seclusion.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, in 2010 France imposed countrywide prohibitions on full-face Muslim coverage; these bans were implemented in several other countries such as Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands. Surrounded by the dispute, these forbids on Muslim coverings were also prodigiously supported by various political groups and the public, entrenched in several versions, and further encouraged by conflicting political beliefs. For example, for the left, veil prohibitions were defensible through notion of secularism or the elimination of Islam from the public domain. In addition, these bans aided in defending the rights of women. Alternately, the right's position was that Muslim cloaks were seen as a sign of basic Islam and thus considered a danger to the security of the state.<sup>12</sup> When used by non-Muslim women, a headscarf is usually considered as a part of dress; however, when used by Muslim females, it is mostly the focus of much criticism. Recently, the veil or niqab has been labelled as a symbol of Islam's oppression of women & concurrently of terrorism. A

veil or niqab is a simple piece of cloth that covers the head. A growing number of states have passed laws making it illegal to wear a headscarf.<sup>13</sup>

For example, Germany's Federal Constitutional Court held that its states were allowed to ban their educators from wearing head coverings. Many states authorized such laws if this ban complies with the German constitution. Other German States are developing to ban their civil servants from wearing different types of Islamic dress.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, in 2011 Belgium had placed a ban on wearing articles of clothing that covered or concealed the whole or part of the face in public places. Before the ban, many municipalities had regulations containing facial covering or concealment prohibitions.<sup>15</sup> Several other countries had instituted clothing, head, and face-covering restrictions. For example, in 2012, the Netherlands' cabinet voted for a legal sanction on wearing face coverings. Similarly, Spain, Italy, and Austria proposed bills for wearing a full-face veil or face-covering outfit. Many people in Britain, Denmark, and Switzerland have considered a similar ban on face-covering.<sup>16</sup> The Canadian Conservative government outlawed face coverings for oath-takers at citizenship ceremonies in late 2011. The prohibition was widely perceived by the media as specifically targeting Muslim women who covered their faces with veils.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, several other countries have bans on Muslim women's head coverings and face coverings, including Austria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Canada, India, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. In 2019, Austria banned head covering for school-aged children. Likewise, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, women cannot wear heads covering courts, other institutions, and judicial settings. Furthermore, there is a prohibition on wearing religious symbols in Canada's public service positions. In India, girls are not allowed to wear head coverings. In 2017 some schools in Kazakhstan were banned from headscarves. Approximately one year later, the government of Kazakhstan planned a prohibition on people wearing headscarves, niqabs, and veils-like clothing. The use of these veils in public schools, universities, and government buildings has been prohibited since 2009. In 2011, 2012, and 2015 in Kyrgyzstan, the donning of head covering was banned in some schools. Russia has a similar school hijab ban in at least two of its territories, the country of the Republic of Mordovia and the Stavropol. Finally, in 2012 the Uzbekistan government banned selling religious clothing, including hijabs and veils, in their marketplaces.<sup>18</sup>

More recently, in 2021, Switzerland joined a long list of European nations banning the niqab. In 2018, Denmark was another European nation that introduced a prohibition on face coverage in public places. Furthermore, offenders could sustain fines of up to €134 (USD 157.00). In addition, repeat offenses may be punishable by up to ten times the stated amount. Belgium is another country with penalties attached to its bans. The law banning a full-face veil came into effect in July 2011. The law prohibits any apparel that conceals the wearer's identity in places, for example, in parks, and on public streets. Breakers, this law risks both fines and up to seven days of jail. In the Netherlands, if the face is covered with a veil, the lawbreaker fines at least €150. This ban included burqas other coverings, full-face helmets, and balaclavas.<sup>19</sup>

The ban on head coverage was not limited to countries where Muslims are a minority. It is also a law in countries such as Turkey. At least 99% of the people in Turkey are Muslims. Turkey has instigated a ban on the hijab, or headscarf, in state-controlled areas such as colleges, government departments, and other public places. Most Turkish females were put in a problematic situation of choosing their rights to be educated and employed and their right to follow the mandate of their faith.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that President Erdogan lifted the ban.<sup>21</sup>



Similarly, in Egypt, there was a call to ban niqab in public places and state institutions. Furthermore, banned doctors, nurses, and assistants covered the niqab during medical examinations and while working in university hospitals.<sup>22</sup> After a 2019 bombing in Tunisia, a government decree barred anyone with an undisclosed face from having access to public headquarters, administrations, and institutions.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, in 2018 Algeria prohibited women from wearing full-face veils, or niqabs, at work. The reason for this finding was also identified.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, in a 2018 Pew Research Center report, many European countries felt that some restrictions should be placed on Muslim women's dresses. For example, 81% of the population of the Netherlands agreed with the above limitations. The same was true for people living in Switzerland, (79%). Similarly, in Belgium, 78% of respondents felt that some restrictions should be imposed on Muslim women's dresses. Approximately 78% of Italy's population also agreed with dress restrictions on Muslim women. A smaller number (77%) of those living in Austria, felt that regulations should be placed upon Muslim women's dresses.

