

# **Contribution of Women Wing of Tanzim-i-Islami Pakistan to Socio-Religious Reform**

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## ***Abstract***

*This research study has been focused upon services of women wing of Tanzim-i-Islami (TI) for the socio-religious developments in the society. The study discussed the working style and setup of TI women wing and its core duties. Financial setup of the organization also be described in the article. The study also presented a view of educational, counseling, and preaching activities of the organization and its effects on society. The study is outcome of the qualitative content analysis of document related to TI and participatory observation methodology. The study resulted that women are significant part of our society and their training and counseling affected the societal segments at large. Training of women in right way is essential for the betterment of Pakistani society and TI is working in this regard significantly. The study presented a view that women wing of TI is playing important role for the elevation of Islamic teachings and significantly performing its duties for promoting the ideology of Quran and Sunnah.*

**Keywords: Socio-religious, educational, counseling, preaching, societal segments, elevation**

## **Introduction**

Tanzim-i-Islami was organized by Dr Israr Ahmad in 1975. The basic objective of TI was to invite men for Islamic revolutionary liabilities. The philosophy of TI was *Sha'dat'lan nas* and *Iqamat-i-Din*, which was confined to men. Later on, it was felt that if the women did not take part in these activities, the training and education of their

offspring would remain incomplete in the progress of the Pakistani society.(Rahe‘tul-Jabin, 2016, p. 141) It was also realized that the women also needed *Dini* education and training in the perspective of TI philosophy, particularly those people who were the associates of TI, their women could play the significant role in this regard for building up the future of new generation.(Rahe‘tul-Jabin, 2016, p. 142)

Moreover, in 1982, Dr. Israr, the leader of TI, in an answer to a question asked by a reporter of daily Jang led to a controversy extensively covered by the media. In the interview he said that all the working women should be pensioned off. What he said about women was only a tiny part of lengthy interview but it was made the headlines.(Mintjes, 1983, p. 10) The other Women organizations demanded that his television program A-Huda should be discontinued. As a result of this protest, his program was stopped.

This statement of TI's leader triggered off a vehement debate among newspaper readers, though it was more prominent in the English dailies than in the widely circulated urdu newspapers i.e, The Daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* and The Daily *Jang*. Dr. Israr Ahmad and his supporters claim that these newspapers censored and withheld letters written in his favour. They said a malicious propaganda campaign had been started. Papers were accused of having opened a complaints cell against Israr; hardly a day passed without something written against him. Those attacking Israr held that he thoroughly enjoyed all this publicity and made it an effort to stay in the news with further controversial statements.(Mintjes, 1983, p. 8)

This illustrates what a media campaign can accomplish. The above quote shows that due to TI leader's one remark, his television program was discontinued. It stirred TI to motivate and educate the women of Pakistani society in a properly articulated and organized manner. (Ahmad, 1996, p. 109)

### **TI's Women working organization**

TI took women also on board as they make a large population and carry a history of influential social services. In 1983, a women's wing of TI was formed where nineteen women prepared a number of

diligence to the leader of TI. The *Nazima* of this wing is the wife of Israr Ahmad who herself performs the duty to spread *Da'wah* to a large number of society giving them the lessons from the *Qur'an* in the most effective way. (TI policy is that to not declare the name of women openly because women wing of the TI has separate structure. So, the names of women could not be obtained. , 2013 )Tahira Begum, the founding directress wing suggested the following points to expand its activities.

- a) The women involved with the TI should both invite their close relatives and other ladies to the message of TI, and try to get them to come to the TI meeting.
- b) Printing of special literature for the women's wing so that it would be easy to approach other women.
- c) If the women who are attached with TI want to attend the lectures, then their husband, father, or brother should cooperate with them and encourage them.
- d) The wives of members who are not interested in *Din* should be told about Islam in pleasing manners and with patience so that they would accept the teachings of Islam whole-heartedly. (Ahmad, 1996, p. 115)
- e) She takes help from the very active members (*Rafiqat*) who are her daughters and daughter in-law also. The central office of TI women wing is situated at Qur'an Academy Lahore, and the centre of Lahore. There are two distinct *usra'jat* (Circles) which are directly under the discipline of Lahore Circle. (Ahmad, 1996, p. 115) There are certain proper organizations of women located in Karachi, Islamabad and Multan, they are working properly.

