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Misinformation Spread by the *Waj Mahfil* through Social Media Platforms about the Position of Women in Islam: A Case Study in Bangladesh

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Abstract- This research explores whether any misinformation regarding women is being spread in the *Waj Mahfils* of Bangladesh through social media platforms. At present, an extensive number of people are listening to these *Waj Mahfils* using social media platforms, and therefore, fabricated information about women can have a terrible impact on society, *Waj Mahfils* held in Bangladesh and conducted by so-called Islamic speakers of this country, Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Bin Yusuf, Abu Twha Muhammad Adnan, Shah Ahmed Shafi and Amir Hamza have been selected from YouTube and Facebook as purposive sample for this research. Representation theory has been chosen as the theoretical framework. It can be expected that through this research, people will get a clear idea about the fake speakers of Islam and their false speeches on various social, economic and marital issues of women. It will also be a helpful tool for future researchers in this regard.

Keywords: *waj mahfil, social media, women, Bangladesh.*

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Misinformation Spread by the *Waj Mahfil* through Social Media Platforms about the Position of Women in Islam: A Case Study in Bangladesh

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Abstract- This research explores whether any misinformation regarding women is being spread in the *Waj Mahfils* of Bangladesh through social media platforms. At present, an extensive number of people are listening to these *Waj Mahfils* using social media platforms, and therefore, fabricated information about women can have a terrible impact on society, *Waj Mahfils* held in Bangladesh and conducted by so-called Islamic speakers of this country, Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Bin Yusuf, Abu Twha Muhammad Adnan, Shah Ahmed Shafi and Amir Hamza have been selected from YouTube and Facebook as purposive sample for this research. Representation theory has been chosen as the theoretical framework. It can be expected that through this research, people will get a clear idea about the fake speakers of Islam and their false speeches on various social, economic and marital issues of women. It will also be a helpful tool for future researchers in this regard.

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I. Introduction

Waj Mahfil is a very familiar event in the lives of Bengali Muslims, where Islamic scholars deliver lectures on the religious matters and affairs, referencing different quotes of the Qur'ān, and Hadith, as well as describing religious histories, in order to spread the knowledge of Islam. *Waj Mahfils* were traditionally organized in an open place where people from different areas would come to gain a deeper knowledge about their religion by listening to such lectures. But with the advancement of technology, nowadays, they no longer need to be present in the event in person to listen to the lectures, as the event can be recorded and found on various online platforms like YouTube, Facebook etc. By taking such advantages of the technology, some speakers are misleading the ordinary and less-educated section of the society through their *Waj Mahfils*, where they deliver wrong and confusing information regarding the social status and empowerment of women in Islam. As a result, on the one hand, these speakers pursue their personal interests in the name of Islam. On the other hand, there is confusion in the minds of people about the true dignity and position of women in Islam.

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In digital platforms, people are not only listening to the lectures of Islamic scholars who have adequate knowledge about the religion and portray the actual status of women in Islam but also listening to some deceptive speakers whose misleading and fake information about the empowerment of women in Islam can make controversy and mislead a section of the society and can easily create religious orthodoxy and prejudice against women in our society as well as the country. Such kind of recorded videos, which are found in the social media, have been discussed here with the authenticity of the delivered information and along with that, the actual view of Islam regarding the matter has also been discussed.

With the digitalization of the country, the availability and popularity of online media is increasing day by day in our society. In terms of popularity, it often lags behind the mainstream media. But there is often a big question mark over the objectivity of these online content.

Nowadays a large number of people from different classes are watching *Waj Mahfil*s on social media in our society and many of them lack proper religious knowledge about the position and status of women. So, they depend on the speeches of Islamic speakers found on social media. It is assumed that the explanation of prominent Islamic scholars is mostly free from any kind of superstition. But there are also some recorded *Waj Mahfil*s where the speakers are spreading confusing and controversial information regarding women empowerment without any authentic religious basis. Thus, ordinary people are receiving deceptive information and acting accordingly, which is a dreadful affair society. Therefore, it is very important to correctly identify which are the real interpretations of Islam and which are the fabricated distorted interpretations of these speakers on various social, economic and marital issues of women. Such fabricated information regarding women empowerment, spread by some speakers on social media platforms, has been discussed here along with the original information, so that people get a clear idea about the fake speakers of Islam and their false speeches. It will also be a helpful tool for future researchers in this regard.

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II. Research Objectives

The present research has been conducted for the following purposes.

a) To identify the videos of *Waj Mahfil*s on social media platforms containing misleading information about the empowerment of women in Islam, which create controversy and confusion.
b) To find out the fake speakers of Islam and their deceiving characteristics through their uploaded *Waj Mahfil*s compared with the authentic sources of Islam.
c) To establish the dignity of women according to the genuinely knowledgeable Islamic scholars, which had been overlooked by some so-called or fabricated Islamic speakers in their recorded speeches of Waj Mahfils on social media platforms.

III. Literature Review

Emon (2021), in his article "The Cultivation of Communalism, Militancy & Misogyny in Waj" *(Waj e Samprodayikota, Jongibad O Nari Biddesher Chashabad)*, mentions how communalism, fundamentalism, militancy, sedition, and misogyny are incited through Waj Mahfils. In the name of religious discussion, the speakers are presenting various kinds of bizarre, irrational and ridiculous words. Instead of an honest discussion on the basis of Quran and Hadith, condemnation of any person or practice of political ideology is becoming the primary purpose of these *Waj Mahfil*s. Sometimes, slander about poets, writers, actors and singers becomes the main topic of discussion.

These *Waj Mahfil*s contain satire and ugly remarks about women's leadership and women. The author blames the lack of morality and religious knowledge of these speakers for the deplorable condition of Waj Mahfils nowadays.

Hossain (2021), Professor of Islamic University, in his article "The Dignity of Women in Islam and the Present Perspective" *(Islam e Narir Morzada O Bortoman Prekkhit)*, says that Islam has given high status to women. But it is a matter of great sorrow and regret that, at present, in most Muslim societies, countries, nations, and states, the effect of that policy of Islam on women is not seen. Even in the countries of the Western world, there are many misconceptions about the status of women in Islam. The author further says that *Waj Mahfil*s portray women in a way that is ridiculous. In our society, in the name of religion, many people prevent women from getting education or earning. But Islam does not forbid women to study or work. In this way, the position of women in Islam is being distorted and misrepresented to the common people.

