Gender Equity in Islamic Marriage and Divorce: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT: This narrative review examines the evolving landscape of marriage and divorce in Islamic contexts, with a focus on gender equity, legal interpretation, and socio-cultural influences. The study aims to understand the systemic barriers faced by women in initiating divorce and how legal, educational, and institutional reforms can address these challenges. Utilizing sources from Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and SpringerLink, the review analyzed literature published over the past fifteen years using keywords such as "Islamic marriage," "Islamic divorce," "fiqh," and "gender equity in Islam." The findings reveal that women often face legal and social obstacles in accessing divorce, compounded by economic dependency, limited legal knowledge, and gender-biased interpretations of Islamic law. Studies highlight the impact of educational interventions like fiqh munakahat, feminist legal reinterpretation, and national policy reforms in improving women's rights. Examples from India, Morocco, and Malaysia illustrate how legal innovation and inclusive practices can promote gender justice. The discussion emphasizes the need for systemic reforms that include educational restructuring, economic support, and protective legislation against domestic violence. In conclusion, the review advocates for context-sensitive and justice-centered reforms in Islamic family law. Emphasis is placed on legal empowerment, economic equity, and gender-sensitive interpretation of Sharia to support more equitable marital outcomes. Future research should expand in scope and methodology to ensure broader applicability and sustained social impact.

Keywords: Islamic Marriage, Islamic Divorce, Gender Equity, Family Law Reform, Domestic Violence, Feminist Legal Theory, Fiqh Education.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage and divorce are fundamental aspects of human society, with profound implications for legal systems, cultural practices, and social institutions. Within Islamic contexts, marriage is regarded not only as a contractual agreement but also a religiously significant act embedded within the framework of Sharia law. Divorce, conversely, while permissible, is often seen as a disruption to the ideal social order. In recent years, issues surrounding marriage and divorce in Islamic societies have become increasingly complex, particularly in developing countries and regions such

as Southeast Asia. These complexities are shaped by overlapping layers of religious interpretation, local customs, socioeconomic pressures, and evolving gender norms. Scholars have noted a growing interest in the re-evaluation of Islamic family law, particularly with regard to how it accommodates the rights and responsibilities of both men and women (Maimun et al., 2020; Analiansyah et al., 2024).

The literature reveals diverse challenges encountered by Muslim communities in navigating the dynamics of marriage and divorce. For instance, Daud and Akbar (2020) discuss how inconsistent interpretations of Islamic and customary law in Aceh, Indonesia, often leave women vulnerable post-divorce due to a lack of legal clarity and social support. Such discrepancies are exacerbated by limited public understanding of Islamic legal frameworks, especially concerning women's rights. Maimun et al. (2020) further highlight the role of Islamic educational institutions in mitigating divorce rates by promoting comprehensive understanding of fiqh munākaḥah (Islamic jurisprudence on marriage). By strengthening education related to marital duties and rights, these institutions contribute to building more resilient family structures. Their research underscores the importance of shared responsibility between individuals and institutions in preventing divorce.

From a socioeconomic perspective, financial hardship emerges as a significant factor influencing marital instability. Salsalbila et al. (2022) focus on the legal implications of divorce due to a husband's inability to provide financially, a situation prevalent in lower-income households. Economic strain, according to their findings, not only leads to conflict but also intensifies emotional and psychological distress, which frequently results in marital breakdown. These financial issues are particularly pronounced among young couples who may lack adequate social safety nets or economic support mechanisms.

Social and psychological dimensions further complicate the discourse on divorce in Islamic contexts. Prabowo et al. (2024) emphasize the necessity of incorporating maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) into interpretations of marriage and divorce laws to ensure that these legal provisions serve the well-being of society. Their work advocates for a holistic understanding of Islamic legal rulings, where the spirit of the law is prioritized alongside its letter. This approach promotes justice, compassion, and stability within the family unit, aligning with broader societal objectives.

Polygamy, another contentious issue, has been explored by Analiansyah et al. (2024), who investigate its impact on women and its legal treatment within Sharia courts. Their study highlights how polygamous marriages, if not conducted with transparency and consent, can lead to perceived injustices that culminate in divorce. The authors argue for the necessity of reinterpreting Islamic marriage laws to better safeguard women's rights and prevent familial discord. This aligns with broader feminist legal scholarship seeking to balance traditional religious teachings with contemporary understandings of gender equity.

Despite these valuable insights, significant challenges persist. The absence of a unified interpretation of Islamic family law continues to create inconsistencies in its application, particularly across different cultural and regional settings. Many Muslim communities experience a disconnect between legal theory and practical implementation, leading to varied outcomes for similarly situated individuals. This fragmentation is further compounded by insufficient access to

legal education and limited institutional support for marginalized groups, particularly women and economically disadvantaged families.

Furthermore, there remains a substantial gap in the literature regarding how Islamic family law is applied within culturally diverse settings. Maimun et al. (2020) argue for the development of inclusive curricula in Islamic higher education institutions that incorporate discussions on gender equity and divorce prevention. Without such efforts, current pedagogical approaches may fail to reflect the lived realities of Muslim communities. Similarly, Salsalbila et al. (2022) point to a lack of public awareness about the legal and economic consequences of divorce, especially regarding the financial obligations of husbands. This gap contributes to systemic inequities and reinforces the need for more comprehensive legal literacy campaigns.