Lahore circle consists of five units, Eastern, Western, Southern Central and Cantt. Under them, there are 124 sub circles (*usra'jat*). There is a local director for each sub circle and there are minimum three and maximum seven sub circles. All the programmes of all such sub units are conducted according to prescribed syllabi. In them, there are separate courses for beginners and to be members and those members who cannot participate in the meetings of sub units, after completion of the course, besides the programmes of the units, there are regular

general invitational programmes also in which there are lessons from the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. The translation and *Tajwid* and Arabic grammar classes are also conducted. In case of training courses, special stress is given and observance of *Shar'i pardah* by the members so that the member may become model of knowledge and character in the light of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. They may train their family and other close relatives (*mehrams*) in the light of Islamic principles.

There are seven units in Karachi Circle and for each there is a separate local directress. And the central director for them is the central director of the Karachi circle. She guides and supervises them all and their programmes are organized according to her advice. Here too, all the syllabi of the sub-units are completed which are done separately by beginner members. Proper recitation of the *Qur'an*, its translation and interpretation and Arabic grammar classes are also conducted regularly. There is also an organization in Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Here is a local director and she runs four sub units. Lessons are given according to prescribed syllabi. The local heads of the sub-units report directly to the centre. Members arrange the programmes according to the instruction. Reports of the individual members (*Rufqah*) are also sent to the centre.

In Multan circle, there are two sub units and one local directress. Here the programmes are organized according to the prescribed syllabi with the consultation of the director. Members arrange the programmes. The class of translation, proper recitation of *Qur'an* and Arabic grammar are conducted and their reports are sent to the centre.

Besides these four cities in Punjab, there are 16 sub-units in Sindh, North West Frontier Province (KPK) and Baluchistan whose heads are local they report directly to the centre about their activities. Their contributions are deposited in the centres. The head contacts through various channels that is fully responded by the centre. Beside the circles of sub-units, there are numerous members in the whole country that have contact with the centre and get guidance.

## Central office of women's wing

On every Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, official matters are judged. Summer courses are arranged for women during summer vacations. For them, special courses are arranged for students and women for their religious training. The monthly get-together of women on the first Saturday of regularly has been a salient feature of TI women's wing for the last 25 years. Speeches are delivered on *Dars-i-Qur'an*, *Hadith* and on different topics of current affairs. *Bait-ul-Mal* of women wing receives their contributions according to their capacity for the TI. These are further deposited in central *Bait-ul-Mal* of the organization.

## TI's Members Women Role in Society

The founder of TI has identified the duties of women like a three storey building: worship is equal duty for both males and females, and there is no difference in them. The nature of worship will differ a little for the observance of veil for women. They ought to stay contented at their homes. The second storey has been explained as *Da'wah* which means preaching and propagation of Islam. He said that for *Dars*, the first circle for females is their home.

A great burden relating to the education and training of their own children is laid on them. Furthermore, their close relatives (males) make their sphere of work where they carry on the activities of the TI according to their power, social status and opportunity. In this respect with the obligation of veil in a very organized way, their due education and training is required regularly through gathering and classes. Similarly, it is their duty to call their brothers, parents, and other male relatives for preaching and guiding to the right path.

In addition, the third stage of the building means resurrection of *Din* i.e., not to confront the enemy and struggle in the field like men. But their role is like annexure of the duties of first stage. They should become helpful for their men but also let them most of time so that they may struggle for uphold of faith, Islam and its resurrection. However, they should prepare their parents, brothers, sons, husbands, and blood relation for the spread of Islam.

Their religious duties in this third stage differ from those of men. Men have to come in the ground and work but women have to do the same work in the obligation of veil and boundary of house in a different circle. The qualities of members (females) have been targeted in section I of the working manual for females. Following are the required characteristics of *Rafiqat* (members) of TI.

- a) The first stage is of faith, obedience, fear and worship of *Allah*.
- b) Keep on struggling for knowing the depth of their faith and conviction and its steadfastness. For that they should recite mostly the *Qur'an* with comprehension and reasoning and should make it a common way for them arranging to listen to the lessons of the *Qur'an*.
- c) At times, they should meditate and peep into their own self to review their aim and ambition for *Allah* and the eternal salvation in the Hereafter.
- d) Collect their ideals, keep on refreshing the implications (*Kalma-i-Shahadat*) words of witness and their essential consequences. For that it is essential to study the pamphlet *Ta'rufTanzim* from at pages 60 to 68 times and again.
- e) Render every obligation and essential commands of *Allah* and avoid all unlawful things.
- f) Always stay alert for their programme in the religious knowledge and to participate in every programme which is arranged for their education, teaching and training by the *Tanzim*. They would try to complete their course at their earliest.
- g) The house wives should observe religious atmosphere and Islamic mode of life in their houses.
- h) According to *Shari'ah*, they should obey their husbands in their rightful deeds.
- i) Observe all the commandment of *pardah* in their life. Do not come out of premises of their houses without any religious and legal obligation.