Azad (2019), in his article "What We are Learning from Waj Mahfil" *(Ki Shikkha Pacchi Waj Mahfil Theke)*, said that there are many differences between the previous *Waj-Mahfil*s and the present *Waj-Mahfil*s. Earlier, one or two *Mahfil*s were organized in villages or certain areas every year. If a gathering was organized somewhere, a festive atmosphere would be created. The present speakers are cleverly dividing society on the basis of different factions and opinions in order to serve their own interests. Anyone can see these *Waj-Mahfil* from any corner of the world through Facebook and YouTube. In these *Waj-Mahfil*s, many speakers are seen delivering various vulgar and anti-feminist speeches opposing women's education and women's empowerment. Again, many are using various propaganda and completely fabricated information to turn these *Mahfil*s into a platform for anti-government talks.

Islam (2001), Professor of the University of Dhaka, in her research paper "Women in Islam" (*LA DONNA NELL' ISLAM*), discussed some common misconceptions about the position of women in Islam. Social prejudices have been being used to suppress women in the name of Islam for a very long time. In this research paper, the writer compared many prejudices with the historical events of Islam as well as the Quran and Hadith in order to find out the original position of women in Islam. With the authentic references, the writer sheds light on some misinterpretations about the women empowerment in Islam. The position of a woman in the family, in various roles, are beautifully portrayed here. The writer strongly proved that women objectification is totally banned in Islam. Both males and females have equal duties towards Allah, and thus, men and women are equally responsible for their own deeds. It is also made clear in the paper that Allah shows His mercy upon both of the genders equally.

Elius (2012), in his research article "Islamic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis", focused on women leadership and women as head of the state in a Muslim/Islamic state in the light of the Holy Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). In this article, the writer states that since the beginning of the industrial revolution in the West, women have given certain social, political, and economic rights after decades of struggle, which Islam had confirmed unequivocally fourteen hundred years ago. Islam has clarified the legal right and obligations of both men and women in such a balanced way that women cannot complain about their weakness or inferiority, and men cannot claim their superiority over women. Explaining various historical events of Islam and referring some verses of the Holy Quran and Al Hadith, he proved that Islam allows women to enjoy complete freedom of will as individuals and to gain their social, economic, and political rights, like men, in a truly Islamic society. So, this article is relevant to my research in order to get a detailed idea of the real position and status of women in Islam.

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IV. Theoretical Framework

The representation theory has been used to conduct the present research. Representation refers to the use of language to convey meaning to the world. This language can be in photography, film, literature, painting etc. Stuart Hall, known as a cultural theorist in the United Kingdom, provided this theory. The meaning of anything is actually created through representation. Because meaning does not exist in the object; it is manufactured and produced. There are three approaches to explain how meaning is represented through language. There are Reflective approach, Intentional approach and Constructional approach (Haq, 2011). How women are being portrayed in *Waj Mahfils* conducted by Bangladeshi *Mollas* is analyzed in this research through the representation theory.

V. Research Methodology

Social media platforms are chosen as the area of this research. In other words, the *Waj Mahfil*s conducted by Bangladeshi speakers uploaded through various popular social media platforms in Bangladesh (such as Facebook, YouTube, etc.) have been selected for conducting this research.

The following two methods have been used for the research on "Misinformation spread by the *Waj Mahfil*s through social media platforms about the empowerment of women in Islam".

(a) *Qualitative Content Analysis:* Qualitative content analysis is a systematic method where qualitative data are analyzed.It focuses on recorded human artefacts and investigates these written, spoken and visual artefacts.

The research has been limited to Waj Mahfils held in Bangladesh and conducted in the Bengali language by Bangladeshi so-called Islamic speakers. Purposing sampling has been used in this research. Here, the videos found on digital platforms of different Islamic speakers containing misinformation regarding the position of women in Islam have been selected as samples. The videos of Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Bin Yusuf, Abu Twha Muhammad Adnan, Shah Ahmed Shafi and Amir Hamza have been selected and recorded from YouTube and Facebook as sample.

(b) *In-depth Interviewing:* In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique which includes intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation.

For the in-depth interview, I have approached Dr. Mohammad Elius, who was conferred a PhD Degree in Islamic civilization for his dissertation on "Historical Development of Interreligious Dialogue: A Case Study in Bangladesh" from the University of Malaya, Malaysia, in 2021. His research articles have appeared in several highly indexed journals from the USA, UK, Malaysia, and Indonesia. He is currently a professor in the Department of World Religions and Culture at the University of Dhaka. I have also approached another Islamic scholar, Dr. Md. Abu Sayem, who was conferred a PhD Degree in Religious Studies on composing the dissertation entitled "Religious Perspectives on Environmental Issues: A Comparative Study of John B.Cobb, Jr. and Seyyed Hossein Nasr" from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and his extensive research articles on the religious field have appeared in some peer-reviewed journals published from the USA, Sweden, Poland, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. He is currently a professor in the Department of World Religions and Culture at the University of Dhaka.

I have recorded selected *Waj Mahfils* from social media platforms through purposive sampling to collect research data, observe them repeatedly, and tried to find out what kind of statements were being delivered about women by taking necessary notes.

The recorded speeches uploaded on social media platforms (such as Facebook, YouTube, etc.) have been analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method. Through this method, the authenticity of the given information regarding women in the speeches has been identified by comparing them with the Qur'ān, reliable Hadith and religious events, as these are considered as the authentic sources of information in Islam. On the other hand, through an in-depth interview method, the opinions of two Islamic scholars of national and international arena regarding such misleading speeches, spread in the mass media, have been known.

VI. Presentation & Analysis of Information

Qualitative content analysis has been conducted through the following case studies.

Case Study 1

Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Bin Yusuf, known as an Islamic Speaker in Bangladesh, narrated the position of women by saying, "I have told the nation that women are created only to bear children. I have told the nation that women are created only to serve their husbands. Through them, the lineage must be maintained, and children should be nurtured by them. Women are not created to run the country, to run the office and court. This is not my personal opinion, *Allah Ta'ala* said that. (*TRUE ISLAM*, 2021: 00:00 to 00:35)." In this regard, he referred to *Surah Al-Baqara* verse no 223 and added that Allah says in Al-Qur'ān, "(women are) your lands, your fields, the place of your production. You come to your place of production as you wish (*TRUE ISLAM*, 2021: 00:59 to 01:09)." He then expressed his anger as to what women understand and said with reference to

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verse 21 of *Surah Ar-Rum*, "I have created your wives from among yourselves so that you may find peace and contentment therein (*TRUE ISLAM*, 2021: 02:00 to 02:14)." At the same time, he repeatedly refers to women as 'objects' as if women are the property of their husbands'. By objectifying women, it is portrayed in this *Waj* that as if women had no feelings and had no rights over their husbands and family.

