

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF EASTERN THINKERS' TEACHINGS ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

<https://doi.org/10.2861/zenodo.19996974>

**Abduxalilov A.A**

*Doctor of Sociology (DSc) at the National University of Uzbekistan, named after  
Mirzo Ulug`bek.*

**Ubaydullayeva G.A**

*2<sup>nd</sup> course master student at the National University of Uzbekistan, named after  
Mirzo Ulug`bek, Department of social work.*

### **Abstract**

This article analyzes Eastern thinkers' perspectives on women's rights, focusing on the teachings of Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, and A. Timur. Unlike Western philosophers such as Socrates and Thales, these Eastern thinkers were among the first to recognize that women can attain spiritual maturity through education and actively participate in governance. Their works mark a significant departure from traditional views, emphasizing the potential for gender equality and women's meaningful roles in society.

### **Keywords**

Eastern philosophy, women's leadership, gender equality, social justice, spiritual maturity, governance, women's rights, Eastern thinkers.

When analyzing the topic of developing women's leadership skills, we surely face issues such as gender equality and the status of women in society. To provide gender equality and women's rights, it is essential to study the history of the development and formation of the concept of gender itself. It is well-known that this subject has long fascinated scholars and has led to the emergence of various approaches and viewpoints. For example, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta, which provides some of the earliest information about the life and traditions of Central Asian peoples, pays particular attention to the theme of women. The perspectives expressed in the Avesta were considered revolutionary for their time: women were revered as "givers of life" (mothers), granted the rights to own property and to testify in court-rights that did not exist for women in Greece at that time. Furthermore, according to the Avesta, women were not forced into marriage and had the freedom to choose their own life partners.

An examination of the writings of researchers and philosophers who have significantly contributed to science reveals perspectives that denied women's

rights, including their ability to lead and govern, and regarded them as an inferior category compared to men. “There is nothing more destructive than a woman [1],” wrote Homer. “First, that I was born a human being and not one of the brutes; next, that I was born a man and not a woman” [2] said Thales, one of the founders of philosophy. Socrates stated, “One should fear a woman’s love more than a man’s anger”. But Eastern thinkers' perspectives about women’s rights were completely different. It is well known that from the very beginning of human existence up to the present day, spiritual belief has shaped people's way of life and worldview. In Islamic history, the rights and social standing of women are determined by the holy book of the religion, the Quran. As well as by the sayings of the Prophet, known as hadiths, and by the rulings of Islamic scholars according to circumstances. Islam acknowledges that all human beings share a common origin, as stated in the Quran: “O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another” [3]. Islam declares the privileges and status of women to be balanced to maintain social stability. The concept of “Equality” does not carry the same meaning in every society, as it differs across cultures, communities, and perspectives. The Western world has regarded political, social, and economic rights as a precise standard defining complete equality between men and women as human beings. Islam, on the other hand, declares all people equal in terms of status, worth, and dignity, while assigning different responsibilities to men and women. Since responsibilities must take into account people’s different natural inclinations and abilities, Islam favors the concept of “justice” over “equality”.

In hadiths, the second most important source in Islam after the Quran, women are honored above all as mothers. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah said, “Whoever raises three daughters well and brings them up properly, Paradise will be guaranteed for him”. He also said: “Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers” [4] and “The person most deserving of your kindness is your mother [4]. From this, it follows that in Islam, women and men are spiritually equal; conversely, leadership is, in most cases, given to men. The reason being that assigning heavy and demanding responsibilities to men reduces the burdens placed on women. It should also be noted that Islam emerged in the seventh century, a time when people were mostly engaged in farming, military service, or trade - all of which required significant physical strength. As a result, a value system formed in which leadership was seen as exclusively belonging to men. Later, even as society progressed, these values remained unchanged for several centuries. The misinterpretation of Islam by some people has led to the social restriction of women and to the emergence of various harmful gender stereotypes.

As a consequence, we can conclude that women's access to education and participation in political life has been limited in certain Eastern countries.

Abu Nasr Farabi, in his work "A Perfect State", spoke about building an ideal society. He emphasized that in a virtuous city, women, just like men, can achieve moral excellence and should strive for it. When listing the twelve most important qualities of a leader, Farabi placed particular importance not on physical strength, but on intellect, justice, and wise counsel [5]. He did not divide reason by gender, but believed that women and men perform different roles in the family according to their responsibilities. Farabi was the first thinker in the East to write that if a woman possesses all the qualities of a leader, she can become one. These were truly revolutionary ideas for the 9th and 10th centuries. Farabi also completely rejected Aristotle's claim that women are naturally weaker in intellect.