Furthermore, 75% of Germans agreed with Muslim women's dress restrictions. In France, 74% of people agreed with some Muslim women's restriction ban. In Norway, 72% of the polled felt there were restrictions on Muslim women's dress. The UK poll results, 72%, were also in line with those of the aforementioned European countries. Likewise, but slightly lower than in the UK, 67% of those polled in Ireland were also on board with other European nations. Spain's 62% of those surveyed agreed with the restrictions on Muslim women's dress. In Denmark, 61% of the respondents felt that Muslim women's clothing was restricted. Finland had the lowest tally rate, (56%), although restrictions on Muslim women's apparel were necessary.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, the Muslim women diaspora of Pakistani origin struggles to endure in the US following the US penetration of Iraq. It has undergone abundant traumas, most conspicuously attacks by US extremists.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in many Muslim-minority countries, it is not abnormal to find instances of Muslim women facing harassment or bullying to the way they dress. Inappropriately, these attacks are not limited to radicalized individuals; as mentioned earlier, governments and institutional bodies also impact the subjugation of Muslim women's rights.<sup>27</sup> Impacted by the rise of Islamophobia, irrational fear of Muslims, and the faith of Islam, in Canada, Muslim females in the greater Toronto area's excessive visibility of being Muslim affects how these females regulate themselves in public.<sup>28</sup> Muslim females are continuously seen as being "at risk" of becoming "radicalized," falling into the susceptible-fanatical category.<sup>29</sup> Islamophobic policies and public narratives often garner active support from regular citizens. Muslim women are systematically portrayed as endangered by Muslim patriarchy during the process of racializing chauvinism. Similarly, Muslim women are viewed as active agents but are then labeled as promoters of unsafe proselytism. These characterizations all involve placing women under constant suspicion, especially when they wear head coverings. Furthermore, many Muslim women in Australia are far more likely than Muslim men to be the sufferers of Islamophobic attacks, and widespread observations recurrently depict Muslim women as plain victims of Islamophobia.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, in British society, many men and secular women, who do not wear clothing related to a specific religion publicly, are far less likely to be the targets of everyday Islamophobia than noticeable Turkish-Muslim women, who face Islamophobia at the juncture of their religion and sex.

Furthermore, females from Turkey are identified as being stereotyped by the hijab, which is translated and depicted in ways that depend on a set of symbolic implications and associations.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, because Muslim women's Muslim identities are commonly more visible and come to symbolize their culture, they are exposed to gendered Islamophobia,

which can lead to trauma and harmful effects on mental health.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, In the US, Muslim women—mostly those donning headscarves or the hijab—are frequently the targets of violent attacks and hate speech about Muslims, which is anticipated to hurt their mental health.<sup>33</sup> Similar to how Americans "know" that Arabs are backward, they also know with perfect certainty that Muslim women are horribly oppressed and degraded. And they know this not because they are aware of the oppression of women generally, but because they think that Islam specifically oppresses women in a monstrous way.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, Muslim women in the West no longer enjoy the same physical freedom as they once did due to the hardening of thoughts toward Muslims conveyed by the European display of Islamophobia.<sup>35</sup> Precisely to the intersections between Muslim women's "visible" Muslim characteristics and gender performance, veiled Muslim women are likely to come across gendered Islamophobia both in cyberspace and in "real" life. From the British perspective, veiled Muslim women are questionable to report their experiences to the police, even though misogyny and Islamophobia are both with authorization classified as hate crimes locally in some police forces.<sup>36</sup> The veil is the primary visual symbol of Islam in the current context. The veiled female body plays a central role in the construction of discourses on the distinction between the Muslim as the "other" and the non-Muslim as the "self." As a result, the veil's numerous meanings become disguised, leaving only one that stands out: the veil as an indication of gender inequality. Islamophobic persecution of veiled women can have severe and lasting effects on victims, their families, and the greater Muslim community. Labels about veiled women's subservience fused with the belief that their Muslim identity cannot be misunderstood, denied, or suppressed make veiled women 'ideal subjects' against whom to enact anti-Muslim intimidation.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, yet disturbing, growing recognition of the gendered features of Islamophobia exposes the targeted, covert, and frequently undetectable victimization of Muslim women in veil in public, which often goes ignored by the criminal justice system.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, the news media has been biased regarding reporting on Muslim women. For example, confirmation bias is what sometimes drives US news coverage of women abroad: stories about Muslim women accentuate the theme of gender inequality and defilements of women's rights, also for those countries which have a good record of women rights; Journalists tend to prioritize reporting on women in Muslim-majority countries when their rights are violated, rather than focusing on women in Western societies where their rights are respected.<sup>39</sup> Muslim women are often perceived as a group that experiences overlapping vulnerabilities based on gender and Islamophobia. Media representations frequently portray them as voiceless and passive, primarily depicting them as victims of their religion and male counterparts. Despite this portrayal being laden with xenophobic elements, there has been limited academic interest and sincerity in addressing the depiction of Muslim women.<sup>40</sup> The media has the power to create women's representation as otherness and place them as a total threat to secular traditions. The topic of the representation of Muslim women in Western media veil is a result of the general discourse about Muslim women who wear veils as a threat to secular tradition, norms, and the value of freedom.<sup>41</sup>