Case Study 2

Regarding marriage, Abu Twha Muhammad Adnan said that marrying more than once indicates how strong a man's backbone is. He indicates that marriage depends only on the will of the male and he can have multiple marriages if only he wants it (**আলোর পথ** 2021: 00:39 to 00:07). He also said that, even in the present time, the proportion of men and women in the society is 1:4.He further stated that, at present there are four women for each man in the society and these statistics can be found in the internet. He also added that in the Western countries this proportion of male and female is so much more (**আলোর পথ**, 2021: 00:54 to 01:10). He also addressed the feminists as the 'Agents of Dajjal'.

Case Study 3

About the allowance of the education of women, Shah Ahmed Shafi stated that, "Your daughter is studying in school, college, university. Make her study up to class four-five, so that she is able to calculate her husband's money after marriage (*Hang War Criminals of Bangladesh*, 2013: 01:58 to 02:29)." He also said that if the girls study up to colleges or universities, they go for love marriages and court marriages without the consent of their fathers. Opposing the combined study of the girls and boys, he says, "Girls are like tamarinds (*Hang War Criminals of Bangladesh*, 2013: 04:05)." Comparing women to tamarinds, he later added that tamarinds make people salivate no matter which place is that and women are worse than this. Again, he said that the hearts of the men salivate when they see women and they want to get married. Contact with women will produce bad thoughts in the male of every age. If any man claims that bad thoughts do not occur to him when he sees women, he must be physically unable.

Case Study 4

About the freedom of women, Amir Hameza said that it is not permissible for girls to go outside without the permission of their husbands. According to his statement, even if someone dies, women cannot go outside without the permission of their husbands it is not permissible above 48 miles without the husband or the 14 people she is permitted to see without a veil (**ইসলামিক টিপস টিভি**, 2021: 01:17 to 02:50). Then he added that "What the husband chooses, even if it is harmful, should be chosen by the wife, if it is permissible (**ইসলামিক টিপস টিভি**, 2021: 03:43 to 03:52)."

a) In-depth Interview of Dr. Abu Sayeem

The interview of Dr. Abu Sayeem, an associate professor in the Department of World Religions and Culture at the University of Dhaka, is given below.

1. Is the Reason for the Creation of Women only to Produce Children, Serve and Please the Husband, or Nurture Children?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: The purpose of the creation of human is to please God, to serve God, and to worship God. It is neither mentioned in the Qur'ān nor in Hadith that women were created only to serve their husbands, to produce children, or to preserve the lineage. If these were the only reasons to create women, Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala would have given sons to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) through his wives to save his lineage. Ayesha (RA), the youngest wife of the prophet (PBUH), would have given birth to children, if maintaining the lineage had been the only duty of women. There are so many other historical events of Islam, which indicate that serving husband, rearing children or maintaining the lineage are not the only reasons behind the creation of a woman. So, this is a conservative thought. Humans were created only to serve God as the Qur'ān states that "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me (Al-Qur'ān 51:56)."

2. Why were Women Compared to the Grain Field?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: In *Surah Bakarah Ayat* 223, it is stated in the Qur'ān that, "Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so, approach your tilth when or how ye will; but do some good act for your souls beforehand; and fear Allah. And know that ye are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give (these) good tidings to those who believe." This verse explains the intimate relationship between husband and wife. This verse is not disrespecting towards women; rather, God has highlighted the great role of women through this verse. This verse is often misinterpreted and misled by many due to the lack of correct knowledge and wisdom.

Women have been compared to a grain field because, through them, Allah has planned for mankind to come into the world. Women play an important role in human resource development. No matter how strong a man is, he cannot give birth to children from his own body, and this is done by Allah through women. Just as people benefit by getting food crops from crop fields, women enrich mankind by producing human resources. By comparing them with crop fields, the great contribution of women is indicated. Just as a field needs to be taken care of in order to produce crops, a husband must take care of his wife in order to get his desired result. For those who live in cities, the comparison of the fields and the women is a bit difficult to understand. If the seeds are scattered on the land by one's own will, the crop will never be produced. For the production of crops, proper cultivation should be done by fertilizing the land, cleaning the weeds, etc. In other

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words, the land should be taken care of properly. The farmer can get his desired harvest only by fulfilling all his duties towards the land. In the same way, man has to take care of his wife to get the desired next generation. In fact, this comparison is a description of the great role of women.

There is no scope to belittle women here. Men and women are mentioned in the Qur'ān an equal number of 24 times which makes the coexistence of both clear. Also, the importance of motherhood and fatherhood are discussed comparatively in the Qur'ān. The Prophet taught us that heaven lies at the feet of mothers. When asked, "Who is most deserving of our kind treatment?" the Prophet replied, "Your mother" three times before saying "your father" only once.

The status given to women in Islam is incompatible. So, Islam never looks down upon women. The interpretation has not been made in proper accordance with the present situation. The conservative mindset of the speaker is reflected in his comments, and negative messages are spreading.

3. Is Polygamy Necessary for the Present Situation?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: In *Surah An-Nisa*, Ayat 3, it is commanded that, "If you fear that you might not treat the orphans justly, then marry the women that seem good to you: two, or three, or four. If you fear that you will not be able to treat them justly, then marry (only) one, or marry from among those whom your right hands possess. This will make it more likely that you will avoid injustice." Here, Allah has given a very clear solution about multiple marriages.

According to the current socioeconomic perspective and mindset, no woman or society wants a man to have more than one wife. There was a time, when people had to take more than one wife due to socio-economic conditions. Earlier, many adult daughters were given marriage at the request of their fathers. Even the daughters of Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Abu Bakr got married to their husbands as one of the multiple wives.

The present situation does not support polygamy. At present, when people marry more than once, they do not fulfill the conditions under which Islam permitted polygamy, and they want to have multiple marriages to satisfy their desires, which is very much against the teachings of Islam. In today's society, no one can maintain the balance of family life by embracing polygamy. There is a saying that goes, "Kingdom can be divided, not love." which means it is not possible to divide love. Because Allah Himself said that if you cannot behave properly, then be content with one wife. So, a man should be emotionally satisfied by marrying only one woman. Polygamy was very common all over the world when this law was revealed, and in this verse, the number of marriages was reduced to one. According to the current situation, there is no justification for polygamy at present according to Islam. However, polygamy may again be permitted by fulfilling the conditions of Islam, if the circumstances and conditions described in the Qur'ān arise again. But at present, no such situation has arisen, so marriage should be limited to one.

