

Mahrem Requirements and India's Image!

News:

Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, said on Sunday that his government has removed the restriction on Muslim women from performing Haj alone, following which hundreds of women have applied to travel alone for the pilgrimage, Times of India reported.

Modi, during his monthly radio address of '*Mann ki baat*', termed the policy of allowing Muslim women to perform Haj only in the company of a male guardian as "injustice", saying that the removal of the restriction of having a male guardian or 'mahram' may appear as a "small thing", but such issues "have a far reaching impact on our image as a society"

Comment:

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist and member of the right-wing. is on a mission to liberate Muslim women! While on this mission, can the Prime Minister of India start to put his own house in order first?

If Modi is so concerned for the plight of Muslim women then why did he, during his appointment of Chief Minister of Gujarat, instigate the 2002 riots where state government reported that 790 Muslims were killed? Approximately 150,000 people were driven to refugee camps. Numerous women and children were among the victims; the violence included mass rapes and mutilations of women. Many writers have called it an example of state terrorism. American academic, Martha Nussbaum, said: "There is by now a broad consensus that the Gujarat violence was a form of ethnic cleansing, that in many ways it was premeditated, and that it was carried out with the complicity of the state government and officers of the law."

Looking on to the situation of women in India in general, the PM of India may want to think about the image of his society more deeply. Gulshan Rehman, the Health Program Development Adviser at Save the Children UK, stated, "In India, women and girls continue to be sold as chattels, married off as young as 10, burned alive as a result of dowry-related disputes and young girls exploited and abused as domestic slave labour."

Year after year, crimes against women, for example acid attack, rape, molestation, kidnapping, dowry deaths and abortion of females etc. are going up. Many crimes, such as rape, have been termed as an epidemic with women in major cities facing harassment in public and lack any kind of security.

Today, India is a society of social exclusion where the caste system, though illegal, still persists, and where illiteracy and poverty still exist and where women cannot live in any form of peace! Yet the pressing issue is Muslim women and their hajj requirements!?

Islam has its laws that govern the life of women and men and when they are implemented and adhered to completely, they produce harmony in society. The laws of Allah (swt) are not unjust or open for change by anyone, let alone an open enemy of Islam and Muslims. In secular societies, laws can be changed and adapted and this is just another case of this happening.

Unless Muslims live under the system that was ordained by Allah (swt) and shown in the struggle of the Prophet (saw), then anybody with an agenda to malign Islam and shift attention away from the flaws in their own system and state can be so bold to speak without fear and clear contempt.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Nazia Rehman**