Since 9/11, it has been noted that Muslim women who wear headscarves face challenges in the workplace, even in Muslim nations. These challenges include social discrimination at the workplace and a "glass ceiling" that inhibits women who wear headscarves from progressing in their careers or getting jobs.<sup>42</sup> My parents told me to keep going to school even if I was killed. The people who did this to me don't want women to be educated. They want us to be stupid things," the 17-year-old girl in Kandahar told a reporter after hearing the roar of a motorcycle as it slowed down next to her. The young Muslim girl was severely injured, scarred, and blinded by battery acid being thrown in her face.<sup>43</sup> Amina Filali, a

young Moroccan adolescent, committed suicide in 2012 after a judge ordered her to wed her attacker.<sup>44</sup> The term "honor killings" refers to severe practices of domestic abuse where a woman is killed by her family or community; however, the concept of honor is only used in religious and ethnic communities.<sup>45</sup> A Muslim woman who is raped faces death, psychologically, bodily, and socially. Victimized Muslim women may be killed (honor killing), left behind, or socially rejected. Throughout wartime, a Muslim woman may be killed by her family or take her own life to evade being raped.<sup>46</sup> (Mahmoud, Zaltz, and Zawati 2013).

There are many other forms of unfair unleashed wrongs on Muslim women. Such as the reaction to the Muslim women's modest swimwear prohibition in France. Muslim head coverings, incorporating the burkini, are religious objects whose materiality directs to complex semantic meanings often facilitated in Internet discussions. In the summer of 2016, the French government sponsored the ban on the burkini, reasoning that it was unhygienic, a uniform of Islamic zealotry, and a symbol of women's persecution. Roughly thirty French cities banned the burkini from their public beaches.<sup>47</sup> Sports is another area where Muslim women are not fairly treated. Using the Iranian context as an example, Muslim women's participation in sports faces numerous obstacles, chief among them the hijab issue. The Qur'an and Hadith highlight the significance of sport for human social, physical, and mental development. The Shari'ah also permitted all forms of athletics and sports envisioned to exhibit superiority, strength, and skill that would be advantageous to human life and health on a social, physical, and mental level.<sup>48</sup> Sadly, because of their veil (hijab), Muslim women athletes in Iran face several challenges when competing in national and international sporting events.<sup>49</sup> For example, the Iranian women's national soccer team was disqualified from the 2012 Olympics due to head coverings worn by its players.<sup>50</sup>

Additionally, there seems to be a disconnect regarding providing health care to Muslim women. The mental health provider faces challenges when it comes to providing culturally competent care for Muslim women. Some of these challenges include the humiliation associated with mental illness and medications, the strong link between postpartum sadness and certain cultural beliefs, the impact of discrimination, and the importance of modesty in this patient population. These insights can be crucial in building a patient-provider alliance.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Muslim women's healthcare needs are distinct, although this is still not well understood.<sup>52</sup> Potential obstacles covered include Muslim women's modesty and privacy, gender preferences for caregivers, family involvement in healthcare, fatalism, and predestination, maintaining religious practices while ill, low health literacy and language proficiency, a preference for conventional remedies, fear of discrimination and stereotypes, and restricted access to healthcare. Specific guidance is provided for healthcare providers.<sup>53</sup> The term "religious discrimination" describes ideas, attitudes, and behaviors that denigrate or refuse equal treatment to individuals or groups because of their religious identity. There have been reports of an increase in religious discrimination in the workplace, including the prohibition of praying in public and the banning of the hijab, a head scarf worn by Muslim women, despite Malaysia being a country with a majority Muslim population.<sup>54</sup>