4. Does Marriage only Depend on the Capacity or will of a Man?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: Marriage in Islam is not one-sided, as it does not depend on one party. Marriage involves both husband and wife. If a man wants to marry a woman and agrees willingly, then it is ok. But if the female does not have consent, then there is no chance of marriage. No one can be forced into marriage. In Islam, freedom of marriage is given to both men and women. The consent of a female after puberty is the most important in a marriage. Even her guardian or parents have no chance to force her. Marriage only takes place through mutual consent and mutual understanding. Still, since women have to sacrifice more in most cases after marriage, the will of females is more important. So, marriage does not depend on the exclusive will or capacity of any man; rather it depends on the capacity and willingness of both parties.

5. To what Extent the Girls are Given the Right to Study According to Islam? Is it only because they can help their Husbands in Calculating their Money?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: Not educating the daughters of the family is nothing but a social prejudice and conservative thinking that has been going on for hundreds of years, which has nothing to do with religion. These are said based on the structures of society. There is no limitation of education for females in Islam. According to the basic concept of Islam, no age limit is given for education. According to one's ability, both males and females can continue their studies while maintaining their own security, if they have the desire and opportunity. If there is any risk or insecurity in acquiring anything, Islam forbids doing so. But if the environment is favorable, women can surely continue their studies and play a role in society through their contributions. In Islam, the roles of both men and women are essential for establishing a good society. Women need to have educational qualifications to contribute to society. Without educational qualifications, they cannot contribute and perform their duties. By advancing in education, women can express their opinions in society. Thus, the position of women will be strengthened in the society, when they have the capacity to express their own opinions. Women will be able to help not only their husbands but the whole society if they are educated. It should be noted here that, after marriage, wealth does not belong only to the husband but also to both the husband and wife.

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6. How Appropriate is it, According to Islam, to Compare Women to a Saliva Producing-food like Tamarind?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: Comparison with tamarind is purely the speaker's own interpretation and opinion. There are some sound contributors to Islam who are women. For example, Ayesha (RA), who was a learned hadith scholar or Muhaddithah. Male companions had learned many hadith from her. She had also led a war. She even protested during the reign of Hazrat Ali (RA), when the trial for the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) was being delayed. So, there is no doubt that, Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wife Ayesha (RA) was a great figure of that time. Her leadership qualities, educational qualifications, public affairs, etc. are the examples for women of later times.

According to Islam, there is no scope to leave women behind in the name of religion. When the Prophet was wounded in the Battle of Uhud and took refuge in a place, several women protected him there. Women used to participate in the battlefields in the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Besides these, in another battle, when the Muslim soldiers were returning after being chased by the Roman soldiers, the women who were in the tabernacle forced them to return to the battlefield again. Additionally, women also took part in the war when needed. If the sight of women produced saliva, then women would not have been able to participate in public affairs at that time. The Prophet himself appointed and allowed them to do these jobs.

At the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), both men and women prayed in the same mosque. The women's queue started after the men's queue. No separate curtain was drawn. Since the face is kept open in prayer, male and female companions would meet, and many male companions had seen the faces of the female companions as some would have covered their faces and some would not. Even during Hajj, the face must be uncovered, and so the faces of females can be seen. Therefore, the events of Islamic history are not compatible with this comparison.

7. According to Islam, should Women be Forced to do the Permissible Things that their Husbands Choose for them?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: In Islam, if the husband wants his wife to do anything, the wife should be convinced with love. She cannot be forced by any means, and there is no scope to force her to do anything. According to Islam, Muslim men can marry the female followers of Abrahamic religions. Which means that it is permissible for a Muslim man to take a Jew or a Christian as his wife. But cannot force that Jew or Christian woman to convert to Islam after marriage. It would be acceptable only when she embraces Islam on her own after seeing the religious virtues. Since there is no scope for coercion in the practice of religion, it cannot be imposed in other matters either.

Everyone has the right to think independently according to their mind. If the choice of the husband is good and the wife embraces it on her own, then it is okay. If the husband wants his wife to do anything according to his choice, he should patiently explain and convince his wife through logical arguments and practical examples. And then, considering him to be her well-wisher, if the wife accepts his words and works accordingly, then that's good and permissible in Islam. However, even if the wife suffers in the short term but thinks that she will get a solution, happiness in the long term and accepts the words of her husband, then there is no harm. By working in such a convincing way, the relationship between husband and wife will be filled with contentment and sweetness, and they will be more respectful towards each other. After all, the relation between husband and wife is all about mutual compromise and understanding.

8. Should Women take Permission before going Outside, even if Someone Close to them Dies?

Dr. Abu Sayeem: In most families of our society, husbands go out for livelihood, and wives remain at home to do the households. So, if the husband is informed by the wife when she leaves home, the he will not be tense if he does not find his wife after returning from work. Communication has become much easier now because of the advancement of technology. So, it is better to go out after informing the partner so that he does not get tensed when he cannot find his wife at home. Similarly, the husband should also inform his wife if he is late to return home for any reason. It is just about informing the partner, not about taking permission.

No one is allowed to dominate anyone in a marriage. This is a process of mutual understanding. But Islam does not say that a wife cannot go outside at all without the literal permission of her husband. While staying at home, if the wife faces an emergency where it is not possible to inform her husband, she can go out without informing him. So, it is clear that if there is a chance, wives should inform their husbands, but if there occurs any urgent situation and there is no scope for informing, then they do not have to take permission. In case the husband forbids his wife to go out, even if the closest relatives, for example, her father dies, then there is no harm for her to go out without the consent of her husband.

b) In-Depth Interview of Dr. Mohammad Elius

Similarly, the interview of Dr. Mohammad Elius, an associate professor of the Department of World Religions and Culture at the University of Dhaka, is given below.

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1. Is the Reason for the Creation of Women only to Produce Children, Serve and Please the Husband, or Nurture Children?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: I assume that this is narrated from a verse of the Al-Qur'ān, where women are said to be created for procreation and service to their husbands. The meaning cannot be taken directly in all cases of the Qur'ān and Hadith because it can be different in different places. The rule is to accept the one that is the more frequent one. There is a problem with the approach of the *Ulama* of our country.