- j) Keep their minimum expenses for their (parents, brothers, husbands or sons) to make them steadfast on their only lawful income. Also become helpful for their religious responsibilities.
- k) Completes the report book given by the *Tanzim* regularly.
- l) The second stage means call and preaching the teachings of Islam and prohibition for evil, witness to the people.
- m) The first sphere for women's preaching and advice is their own house. So, they should arrange for the religious education training, prayers and fasts for their children at home.
- n) Invite to the faith to the women of their acquaintance and blood relations men. Also introduce to them the Qur'anic knowledge and TI.
- o) Participate in the activities of the *Tanzim* with consciousness
- p) The third stage means dominance and resurrection of the path. Religious obligations for uphold of faith and its struggle is not meant for woman to do it in open ground and face the enemy there. But it is like and annex to the first stage. So, they should not only become helpful for their men but also free for them, their most of time for this way. They should not take their demands on them lest they should be caught up in them and could not work and struggle for the prevalence of faith. Especially they (females) should prepare their children for the struggle of the resurrection of the faith mentally and practically. (Nizam-ul-'mal, 2010, p. 12)

### **Classification of members (Section 3)**

Joining in the *Tanzim* will have two categories with respect to their duties. Members (*Rafiqat*) Every female member who is fully busy in her household will be called member (*Rafiqat*). *Rafiqas* such women who may get some spare time after doing their household and can do some service to teaching, learning or organizing will be called working member (*karkunrafika*)

Category wise Duties (Section 4)

### **Members' Duty**

## **Contribution of Women Wing JSS, Vol.10, No. 1 (2019)**

- a) To fulfil the requirement of the worship of *Allah* in their person in the conformation with the life of the Prophet and the life of his pure wives.
- b) To struggle for their religious knowledge passing faith and increase in the good deeds.
- c) To complete that training and preaching syllabus it is prescribed by the central circle of the women.
- d) To work for their family, known females and their blood relatives for the preaching of Islam.
- e) To organize a house sub-unit *usra* for their husband, children, father, sons and brothers through them.
- f) To unite on monthly basis for the dominance of the faith of *Allah*.
- g) Responsibilities of the Worker *Rafiqat*.
- h) As assistants to organize organizational training and preaching programmes. (Nizam-ul-‘mal, 2010, p. 15)
- i) To receive donations from members and deposit them with local units.
- j) To render teaching services in case they are appointed as teachers in some school.

## **Structure of the Organization (Section 5)**

It is the duty of head/executive of the circle to organize the structure of members, establish circles or dissolve them. The women wing will work under discipline of men's circle/local unit or region. For this, some matters should be kept in view.

- a) Contacts of males with females will only be through blood relatives. Contacts with men will not be allowed.
- b) Any record which will come before men for review or checking will name female after their sons, husbands. instead of their names the titles such as (*umm-i-name*) or wife of will be preferred
- c) Two separate forms will be issued by females' members. One form will comprise of the detailed particulars about them, which will be sent



to central circles. The other will be of brief nature which will mention only essential particulars. This form will be a record for the regional / local organization.

d) In the programmes of women, they themselves will address or deliver a lesson.

e) Guest females would only address or preach through the permission of the concerned organization only.

f) In the preaching programmes of women, they will only be allowed in case there are proper facilities for them

g) To intact a house hold circle male member will work as guides. Because, the duty of the religious education is of females and their children is there real liability. This duty of their own house has a status of basic circle for them. So, the members should manage a household circle at their house and seen it according to the prescribed syllabus and system advised by the centre.

h) Individual member: If by any way the member joining the *Tanzim* cannot organize any local circle in any area, they will be bounded as individual members. Such member will have direct contact with the central circle of females.

i) *usra'* (circle): To establish a local unit and its supervision a *Naqib* / Local head/head of circle or (*Rafiq*) will be chosen one of *Mehram* of a male member as coordinator.

j) The Grand Organizer: A (*Mehram*) capable close relative of the head of the TI will be chosen at the centre to help the head and work after the affairs of females.

k) Central Circle: Under the supervision of the grand organizer a central circle will be organized at the centre of the organization in such as circle as women will be incorporated who are scholarly capable, enjoy free time own organizational experience and sacristy time for the central office with comfort.