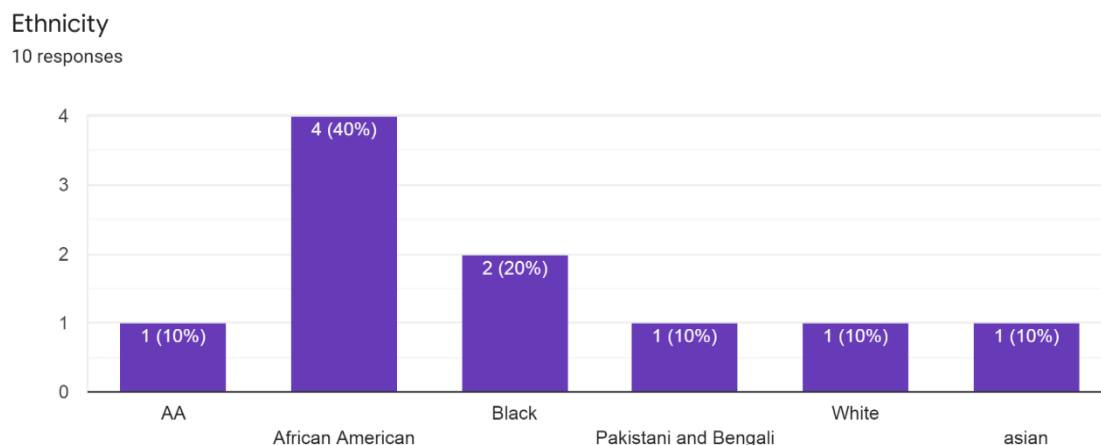
Rape is frequently utilized to establish power and authority, oppress, and dehumanize a specific group of people. It is a tool used to dominate and control a community, exerting influence in social, political, and economic realms, while further marginalizing and silencing victims. Throughout history, rape has been employed as a means of political control and mobilization, particularly during times of conflict and war. The motivations behind using rape as a political tactic can vary, but often involve maintaining power and control over a population, instilling fear, destabilizing a community, and asserting dominance over a particular group. The effects of using rape in this way can be extensive,



causing long-term trauma to the victims as well as psychological and emotional distress.<sup>55</sup> For example, a mob of hardline Hindu men gang raped Bilkis Banu, a young Muslim woman, in 2002 as she was fleeing her riot-torn village in Gujarat. In India, the media rarely covered rape cases involving victims who belonged to a minority community. The victim's social and demographic identifiers are used to determine the newsworthiness of a case. There are hints in this news discourse that Banu's history of sexual abuse is being purposefully disregarded because of her faith.<sup>56</sup> A mixture of success and failure for women in Pakistan. The Women Protection Act of 2006 was introduced during the Musharruf era, which is considered a golden age of legislation for women's empowerment. Legal reforms are currently being implemented, but women are still subjected to numerous crimes such as attempted rape, acid throwing, and workplace harassment. To protect women's rights, an efficient implementation mechanism must be created that adheres to the letter and spirit of the law.<sup>57</sup> The raping of Muslim women has been around for many years and has been used as a method of ethnic cleansing or genocide. For example, in the late 1900s as a tool of "ethnic cleansing," Bosnian Serbs and Serb militia, military personnel, and other individuals in positions of authority systematically raped Muslim women.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, in every sense, Muslims in India must vanish and cease to exist. This belief is so pervasive that some Gujarati Hindu women assisted "their" men in raping and torturing Muslim women. As a result, cleansing exposes the true logic or normalcy of ethnic nationalism in its most brutal form.<sup>59</sup>