The literal meaning of the verses is not the same in all cases. In various sources, such as in the book *Rights and Responsibilities of Muslim Women*, husband and wife are described as complementary to each other. Elsewhere it is said that women have rights over men just as much as men have rights over women. Analyzing all these Islamic quotations, it can be observed that women have been despised in the stated saying, as it indicates the reason behind the creation of women is the satisfaction of men and procreation. Here the word "زَوج (*Zawjun*) means not only wife but partner or spouse. Here, procreation means the continuation of the next generation, which is encouraged by Islam. But contrary to the statement of the speaker in case study 1, both men and women are equally responsible here. Islam encourages a mutual relationship between husband and wife to achieve the same purpose. If women become mothers, men also become fathers. In this, both parents have responsibilities in rearing their children. In the Hadith and the Qur'ān, the mother is given more respect than the father. In Islam, women cannot be presented as subordinate objects of their husbands. The original meaning of the verse of *Surah Ar-Rum* was not portrayed by the narrator of Case Study 1.

2. Why were Women Compared to the Grain Field?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: The definition of grain field includes production or procreation. Grain field refers to where crops are grown. For example, a child is the product of the reproductive process of husband and wife. But it is not the case that the husband can enjoy his wife without her consent. Reciprocity, love and cooperation are important here. In this case, nothing will be done by the sole right or will of the husband. Rather, husband and wife must have mutual consent.

Islam gives importance to procreation for another reason. After the death of a person, the three deeds of a person continue; one of them is the child who will do good deeds and pray after the demise of his/her parents. Mothers usually do the toughest part by giving birth to the children, and thus mothers are more respected in Islam than fathers. But even the process of procreation should include the mutual consent of a married couple.

3. Is Polygamy Necessary for the Present Situation?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: The information Abu Twha Muhammad Adnan mentions about the global male-to-female ratio of 1:4 is not correct. Therefore, no decision can be made on the basis of this information regarding the validity of polygamy. The Holy Qur'ān mentions marrying four women under 'special circumstances'. This verse has a special background. This verse speaks of a period after a war, where many Muslims died in that battle. At that time, women became helpless in the absence of a male partner. Since the number of Muslims was also less then, there were no men to marry or support those women. Then, this verse of the Holy Qur'ān was revealed to shelter women in that special situation. But at present, no such situation has arisen. Even in those special circumstances, equality is said to be preserved. Importance has been imposed on giving equal rights to every wife.

In our society, people who marry for the second or third time often have no contact with the first wife. Sometimes, their children are also deprived. In that case, equality or justice is not being established in any way. Firstly, there is no situation of polygamy now. And even then, if one wants to practice polygamy, it is difficult to maintain the equal rights prescribed in the Qur'ān, because Allah Himself has expressed concern about this, as the Qur'ān states that, "Ye are never be able to do justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire: but turn not away (from women) altogether, so as to leave her (it were hanging in the air) (Al-Qur'ān 4:129)."

4. Does Marriage only Depend on the Capacity or will of a Man?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: The Holy Qur'ān mentions polygamy under special circumstances and lays special emphasis on justice. Polygamy does not depend only on the ability or will of the man. In the case of a second marriage, the first wife's permission must be taken. In this case, some special situations may arise. For example, because the first wife has some physical problem or she is unable to bear children, she herself allows the husband to marry for a second time. But it is not a forced permission, the first wife has to give permission voluntarily.

5. To what Extent the Girls are Given the Right to Study According to Islam? Is it only because they can Help their Husbands in Calculating their Money?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: Islam does not set any specific criteria for the education of men and women. In Islam, knowledge has been made compulsory (*Farz*) for both men and women. In this case, the concerned speaker did not mention the information with any explanation or reference to the Qur'ān or Hadith. So, this is his own opinion. If we look at the Muslim world, the eminent Islamic scholars also made no distinction between men

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and women for study or professional work. Rather, they encouraged men and women to work according to their own merits. Therefore, Islam does not create any obstacles for women to gain knowledge and enrich themselves in various professional fields. In the world's famous Muslim countries, women are engaged in important responsibilities in various institutions, including hospitals and universities. Therefore, the work of girls is not limited to studying up to class four/ five or keeping accounts of husband's money.

6. How Appropriate is it, According to Islam, to Compare Women to a Saliva-producing Food Like Tamarind?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: Islam grants freedom of movement to women. I am at a loss as to what the speaker meant by comparing women with tamarinds. According to Islam, the condition of society should be such that women can move about freely at any time of the night. Such was the system during the rule of Hazrat Umar (RA). Many Muslim and non-Muslim countries still have such a system. There are some problems in our country; we have to overcome them. So, there is no room to blame only women here.

7. According to Islam, should Women be Forced to do the Permissible Things that their Husbands Choose for them?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: Both husband and wife should respect each other's individuality in terms of likes and dislikes. Both boys and girls have responsibilities and duties towards their respective parents. Many times in our society, the husband also imposes the responsibility of serving and caring for his parents on the wife. In that case, the husband can never force his wife to perform this duty. If the wife fulfils her duty to her husband's parents in this case, it is better from the social point of view, but it is not obligatory for her to do so from the religious point of view.

8. Should Women take Permission before going Outside, even if Someone Close to them Dies?

Dr. Mohammad Elius: In the light of the Qur'ān-Hadith, the husband-wife relationship is complementary to each other. In that case, the other has to come forward when one is in danger. It is natural that both husband and wife will inform each other or help each other when any such special situation arises. But if such strictness is imposed on the relationship, it cannot be considered a good relationship.

c) Analysis of Information

In the first Case Study, the Islamic speaker Shaykh Abdur Razzaq Bin Yusuf said that women are created only to produce children, serve and please the husband, and rearing children. Both of the scholars, Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius, whom I have interviewed, strongly disagreed with this statement regarding the purpose of the creation of women. According to the Islamic scholar Dr. Abu Sayem, the purpose of creating all human beings is to please, serve and worship one and only God. In this regard, a *Quranic* verse should be mentioned here, where Allah says, "I did not create *Jinn* and humans except to worship Me (Al-Qur'ān 51:56)." So, from this verse, it is clear that serving and worshipping Allah, Who is the one and only creator of human being, is the sole purpose of the creation of all men and women. In his in-depth interview, another Islamic scholar, Dr. Mohammad Elius opined that the responsibility of rearing children should be divided equally between the parents according to their mutual understanding and consent, and should not be imposed.