### **Central office bearers and their official duties (Section 6)**

- a) The central circle will devise training course, training and preaching syllabus, individual review reports and teaching courses for the female members.
- b) A duplicate record will be maintained at the central office for all female members.
- c) The grand organizer of the other member of the central circle who are (*Mehramat*) close blood relatives of the head of the *Tanzim* will visit six monthly or annually to all organized circle/local organizations. Besides participating in the gathering of members, they will study the organizational and preaching programmes and reports to the head of the *Tanzim* about their findings and render him their advice and proposals. If some matters of females cannot be settled locally then a help will be sought for the central female circle.
- d) This circle will suggest changes for the training of females according to the changing conditions with mutual consultation.
- e) If females intend to arrange some other programme there, the prescribed once they have to seek due permission from the grand organizer.
- f) The duties will be assigned to females at the centre according to the needs. Such as secretary, executive for training and executive for funds.
- g) With reference to training special correspondence courses will be edited and proposed.

### **System of sessions: Education and Training, counselling and preaching (Section 7)**

- a. Monthly training and organizational sessions on the level of a local unit (*usra*) at least one session will be held for their organization and training. In such gathering the programmes will be managed according to the central female circle.
- b. Monthly preaching session: A local monthly session will be held for each circle for preaching within the limits of local conditions. In such gathering the programmes will be observed according to the syllabus received by the central circle. (Nizam-ul-'mal, 2010, p. 17)

- c. Six months of gathering/annual session to the possible limit a six monthly/yearly session at local circle level will be held where the grand organizer or other female member may participate from the central wing
- d. Educational and teaching courses: where such females are present who can render teaching service, may arrange local level/circle level courses.

### **The financial System (Section 8)**

- a. The individual members may deposit their donation in their nearest *Tanzimi* office.
- b. The members with circles send their donations through their coordinators.
- c. The received donations after deduction of expenses will be deposited in the Bait-ul-mal of the region. (i) *Bait-ul-mal*, publication and secretary like CEC. (ii) The executives of the circles would pay their responsibilities according to the instructions of their counterpart in the centre. (iii) Internal Audit and training and training requirement would be fulfilled under the management of CEC. The CEC shall be entitled to appoint administrators of these departments at the level of local circle when needed) Circle committees according to their requirements would keep their staff according to their requirements in accordance with their payment basis.

### **Miscellaneous (Section 13)**

- a) There is no condition of any quorum and ordinary session of Executive Committee. It is enough to give notice and agenda of meeting to members at least seven to fifteen days before.
- b) Apart from the ordinary session of CEC, the head can call session any time. Similarly, one third strength of members can also give notice to call for the session. In both cases the agenda for special emergency.

### **Analysis of Progress of the TI**

TI's women wing launched one year courses in Karachi which have been very successful. Under the supervision of a teacher after getting

the Qur'anic knowledge and following a prescribed syllabus, the new and the old members got a benefit of listening and obeying the Qur'anic commandments. They developed a clear and correct view about the faith. Most of them repented over their past life of oblivion. They understand the religious obligations and resolved to follow the path suggested by *Allah* and His Prophet. A fulsome sketch of the call of *Qur'an* came before them by the teaching of selected scholars. (Nizam-ul-'mal, 2010, p. 9)

In addition analyzing the progress of *Tanzim*, *Da'ai-'mumi* said to *Nazim'mumi* by giving his real expression that the progress is neither satisfactory nor disappointing, but it is tolerable. In fact, he had decided on his behalf that it will be a tremendous achievement even if he stays linked for years for the achievement of the goal. (Ahmad I. , p. 45) Because the founder of the TI used to say that *Tanzim* is the most difficult and complicated job of the world and to him, the collective living is like a flower; the petals of which are dispersed even by a slight blow of breeze. Israr Ahmad said that a lot of hurdles occur in one's life and he has to face the attitude of others against his will, but he has to tolerate the mistakes of others. In addition, he said that it is very hard to survive for the *Tanzim* which is based upon the Islamic principles, in which there is no charm and temptation no position and designation, no activity of election, no meeting and procession, no sound of slogans and no upheaval. Who will sacrifice wealth, abilities and physical energies to live a life in which he is bound of commands of *Allah* and obligations of *Din*? (Ahmad I. , p. 47)