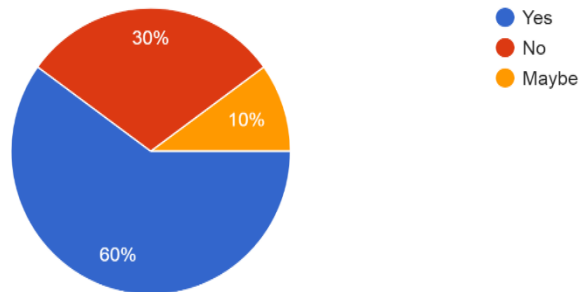
Oftentimes, religious accommodations are not provided to Muslim women and girls which presents unique challenges for them. Muslim women may encounter unique challenges in physical education (PE) classes, such as dress codes, mixed-teaching, and exercise during Ramadan. Additionally, they may be prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities due to cultural and religious beliefs.<sup>60</sup> The way policymakers handle religious affiliations is important because in some cases, it has been observed that when religious affiliations are handled well, they do not prove to be the main obstacle to Muslim women's educational attainment. Muslim women have demonstrated this in recent times in both India and Pakistan. In many other countries, Muslim women do not have to overcome narrow-minded views to obtain educational freedom. In one such instance, when Malala Yousufzai expressed her desire for education, she was shot.<sup>61</sup>

### Results of the Questionnaire:



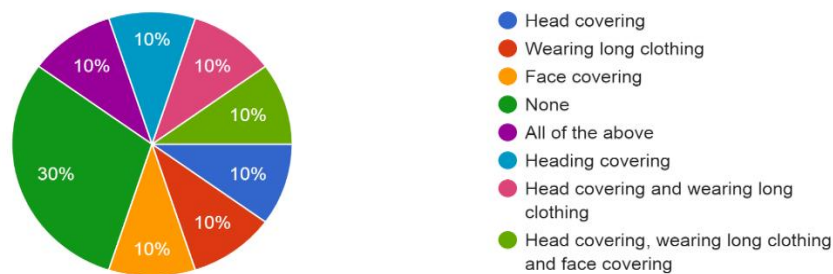
Do you know of policies that restrict Muslim women from wearing their Islamic dress?

10 responses



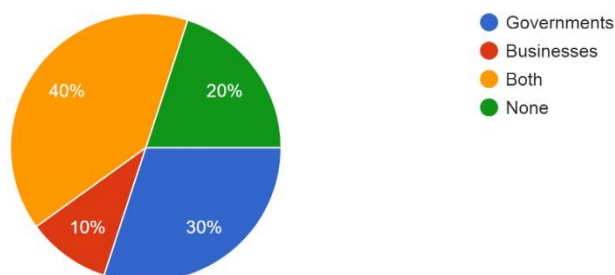
Types of policy restrictions

10 responses



Who restricts Muslim women?

10 responses



**Discussion:** Most responses were from Muslim women (60%). The respondents' ages ranged from 17 to 68. Ethnically, most respondents (40%) were African Americans. Regarding restrictive Islamic dress policies, overwhelmingly (60%) of the respondents knew of them. Most of the respondents (30%) felt that many policy restrictions centered on head coverings, wearing long clothing, and face coverings. The countries that restricted the dress of Muslim women were mainly France and China. The other countries mentioned were Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA. Many respondents (40%) felt that the government and

businesses-imposed restrictions on Muslim women. When asked which country(ies) restrict Muslim women's dress. The following is a list of countries polled: France, China, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland.

**Conclusion:** Although European and other governments may be legitimately authorized to limit women's rights to wear Muslim veils, banning them entirely might breach a person's right to confidentiality, freedom of expression, personal identity, and freedom to present one's religion in a fashion that suits them.<sup>62</sup> Their banning laws or policies may be unfitting to Muslim women, which forces them to choose between staying home and going out of the home uncovered, in compliance with local or national anti-veil laws. They would have to obey the laws of the land, which may mean that they would have to disobey the laws of Allah. These laws, restrictions, and policies are imposed on Muslim women with little to no room for recourse. Many of these laws and bans may have been destroyed. At present, are these laws fair to Muslim women who are trying only to obey the mandates and restrictions of Allah (Almighty GOD)? Are the same regulations, bans, or restrictions presently imposed worldwide on female members of other faiths?

## Notes and References:

<sup>1</sup> Piatti-Crocker, Adriana, and Laman Tasch. 2015. "Veil Bans in Western Europe: Interpreting Policy Diffusion." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 16 (2): 15–29.

<sup>2</sup> Aydin, Hasan. 2010. "Headscarf (Hijab) Ban in Turkey: Importance of Veiling." <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=9fedd446dcdae7ddd31697895519e8d8498929f0>

<sup>3</sup> Li, Yufei. 2022. "Wearing Hijab: A Right or Constraint?" *BCP Education & Psychology* 7 (November): 314–20. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpep.v7i.2682>.