The approach of the speaker in case study-1 towards women was not found very much respectful, instead his negligence towards women was felt through his lecture. In his lecture, he raised questions about the knowledge of women. In the Qur'ān, the importance of gaining knowledge was described with so much importance that there are total 21 verses which contain the command 'know'. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman (*Sunan Ibn Majah* 224)." This Hadith indicates the knowledge of that aspect of the *Deen* that will save someone from the fire of hell. There are *Quranic* verses saying, "...Men shall have a share according to what they have earned, and women shall have a share according to what they have earned... (Al-Qur'ān 4:32)" and "The believers, both men and women, are guardians of one another. They encourage good and forbid evil, establish prayer and pay alms-tax, and obey Allah and His Messages. It is they who will be shown Allah's mercy. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise (Al-Qur'ān 9:71)." From these verses, it can be understood that good and bad deeds bring the same reward or punishment for both men and women as they have the same material and spiritual duties. So, Muslim males and females have equal capability of achieving knowledge, and thus a true preacher of Islam cannot question the capability of women in gaining knowledge. Although he confidently stated that Allah Ta'ala Has not created women to run the country, office or the court, there is no such direct and clear verse in the Al-Qur'ān regarding women leadership.

In his research article, 'Islamic View of Women Leadership as Head of the State: A Critical Analysis', Dr. Mohammad Elius said, "There is no verse in the Qur'ān regarding the permission or prohibition of a woman's rule in a country. The Qur'ān is silent on this particular point. The silence of the Qur'ān on this crucial issue means that it has been left to the Muslim community to decide according to the circumstances (Elius, 2012: 200)."

The speaker also quoted from the Qur'ān, and stated that it is the responsibility of a wife to assure

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peace and contentment of her husband. From the *Ayat*, "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought (Al-Qur'ān 30:21)." We come to know that affection and mercy within the partners are the blessings of Allah so that people can find tranquillity among their partners. This duty of providing mercy and affection does not lie solely upon the wife. Both husband and wife are equally responsible for ensuring the peace of their respective partners. As the Islamic scholar Dr. Mohammad Elius mentioned in his in-depth interview, the word زَوج (*Zawjun*) means partners or spouse, and thus, this verse indicates the mutual conjugal relationship of both partners.

The speaker of Case Study 1 again referred to the verse of Surah Al-Baqara from the Qur'ān, and stated that the wives are the lands of their husbands, and the husbands have the right to come to the place of their production as per their wish. The original statement of the Qur'ān is, "Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers (Al-Qur'ān 2:223)." Both of the scholars whom I have interviewed, explained this verse beautifully, where there is no room for disgracing women. Rather, they portrayed the greatness of procreating children through women and both refused to accept that this verse gives the husband a higher position than the wife. If we compare the wife to the land, and the husband not only to the owner but also the farmer, we will see how beautiful this analogy is! All the thoughts and attention of a farmer revolve around his land. He thinks all day what to do for his land, so that he can get a proper harvest. He takes care for that land, so that the seedlings grow. When he achieves his desired result, the feelings of happiness, joy, and success of a farmer surely become intense. In the same way, a large part of a husband's thoughts and plans should be about his wife. He should sow the seeds to his wife for a better future. Then, when the wife becomes pregnant, he should care more for her, just like a farmer does for his grain field. The later part of this verse does not give full freedom to the husbands to enjoy their wives, as the speaker stated. Rather, consent from both sides is important, as Allah Ta'ala clearly commands to fear Him before doing anything wrong. In Islam, in a conjugal relationship, it is very important to establish consent and cooperation from both spouses.

In Case Study 2, according to the Islamic speaker Abu Twaha Muhammad Adnan, having more than one wife is an indication of a man's masculinity or backbone. This statement indicates that the second marriage solely depends on the will of the husband. But contrary to his assumption, Islamic Scholars Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius both said that marriage does not depend solely on either the bride or the groom. Rather, according to these scholars, this is a bond of mutual consent, where the bride and groom both willingly agree to be married. In the case of having multiple wives, the permission and consent of the previous wife or wives are equally important.

The instruction of Al-Qur'ān regarding marriage is, "If you fear that you might not treat the orphans justly, then marry the women that seem good to you: two, or three, or four. If you fear that you will not be able to treat them justly, then marry (only) one, or marry from among those whom your right hands possess. This will make it more likely that you will avoid injustice (Al-Qur'ān 4:3)." It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas and his disciple 'Ikrimah that in *Ayame Jahiliya* period (dark ages), there was no limit to marriage and men would take as many wives as they wished. Thus, there were no respect or right of the wives and they did not receive proper treatment from their husbands. So, under this context, Allah fixed the limit of four wives, instructing the husbands to do equal justice to all of the wives. According to Sa'id b. Jubayr, Qatadah and some other commentators, in the period of *Ayame Jahiliya*, this verse was revealed to stop the injustice and oppression of the orphans. As stated by Dr. Mohammad Elius in his in-depth interview, this verse was revealed under post-war conditions, where the number of Muslim men were much less than the number of Muslim women. So, in order to make shelter for the helpless women of post war, this verse was revealed.

This verse states that having more than one wife is permissible on the condition that one treats all his wives with equal feelings. However, this is practically impossible according to Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius, in the present socioeconomic conditions. So, they suggested that marriage should be limited to one. But they both agreed that if such special conditions rise again, as in past events of Islamic history, then it might be permissible to have multiple wives by abiding all the conditions set by Allah Ta'ala. If a person takes more than one wife, claiming that this permission is granted by the creator to have multiple wives up to four, and then disregards the condition laid down by Allah by failing to treat them justly, he is not favored by the creator. Rather, he will be punished for doing such injustice.

To establish his opinion, the speaker of Case Study 2, Abu Twaha Muhammad Adnan, said that the present statistics regarding the proportion of men and women are 1:4. But in Bangladesh, for every 100 females, there are currently around 99 males, according to a preliminary report of 'Population and Housing Census 2022', which is the sixth census of the country (Molla, 2022). So, the gender ratio in our country for men and women is 9.9:10. But if we look at the world population, the gender ratio in the world in 2021 is 101.68 males per 100 females, according to the World

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Population Prospect of the UN (Molla, 2022). So, according to these statistics, the proportion of men and women in the world is 1.01:1, where men are in the slightly leading position. These original statistics do not match the information given by the speaker, and he presented his personal incorrect information as the world statistics.