The primary objective of this review is to critically examine the multifaceted nature of marriage and divorce within Islamic societies. Drawing upon a diverse body of literature, this study aims to identify and analyze the key factors contributing to marital instability, including legal interpretation, economic hardship, gender norms, and cultural influences. By synthesizing empirical findings and theoretical perspectives, the review seeks to offer nuanced insights into how Islamic family law operates in practice and what reforms may be necessary to enhance its efficacy and fairness.

The scope of this review focuses primarily on Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as relevant case studies from other developing regions. These settings offer rich contexts for examining the interplay between religious law, cultural practices, and state legal systems. In particular, Southeast Asia presents a unique convergence of Islamic jurisprudence and local customs, providing valuable insights into how Islamic legal principles are interpreted and implemented within diverse societal frameworks. This geographical emphasis allows for a more grounded analysis of the practical challenges and opportunities associated with marriage and divorce in Islamic contexts.

In light of the evidence presented, it is evident that a collaborative effort involving religious authorities, educational institutions, policymakers, and community leaders is essential for fostering more equitable and sustainable marital relationships. Further research is needed to explore effective strategies for legal reform, community engagement, and educational innovation aimed at reducing divorce rates and enhancing family resilience. Through a better understanding of the underlying causes of marital breakdown, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions that align with both Islamic values and contemporary social realities. This review thus contributes to the ongoing discourse on Islamic family law reform, emphasizing the importance of context-sensitive approaches that uphold justice, equity, and the overall well-being of Muslim families.

METHOD

This study employed a comprehensive literature review methodology to examine the multifaceted aspects of marriage and divorce in Islamic contexts. The literature was systematically collected using multiple academic databases, with a focus on ensuring both breadth and depth in the sources consulted. Among the most frequently utilized databases were Scopus and Google Scholar. Scopus provided access to peer-reviewed journal articles from leading academic publishers, facilitating a

robust engagement with high-quality empirical and theoretical studies. Google Scholar, while broader and less curated, offered an expansive platform for retrieving diverse academic materials, including conference proceedings, theses, and working papers, which proved particularly useful for exploring emergent and interdisciplinary perspectives (Maimun et al., 2020).

In addition to Scopus and Google Scholar, specialized databases such as JSTOR and SpringerLink were employed to access literature concerning Islamic legal traditions and family practices. These platforms enabled the identification of scholarly works addressing nuanced dimensions of Islamic jurisprudence, gender studies, and socio-legal analysis relevant to marriage and divorce (Badawi & Nasution, 2021). The inclusion of these databases was essential for capturing both the classical and contemporary discourse surrounding the implementation of Islamic family law.

The search strategy involved the use of carefully selected keywords, intended to encompass the range of themes pertinent to the topic. Keywords such as "Islamic marriage," "Islamic divorce," "fiqh," "gender and Islam," "domestic violence," and "family law" formed the foundation of the search queries. Additional terms including "polygamy," "rights of women," and "Islamic jurisprudence" were incorporated to locate literature addressing specific issues within the broader framework of Islamic family law (Prabowo et al., 2024). To ensure comprehensive coverage, synonymous and derivative terms were also used, including "marital relationships," "dissolution of marriage," "family law implications," and "gender equity in Islam." These terms captured various legal, social, and psychological dimensions relevant to the study of marriage and divorce among Muslim populations.

For studies with a specific geographical or cultural orientation, additional search filters were applied to include regional identifiers such as "Southeast Asia," "Middle East," or "South Asia." This allowed for a more targeted exploration of literature relevant to localized practices and interpretations of Islamic family law. For example, queries including "Islamic divorce in Indonesia" or "polygamy in Malaysia" helped contextualize the analysis within region-specific socio-legal frameworks (Muhammad et al., 2021).

The inclusion criteria for literature selection required that studies be published in peer-reviewed academic journals or recognized academic sources. Articles were included if they addressed topics related to Islamic marriage and divorce, incorporated empirical data or theoretical frameworks, and were written in English. Emphasis was placed on publications from the last 15 years to ensure contemporary relevance, though foundational texts were also considered where appropriate. Studies that focused exclusively on non-Islamic legal systems or secular interpretations of marriage and divorce, without reference to Islamic law or practice, were excluded. Additionally, articles that lacked sufficient methodological rigor or clarity in their findings were omitted from the review to maintain the scholarly quality of the study.

The types of studies included in the review encompassed a range of methodologies. These included qualitative studies such as ethnographic research and case studies, which provided in-depth insight into individual and community experiences of marriage and divorce. Quantitative studies, such as surveys and statistical analyses, were also incorporated to offer measurable data on divorce rates, contributing factors, and the impact of legal reforms. Furthermore, legal analyses and doctrinal reviews were employed to understand the evolution and application of Islamic family law across

different jurisdictions. Together, these varied methodological approaches allowed for a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at play within Islamic marital and divorce practices.