<sup>4</sup> Li, Yufei. 2022. "Wearing Hijab: A Right or Constraint?" *BCP Education & Psychology* 7 (November): 314–20. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpep.v7i.2682>, 314-20.

<sup>5</sup> Bjoernaas, Therese Ignacio. 2015. "Saving Muslim Women: A Feminist-Postcolonial Critique of Veiling Legislation in Norway." *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 3 (1): 78. <https://doi.org/10.13169/islastudj.3.1.0078.3>, 3

<sup>6</sup> Bjoernaas, Therese Ignacio. 2015. "Saving Muslim Women: A Feminist-Postcolonial Critique of Veiling Legislation in Norway." *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 3 (1): 78. <https://doi.org/10.13169/islastudj.3.1.0078.3>.

<sup>7</sup> Howard, Erica. 2012. "Banning Islamic Veils: Is Gender Equality a Valid Argument?" *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 12 (3): 147–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1358229112464450.147-65>.

<sup>8</sup> Howard, Erica. 2012. "Banning Islamic Veils: Is Gender Equality a Valid Argument?" *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 12 (3): 147–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1358229112464450.147-65>.

<sup>9</sup> Najib, Kawtar, and Peter Hopkins. 2019. "Veiled Muslim Women's Strategies in Response to Islamophobia in Paris." *Political Geography* 73 (August): 103–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.05.005.103-11>.

<sup>10</sup> Najib, Kawtar, and Peter Hopkins. 2019. "Veiled Muslim Women's Strategies in Response to Islamophobia in Paris." *Political Geography* 73 (August): 103–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2019.05.005.147-65>.

<sup>11</sup> Yeste Garcia Carme, Ouarda El Miri Zeguari, Pilar Álvarez, and Teresa Morlà Folch. 2020. "Muslim Women Wearing the Niqab in Spain: Dialogues around Discrimination, Identity and Freedom." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 75 (March): 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.02.003.95-105>.

<sup>12</sup> Piatti-Crocker, Adriana, and Laman Tasch. 2015. "Veil Bans in Western Europe: Interpreting Policy Diffusion." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 16 (2): 15–29., 15-29.

<sup>13</sup> Osman, "Legislative Prohibitions on Wearing a Headscarf", 1317-48.

<sup>14</sup> Osman, Fatima. 2017. "Legislative Prohibitions on Wearing a Headscarf: Are They Justified?" *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 17 (4): 1348. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1727-3781/2014/v17i4a2167.147-65>.

<sup>15</sup> Osman, Fatima. 2017. "Legislative Prohibitions on Wearing a Headscarf: Are They Justified?" *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 17 (4): 1348. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1727-3781/2014/v17i4a2167.147-65>.

<sup>16</sup> Osman, Fatima. 2017. "Legislative Prohibitions on Wearing a Headscarf: Are They Justified?" *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 17 (4): 1348. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1727-3781/2014/v17i4a2167.147-65>.

<sup>17</sup> Previsic, Ivana. 2017. "Neoliberalism and Gender Equality: Canadian Newspapers' Representations of the Ban of Face Coverings at Citizenship Ceremonies." *Review of European and Russian Affairs* 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.22215/rera.v11i1.253.>, np.

<sup>18</sup> "List of Countries Where Hijab Is Banned." 2022. *Jagranjosh.com*. March 15, 2022. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/list-of-countries-where-hijab-is-banned-1647354865-1>.