In Case Study 3, the speaker, Shah Ahmed Shafi, stated that primary education is enough for a woman and there is no need for educating the daughters of the family in schools, colleges or universities. But the Qur'ān begins with the word '*Iqra*', which means 'Read', and this shows how much importance Islam has placed on acquiring knowledge. The *dua* of increasing knowledge is stated in the Qur'ān, "O my Lord, increase me in Knowledge (Al-Qur'ān 20:114)." This indicates that both men and women should try to increase the proper knowledge to make the right material and spiritual decisions. In emphasizing the necessity of seeking knowledge, the Qur'ān states that, "With all this, it is not desirable that all of the believers take the field (in time of war). From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going to war, and shall devote themselves (instead) to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith, and (thus be able to) teach their homecoming brethren, so that these (too) might guard themselves against evil (Al-Qur'ān 9:122)." It means that one should not stop seeking knowledge even in the time of war. The Qur'ān also asks, "Can they who know and they who do not know be deemed equal (Al-Qur'ān 39:9)"; which also encourages the believers to advance their knowledge. It is made very clear in these verses of the Qur'ān that gaining knowledge is a must for both male and female Muslims, and no one other than themselves is responsible for their deeds. There is no such verse in Al-Qur'ān where there is any kind of discrimination between boys and girls in acquiring knowledge. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also placed importance in the education for both male and female Muslims, and his admiration for knowledge is narrated in various Hadiths. For example, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said that, "Acquire knowledge. It enables its possessor to distinguish right from wrong. It heightens the way to heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless, it is our ornaments among friends and an armor... against enemies (Suhrawardy, 1970: P. 108)." This hadith is gender neutral, and it states that humankind should seek knowledge to educate themselves no matter what gender, age or class they belong to. So, it is clear that seeking and acquiring knowledge in Islam does not depend on the gender, race, age or marital status of anyone. The Islamic scholars Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius have both pointed out references from Hadith and the Qur'ān in support of the higher studies, in their respective in-depth interviews. So, they did not agree to draw any limitation of educational phase to the daughters of the family, as to build an ideal society, it is a must for each and every member of the society to gain proper education. The speaker of Case Study 3 also compared women to tamarind and added that, as women are like tamarind for the men, saliva is produced within the men whenever they see a woman. By this comparison, the speaker tried to establish the necessity of confining girls to the house. But both the scholars, whom I have interviewed, strongly disagreed with such comparison and they mentioned many examples of working together of men and women in Islam. In his in-depth interview, Dr. Abu Sayem narrated the great contribution of Ayesha (RA) in Islam as a Hadith narrator and a tutor of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) after his departure. He also indicated the lifetime of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when the Muslim men and women used to perform *salat* in the same mosque without any curtain between the rows of men and the rows of women. The other scholar, Dr. Mohammad Elius, mentioned the reign of Hazrat Umar (RA) when there was no restriction on women stepping out of the city, and they could move about freely at any hour of the day as their proper security was ensured.

There are many other historical examples of Islam where the women not only stepped out from their houses but also took part in the battles along with the males. For example, Ayesha (RA) and Umm Salma (RA) participated in the Battle of Ohud. Sufia bint Abd al-Muttalib (RA), maternal aunt of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), participated in the Battle of Khaybar. Umm al-Khair, Zurqa bint Adi, Iqrama bint Atrash and Umm Sinan assisted in the defence in numerous battles. Azra bint Harith bin Qalda led the army and fought against Ahle Bisan. Umm Ammara (RA) formed the defence ring to save the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the battle of Uhud, and after that, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave her the title of 'Khatune Ohud'. Umm Haram bint Milhan (RA) was martyred in the first maritime campaign in the history of Islam. Umm Atiya Ansari (RA) participated in seven battles with the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Umayya bint Qays Kifaria participated in the Battle of Khaybar. Umm Hakim bint Harith participated in the war against the Romans. Umm Ayman Habshi (RA) participated in the battles of Ohud, Hunain, Khaybar and Motar. Umm Sulaym (RA) participated in the Battle of Khaybar and Hunain. Umm Haram bint Milhan was the first female sailor of Islam. Rabi bint Muwaaz (RA) participated in the Battle of Badr. Nasibah bint Ka'b participated in the battles of Ohud, Bani Quraiza, Hudaybiyah, Khaybar, Hunain and Yama (Tabqat Ibn Saad: 8/415; Dalailun Nabuiyah: 2/712).

In these battles, women fought with and against the men, and most of these incidents took place during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). They maintained their decency even if male and female were working together in a combined

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environment. So, the comparison of women with tamarind, where saliva is produced within the men just by seeing women, does not match with the history of Islam. Even during Hajj, men and women perform *Tawaf* together, when it is obligatory for female Muslims to keep their faces uncovered. If men could not control themselves whenever they see a woman, such combined participation would not be allowed by Islam. This is just a personal opinion of the speaker without any connection to Islam.

In Case Study 4, the speaker, Amir Hamza, said that it is obligatory for the wife to act according to her husband's wish, whether she has consent or not, if the desired acts of the husband are permissible in Islam. But both the scholars I have interviewed did not seem to agree with this statement, as the wife is an individual being with emotions, and she has equal right in the conjugal relationship. In his in-depth interview, Dr. Mohammad Elius explained with example that serving the husband's parents is permissible in Islam. But the husband cannot force his wife to serve and live with his parents, as taking care of the parents is imposed upon the children by Islam. So, in Islam, marriage is a sacred bond between husband and wife, where they both continue the lineage through mutual understanding and consent. Nothing should be imposed on anyone as any kind of forcing can harm the ideal bonding of husband and wife, according to Islam. Dr. Abu Sayem, in his in-depth interview, mentioned the rule that a Muslim man can marry a Jew or Christian woman. In this case also, the husband has no right to force his wife to convert into a Muslim. Thus, he added that where performing Islamic duty can be considered, there is no room for a husband to force his wife to do anything. Everything in a marriage should be done by mutual understanding. There are many verses in the Quran where the beautiful bonding of husband and wife has been explained. "They (your wives) are a clothing (covering) for you, and you too are a clothing (covering) for them (AlQur'ān 2:187)." From this verse, we can understand that husband and wife are like each other's clothes. Husband and wife protect each other the way clothes protect our pride and enhance our beauty. If any of our clothes ever get dirty, we clean them carefully, rather than throwing it away. Similarly, if either the husband or wife ever disappoints the other, they should patch up with love and affection. Husband and wife are each other's best friends in Islam, and if they act accordingly, it is possible to build a happy family. So, forcing the wife to do anything does not match with the true values of Islam, and the statement of the speaker will encourage the husbands to treat their wives as emotionless objects. There are Hadiths for both husbands and wives to maintain a happy conjugal relationship. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives (*Sunan Ibn Majah* 1977)." In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Any woman dies while her husband is pleased with her, she will enter Jannah (*Riyad as-Salihin* 286)." From these Hadith, it can be realized how important it is for Muslim husbands and wives to have a meaningful and empathetic relationship with each other, which cannot be achieved if one spouse forces the other to do anything against their consent. The speaker of Case Study 4 also mentioned that the wife must take permission from the husband before going outside, even if anyone close to them dies. In this context, Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius, in their in-depth interview, advised that both spouses should inform one another before going out, so that the other does not get tense upon not finding his/her partner at home. But both of them agreed that this should be the same for both spouses, and in an emergency situation, it is acceptable to go outside without informing if there is no scope.