The great thinker, philosopher, and founder of medicine, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, left behind an extraordinary scientific legacy and held very progressive views on women. Like Farabi, he entirely rejected Aristotle's idea that women are intellectually inferior. In addition, Ibn Sina showed special concern for girls' education. In his work "Kitab al-Shifa, he wrote": "Women share with men the same human essence and the same rational faculty that makes a person human. They differ from men in only two respects: the maturity of bodily organs and physical strength, and the fact that nature has given men an active generative force and women a receptive one. If women are given the same upbringing and education as men, they will become partners with men in science, virtue, and the governance of cities and states, and in some cases may even surpass them, if their nature is finer and purer" [5]. From this, it is clear that Ibn Sina highly valued not only women's intellectual potential but also their leadership abilities. Notably, he specifically highlighted that these depend on social environment, upbringing, and education.

The views of Amir Timur, 1336–1405, the founder of the Timurid state, a great military commander and statesman, who is relevant to all eras. Amir Timur, while placing special importance on the development of science and learning in his time, also held women's intellectual abilities in high regard. In the "Timur Tuzuklari" of Timur, women are described as follows: "Women must be respected and honored, for they are the educators of future generations and the blessing of the household" [6]. Furthermore: "Anyone who violates a woman's rights shall be punished, for a woman's honor must be protected". Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi also wrote in his work "Zafarnama": "Saroymul Khanim was always Timur's close advisor, and many listened to her opinion" [6]. "Scientific research shows that Saraymul Khanim held councils with amirs and ministers, conducted negotiations with foreign politicians,

and continued to hold an influential position in state affairs even after Timur's death".

Examining this topic could lead us to the following conclusions: First of all, women's role in society has been one of the most debated questions throughout human history, like the leadership phenomenon. The fact that leadership has historically been a male domain may partly reflect the physical realities of earlier eras. Because men were primarily hunters and warriors, and education was a privilege few could access, let alone women. However, even within that context, great thinkers like Farabi and Ibn Sina held women's intellectual capacity in high regard. They believed that with access to education, women were fully capable of reaching the same moral and intellectual heights as men. This brings us to one of the foundational principles of gender equality and balanced leadership, the creation of genuinely equal opportunities for both men and women. Farabi argued that any woman who possesses the qualities of a leader should, in fact, be one. Equal opportunity is not merely a political ideal; it is the very condition that allows women to discover and express their full potential.

Moreover, as societies grew more complex, cities expanded, institutions shaped, and so ways of living transformed. As a result, the demand for women's participation across all sectors of life naturally increased. Their growing presence in diverse fields deepened their role in society and, in turn, brought the concept of gender as a social construction into serious academic discussion. From there, various theoretical frameworks emerged to make sense of it. Gender equality thus moved beyond the walls of universities and research centers, becoming a lived concern that shapes public policy and social values.

A third: For women to perform a role as leaders, they constantly require support at every stage, from national institutions down to the family home. There is one more dimension worth naming directly: our world has endured two world wars and countless military conflicts, but the overwhelming majority of those were set in motion by men. Women in leadership are not just a matter of fairness. They are essential for building a more peaceful world and ensuring that the voices shaping our future are genuinely diverse.

#### REFERENCES:

- 1.Homer. (1996). *The Odyssey* (R. Fagles, Trans.). Viking Penguin.
- 2.Diogenes Laërtius. (1925). *Lives of eminent philosophers* (R. D. Hicks, Trans., Vol. 1, Book I, §33). Harvard University Press.

3. Quran. (2004). The Quran (M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Trans.). Oxford University Press. Surah Al-Hujurat Sunan al-Kubra lil-Nasa'i, 6/131, hadith 9131, Bukhari, 597; Muslim, 2548.

4. Al-Fārābī, A. N. (1985). Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila [Al-Farabi on the perfect state] (R. Walzer, Trans.). Clarendon Press

5. Ibn Sina, A. A. (2005). Kitab al-Shifa [The book of healing] (M. Marmura, Trans.). Brigham Young University Press.

6. Timur. (1783). Institutes political and military (W. Davy, Trans.). Oxford University  
González de Clavijo, R. (1928). Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403–1406 (G. Le Strange, Trans.). George Routledge & Sons