- <sup>19</sup> “Hijab Ban Stays in Karnataka: A Look at Countries Where Veils Are Barred.” 2022. Firstpost. March 15, 2022. <https://www.firstpost.com/world/hijab-ban-stays-in-karnataka-a-look-at-countries-where-veils-are-barred-10460931.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> Aydin, Hasan. 2010. “Headscarf (Hijab) Ban in Turkey: Importance of Veiling.” <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=9fedd446dcdae7ddd31697895519e8d8498929f0>
- <sup>21</sup> “Hijab Ban Stays in Karnataka: A Look at Countries Where Veils Are Barred.” 2022. Firstpost. March 15, 2022. <https://www.firstpost.com/world/hijab-ban-stays-in-karnataka-a-look-at-countries-where-veils-are-barred-10460931.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> “The Controversy of Banning Niqab in Public in Egypt | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.” n.d. Eipr.org. <https://eipr.org/en/blog/ishak-ibrahim/2020/05/controversy-banning-niqab-public-egypt>.
- <sup>23</sup> Amara, Tarek. 2019. “Tunisian PM bans face veils in public institutions after bombing.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-niqab-security/tunisian-pm-bans-face-veils-in-public-institutions-after-bombing-idUSKCN1U01BZ/>
- <sup>24</sup> Reuters Staff. 2018. Algeria bans wearing of full-face veils at work. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-politics/algeria-bans-wearing-of-full-face-veils-at-work-idUSKCN1MS346>
- <sup>25</sup> Pew Research Center. 2020. “Most Western Europeans Favor Restrictions on Muslim Women’s Religious Clothing | Pew Research Center.” May 30, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/17/most-western-europeans-favor-at-least-some-restrictions-on-muslim-womens-religious-clothing/>.
- <sup>26</sup> Djohar, “Rewriting 9/11 or US Invasion of Iraq”, 129-39.
- <sup>27</sup> Dars, Basheer Ahmed, Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf, and Arshad Munir. 2020. “The Dress Code for Muslim Women.” *Journal of Islamic and Religious Studies* 3 (1): 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.36476/jirs.3:1.06.2018.11>, 27-37.
- <sup>28</sup> Khokhar, Faiza J. 2021. “Reclaiming the Narrative: Gendered Islamophobia, Its Impacts and Responses from Muslim Women.” *Social Identities*, December, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2021.2006624>, 267-87.
- <sup>29</sup> Canning, Victoria. 2018. “Islamophobia and Securitization: Religion, Ethnicity and the Female Voice.” *Journal of Language and Discrimination* 2 (1): 118–23. <https://doi.org/10.1558/jld.36238>, 118-23.
- <sup>30</sup> Carland, “We’re Islam in Their Eyes”, 654
- <sup>31</sup> Babacan, Muhammed. 2022. “Were You Treated Differently Because You Wore the Hijab?: Everyday Islamophobia, Racialization and Young Turks in Britain.” *Ethnicities* 23 (1): 14687968221126196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687968221126196>, 64-87.
- <sup>32</sup> Steele, Rachel R., Sakina Bengali, Gwynne Richardson, Mackensie Disbennett, and Yasmeen Othman. 2021. “Muslim Women Negotiating Their Identity in the Era of the Muslim Ban.” *Journal of Gender Studies*, December, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2021.2016382>, 707-18.
- <sup>33</sup> Tetreault, Chantal, Sara Tahir, Amara E. Ezeamama, and Farha Abbasi. 2019. “Muslim Women’s Ethical Engagement and Emotional Coping in Post-Election United States” *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 13 (1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0013.103>.
- <sup>34</sup> Ahmed, Leila. 1982. “Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem.” *Feminist Studies* 8 (3): 521. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3177710>, 521.
- <sup>35</sup> Carland, Susan. 2011. “Islamophobia, Fear of Loss of Freedom, and the Muslim Woman.” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22 (4): 469–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2011.606192>, 469-73
- <sup>36</sup> Zempi, Irene. 2019. “Veiled Muslim Women’s Responses to Experiences of Gendered Islamophobia in the UK.” *International Review of Victimology* 26 (1): 96–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758019872902>, 96-111.
- <sup>37</sup> Chakraborti, Neil, and Irene Zempi. 2012. “The Veil under Attack.” *International Review of Victimology* 18 (3): 269–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758012446983>, 269-84.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 269-84.
- <sup>39</sup> Terman, Rochelle. 2017. “Islamophobia and Media Portrayals of Muslim Women: A Computational Text Analysis of US News Coverage.” *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (3): 489–502. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx051>, 489-502.
- <sup>40</sup> Shabir, Aamina, and Tanveer Ahmad Khan. 2022. “Media as an Instrument of Reflection or Distortion of the Real Life Problems of Muslim Women in India.” *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies* 8 (1): 86–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23944811221096943>, 86-96.
- <sup>41</sup> Satiti, Nur Latifah Umi. 2017. “Representation of Muslim Women in the Western Media.” *Semantic Scholar*. <https://doi.org/10.24002/jik.v14i2.789>, 189-202.
- <sup>42</sup> Lalani, Nasir, and Irfan, “Glass Ceiling for Women Who Wear Hijab.”, 316-27.
- <sup>43</sup> Spink, Jeaniene. 2005. “Education and Politics in Afghanistan: The Importance of an Education System in Peacebuilding and Reconstruction.” *Journal of Peace Education* 2 (2): 195–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400200500185794>
- <sup>44</sup> Mesbahi, Nima. 2018. “The Victimization of the ‘Muslim Woman’: The Case of Amina Filali, Morocco.” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 19 (3): 49–59.
- <sup>45</sup> Meetoo, Veena, and Heidi Safia Mirza. 2007. “‘There Is Nothing ‘Honourable’ about Honour Killings’: Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 30 (3): 187–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2007.03.001>, 187-200
- <sup>46</sup> Mahmoud, Ibtisam M., Aron Zaltz, and Hilmi M. Zawati. 2013. “An Extended Interview with Dr. Hilmi Zawati, President of the International Legal Advocacy Forum on Wartime Rape in Syria and Libya.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2294602>.