Practically, men; even the religious people are not committed with the duties of *Din*. In present time the obedience of devil is spread over every sphere of life that keeps the Muslims away from the fear of *Allah* and hereafter. They are ready to give up religious obligations for worldly desires even traditional religious persons consider it lawful in our society. People cannot distinguish right and wrong and they have no idea of selflessness and sacrifice. Taking bribe, submission of illegal income tax returns, planning to secure custom duty, overdraft from banks, business of interest, insurance policies and investment in these schemes is considered lawful. Religiously and constitutionally, it is not accountable to take loan for the construction of houses and

buildings from housing cooperation on interest basis. There is no awareness in people about the loss in society created by these social evils. To some extent, some people of *Tanzim-i Islami* realized it as a threat for Pakistani Muslim community and committed themselves to uproot these social evils with full determination.

They decided to get their countrymen out of this marsh and tried their best to wash out such spots from the personal life of newly joined religiously guilty and disappointed members, so that; they would become successful on the earth and get salvation in the next world. By serving *Din* this way, they will deserve forgiveness and blessing of *Allah*; and it is a very valuable success that should not be underestimated. By analyzing it deeply, Israr Ahmad came to know that some of the *rufaqa'* had experienced a great revolution in their personal lives. Their thoughts, activities and interests had been directed towards the obligations of Islam. They strictly follow *Sunnah* and have beards on their faces. Although some of them are passing through a kind of dilemma. It is obvious that if they are committed to their determination solely towards *Din*, all the problems of their lives will be resolved.

The departure of some of the members who paid no attention to work, discipline and the organization is a great shock for all, but their attitude is the real cause of their disappointment. Sometimes, he says he feels that it is his weakness that he cannot show them the right path but it inspires him to keep them intact or to impart them the same emotion which *Allah* has granted him. This is satisfactory for all of us that nobody left the *Tanzim* due to the difference between his and the viewpoint of the convener. Everyone considered it a reality but due to the difficulties of his life, he is unable to march with the organization. But the services and sympathies of all those members with MAKQ are still continued. (Ahmad I. , *Tanzim-i-Islami ka Tarikhi Pasmanzer*, 1991, pp. 41-42) "This is the blessing of *Allah* and confers upon to whom He likes and He is the greatest merciful."

No doubt, the role of a woman in a society is as important as water and fresh air to life. But it would be unjust not to acknowledge the endeavours and devoted efforts put in by the womenfolk. TI conceals

the names of those women as policy matter, which has devoted their lives for the cause of Islam.

In this chapter the work of TI is analysed in different dimensions, the purpose of organization, evolution as revivalist party and its approach, objectives, structure, role of women, their activities, strategy to understand the teachings of the *Qur'an*, their organizational structure as well as policy matter in TI.

## **Conclusion**

No culture or country significantly this world might be shaped with full support of its persons, citizens, and habitants. The women are 49.6 percent of this world and without their cooperation no world, no country furthermore the society might attain its best. TI's women members worked with men because struggle could not find desired and healthy results without active participation of women separately. At the beginning of their struggle there were trained by TI's leader through speeches and statements of learned men by seminars.

The participants often listen to Dr Israr Ahmed's cassettes. Frequently Arabic grammar courses were held for women. The first convention of women wing was held in May 1990 in which 122 women had participated in it. In June 1992 five hundred and fifty women participated in second convocation, (The total number of female associates of TI is now 640, TI's *Halqa-i-Khawatin* Lahore consists of 220)

In this way, women associates of TI were playing their important role in the promotion of Islamic teachings and social work by performing their duties in the light of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. *Da'wat* was extended to all the big cities of Pakistan. The total calculated number of women was 1931.

Though their number in different *halqahs* was not more but a change was taking place in society through their introduction and work. Because these women celebrate the marriage ceremony of their children by letting the custom of society.

Though there were opposed but they continued their mission which is still in progress in the state. If their mission remained continue in this

way, it would be hoped that the peace and normally would return to Pakistan soon.