Here, following the constructional approach to meaning through representation theory, the mis-information being spread about women in *Waj Mahfil* through social media is analyzed. A qualitative content analysis of how women are represented is shown by constructing meaning through concepts and symbols with the help of representation theory. The status given to women by Islam is not properly represented in these *Waj Mahfils*. Rather, the trend of portraying women through fabricated and one-sided information of the concerned speakers has been observed in the analysis.

VII. Concluding Remarks

The first objective of the research was to find out how poorly is the status of women in Islam portrayed by the *Waj Mahfils* through social media platforms. As seen from the case studies, specially from Case Study 1 and 4, we find that women are being portrayed as dependents and objects of enjoyment by husbands. There is no evaluation of the wife's consent or her willingness. Even the movement of women is being restricted. From Case Study 2, we can see that men are being persuaded toward polygamy in different ways. Not only that, polygamy is the basis of their backbone or masculinity, it is claimed. Again, as a result of identifying feminists as 'Agents of Dajjal', hatred is being created against them in society. From Case Study 3, we see that women are being restricted or limited in their educational and career opportunities. Women's education is restricted to class four to five. Higher education for women is discouraged. Various negative comments are being made about working women. Even by comparing women with tamarinds, women are being unilaterally blamed for all the chaos and degradation of society.

The second objective of the research was to find out how some speakers deceive the audience of online platforms by fabricating religious information

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about the empowerment of women in Islam. The answer is that speakers are spreading various types of misleading information in society through *Waj Mahfil*. Sometimes, references to the Qur'ān-Hadith are used without any background discussion, and in many cases, the speaker is presenting his own fabricated speech without any proper religious reference. For example, from Case Study 1, we can see that women are compared to a grain field with a partial reference to a verse of the Holy Qur'ān. We can understand the proper explanation of those verses from the interview of Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Elius. Similarly, the speaker in Case Study 2 tried to persuade men to polygamy by referring to a verse of the Qur'ān revealed in special circumstances. Again, in support of polygamy, the figure of a 1:4 male-tofemale ratio all over the world, including Bangladesh, has no scientific basis. The evidence for this can be found in the interview with Dr. Mohammad Elius. In both Case Study 3 and Case Study 4, some fabrications are spread. At the same time, Dr. Abu Sayem and Dr. Mohammad Elius have shown with various references that Islam has given maximum freedom to women to acquire knowledge and prosper professionally. The relevant speaker in Case Study 3 said that girls can only be educated up to class four or five and can count their husband's money. In this case too, no reference to the Qur'ān or Hadith was used. Similarly, in Case Study 4, the speaker also said, without using any reference, that wives should obey husbands' orders even if it causes harm. Even if someone dies, the wife cannot go there without her husband's permission. From the point of view of Islam, no basis can be found for these sayings. So, in all the case studies, one thing is clearly visible that the speakers are deceiving the common people by partially explaining any statement of the Qur'ān or Hadith and sometimes giving fabricated statements.

The third objective of the research was to establish what Islam actually holds about these misleading and fabricated information regarding women empowerment spread by some speakers in these recorded *WajMahfils*. From all the case studies, it is evident that the speakers were only preaching their Islamic knowledge to the men, and all the instructions from Allah are obligatory for the men. But in the Al-Qur'ān, there are an equal number of verses for the Muslim men and women. So, all the other verses are equally obligatory for both male and female Muslims. In Case Study 1, there is much misleading information regarding the purpose of the creation of women, where the speaker narrated several commands for the husbands. But according to the *Quranic* verse, the purpose of human creation is to worship one Allah and this is the same for both male and female. Both the scholars, of whom I have taken the interview, opined that all the responsibilities should be divided between husband and wife, maintaining their mutual consent, and Islam treats both the partners of a conjugal relationship equally. Again, *Sura al Baqara* and *Sura Ar-Rum* do not lower the position of women in the conjugal relationship; rather these are beautiful examples of how cooperative the spouses should be in a marriage. In Case Study 2, though the speaker tried to tempt men to take more than one wife by presenting wrong statistics and by putting the strength of a man's backbone on how many wives he can take under the present condition, except for special cases, it is not permissible in Islam to take more than one wife as it does not go with the present world gender ratio and it is almost practically impossible to fulfil the condition of treating all the wives with the same feelings. In Case Study 3, the speaker declared the boundary of education for the daughters of the family, but originally there are neither any verses in the Qur'ān nor any reference in Hadith, supporting his statement. On the contrary, Hadith and the Al-Qur'ān encourage seeking knowledge for both males and females, as they are equally responsible for their own deeds. Moreover, the history of Islam totally supports women's empowerment, as there are many Muslim women who have made an incomparable and brilliant record of professionalism in the history of Islam while maintaining a fully Islamic way of life. So, this is nothing but his personal opinion, which has no connection with Islam. In Case Study 4, Islam has actually emphasized the duties and responsibilities of husband and wife towards each other. In summary, Islam has given women equal rights and dignity to men in all respects. Islam did not make women subservient to men.

Recommendation

1. It should be ensured that the speakers use references to the Qur'ān and Hadith appropriately while giving a speech. In that case, the spread of fabricated or misleading statements can be prevented a lot. The Ministry of Religion and Islamic Foundation can play a monitoring role in this regard. Even after warning, if any speaker gives misogynist, anti-state or misleading speech without proper reference to the Qur'ān-Hadith, appropriate legal action should be taken against the concerned speaker.
2. Speakers who are constantly spreading misogyny or misleading information through *Waj Mahfil* should be identified and socially boycotted.
3. Religious education should be spread among common people. As a result, common people will not be influenced by the fabricated words of any speaker in *Waj Mahfil*.
4. Awareness should be raised among common people through research and speeches of scholars of the University of Dhaka and other universities in the country about religious and moral education.

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