- <sup>47</sup> Evolvi, Giulia. 2019. "The Veil and Its Materiality: Muslim Women's Digital Narratives about the Burkini Ban." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 34 (3): 469–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2019.1658936>, 469-87.
- <sup>48</sup> Azizi, Parand, and Kamal Halili Hassan. 2014. "Iranian Women, Sport and the Hijab Issue." *Social Sciences* 9 (6): 492–98. <https://doi.org/10.3923/sscience.2014.492.498>, 492-98.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 492-98
- <sup>50</sup> Hamzeh, Manal. "FIFA's Double Hijabophobia: A Colonialist and Islamist Alliance Racializing Muslim Women Soccer Players." *Women's Studies International Forum* 63 (July 2017): 11–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2017.06.003>, 11-16.
- <sup>51</sup> Saherwala, Z., Bashir, S., & Gainer, D. (2021). Providing culturally competent mental health care for Muslim women. *Innovations in clinical neuroscience*, 18(4-6), 33.
- <sup>52</sup> Tackett, Sean, J. Hunter Young, Shannon Putman, Charles Wiener, Katherine Deruggiero, and Jamil D. Bayram. 2018. "Barriers to Healthcare among Muslim Women: A Narrative Review of the Literature." *Women's Studies International Forum* 69 (69): 190–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.02.009>, 190-911.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 190-911
- <sup>54</sup> Mokhtar, Rafidah Hanim, Noor Fadzilah Zulkifli, Azizi Ayob, Asral Widad Ahmad Asnawi, Amira Ismail, Nur Hazlin Hazrin Chong, Mohd Eqwan Mohd Roslan, et al. 2022. "Religious Discrimination among Working Women in Malaysia." *Oarep.usim.edu.my*. <https://oarep.usim.edu.my/jspui/handle/123456789/19917>.
- <sup>55</sup> Haque and Khan, "Rape as a Tool of Political Mobilization", 327-33.
- <sup>56</sup> Fadnis, Deepa. 2022. "Understanding Multidimensionality of Muslim Women's Experiences of Sexual Violence through the News Coverage of the Bilkis Banu Gang Rape Case in India." *Journalism Practice*, February 2022, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2032284>, 127-49.
- <sup>57</sup> Noreen, Naveeda, and Prof. Dr. Razia Musarrat. 2013. "Protection of Women Rights through Legal Reforms in Pakistan." *Journal of Public Administration and Governance* 3 (4): 119. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v3i4.5059>, 119.
- <sup>58</sup> Arcel, L.T. 1998 "Sexual Torture of Women as a Weapon of War — the Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina." *European Psychiatry* 13 (January): 159s. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0924-9338\(99\)80103-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0924-9338(99)80103-5)
- <sup>59</sup> .Bannerji. Himani. "Demography and Democracy: Reflections on Violence against Women in Genocide or Ethnic Cleansing." BRILL EBooks, (September 2020), 499–513. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004441620\\_023](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004441620_023).
- <sup>60</sup> Dagkas, Symeon, and Tansin Benn. 2006. "Young Muslim Women's Experiences of Islam and Physical Education in Greece and Britain: A Comparative Study." *Sport, Education and Society* 11 (1): 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320500255056>.
- <sup>61</sup> Islam, Muslim, and Societies. 2014. "Muslim Women in Higher Education in India and Pakistan: A Comparative Study." *A Social Science Journal* 7 (1). [https://www.muslimsocieties.org/Vol7\\_1/Muslim\\_Women\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education\\_in\\_India\\_and\\_Pakistan.pdf](https://www.muslimsocieties.org/Vol7_1/Muslim_Women_in_Higher_Education_in_India_and_Pakistan.pdf).
- <sup>62</sup> Piatti-Crocker, Adriana, and Laman Tasch. 2015. "Veil Bans in Western Europe: Interpreting Policy Diffusion." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 16 (2): 15–29.