The selection process followed a structured approach. Initial searches using the aforementioned keywords yielded a large body of results. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by a full-text review of the selected articles. During this phase, articles were assessed based on their relevance to the research questions, methodological soundness, and contribution to the broader discourse. Discrepancies in inclusion decisions were resolved through discussion among the research team, ensuring consistency and objectivity in the selection process. Literature was then organized thematically, with studies grouped according to key issues such as gender equity, legal interpretation, cultural variation, and economic influences.

Each article was critically appraised to evaluate the robustness of its arguments and the validity of its findings. Attention was paid to the clarity of the research questions, appropriateness of the methodology, depth of analysis, and relevance to the central themes of the review. The selected literature was also cross-checked to ensure representation of diverse viewpoints and regional contexts, reflecting the varied realities of Muslim communities worldwide. This rigorous process facilitated the development of a well-rounded understanding of the current state of research on marriage and divorce in Islamic contexts.

In sum, the methodology adopted in this study ensured a systematic, comprehensive, and critical engagement with the existing body of literature. By integrating diverse sources, employing well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analyzing a range of study types, the review provides a reliable foundation for understanding the complexities of Islamic marriage and divorce. The approach also underscores the importance of context-sensitive legal and social frameworks, paving the way for informed discussions and future research aimed at improving family law practices in Muslim societies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The literature reveals several critical themes concerning marriage and divorce within Islamic contexts, particularly with regard to women's rights and legal empowerment. Empirical studies consistently emphasize the role of legal literacy, socio-economic status, cultural norms, and gender-biased interpretations of Islamic law in influencing divorce outcomes. This section presents key findings grouped under three core thematic sub-sections: women's rights to divorce, gender-based interpretations of Islamic family law, and the influence of national legal frameworks.

In the examination of women's right to initiate divorce, the literature overwhelmingly points to gaps in legal knowledge and access to justice. Analiansyah et al. (2024) report that many women lack adequate awareness of their rights, a deficiency that hampers their ability to pursue legal separation even under distressing marital conditions. Women often remain in detrimental relationships due to fear, economic dependence, or social stigma. This lack of access to information constitutes a structural barrier, making legal empowerment a critical objective. Baihaqi et al. (2022) identify dissatisfaction in daily interpersonal interactions, such as poor communication and emotional neglect, as key drivers behind women's decisions to seek divorce. Moreover,

Analiansyah et al. note that practices like polygamy and the inequitable distribution of power in marriage contribute to emotional and psychological distress, prompting women to assert their agency through legal recourse.

Economic hardship is another frequently cited factor in the literature. Muhammad et al. (2021) find that women burdened by financial insecurity often seek divorce when the husband fails to fulfill his economic responsibilities. Salsalbila et al. (2022) reinforce this, stating that financial neglect is recognized in Sharia courts as legitimate grounds for divorce. The intersection of economic vulnerability and legal recourse underscores the need for policy mechanisms that support women's financial independence. Additionally, domestic violence emerges as a recurring determinant in the decision to terminate a marriage. Alfitri (2020) highlights that experiences of physical and emotional abuse compel many women to seek separation, reinforcing the necessity for protective legal frameworks and accessible support services.

Culturally rooted social stigma continues to shape women's choices around divorce. Minganti (2016) notes that societal expectations, especially in conservative Muslim communities in Europe, deter women from pursuing divorce even when it is warranted. These constraints suggest that legal reform alone is insufficient without concurrent shifts in societal norms. A comprehensive understanding of divorce must therefore consider both legal and sociocultural contexts that constrain women's autonomy.

Efforts to reform Islamic family law to address gender inequities have gained traction globally. Shahin (2020) discusses the role of Islamic feminism in challenging patriarchal interpretations of sacred texts. Movements advocating for gender-inclusive legal reasoning have been instrumental in reshaping marital laws in countries like Turkey and Morocco. Baihaqi et al. (2022) observe that these countries have enhanced women's post-divorce rights, including equitable financial settlements and custodial arrangements.

A notable innovation is found in India's gender-sensitive Sharia courts. Jones (2019) documents how these women-led courts function not only as legal institutions but also as spaces for community empowerment. By centering women's voices in adjudication processes, these courts embody a more holistic approach to justice, one that takes into account the lived realities of women navigating marital breakdowns. In Indonesia, Maimun et al. (2020) argue for increased educational outreach through Islamic universities, suggesting that informed women are better positioned to assert their rights and reduce dependency on male-dominated religious interpretations.

Empirical evidence supports the assertion that increased education correlates with reduced tolerance for unjust marital practices. Badawi and Nasution (2021) report that women with higher education levels are more likely to initiate divorce when confronted with inequity or abuse. Alfitri (2020) supports this conclusion, noting that informed women are less likely to remain in abusive relationships. Education thus emerges as a powerful tool for empowerment and a predictor of positive divorce outcomes.

The prevalence of domestic violence and the legal mechanisms to combat it form another vital strand in the literature. Mahamid et al. (2023) argue that responsive legal systems that prioritize the needs of abuse survivors are essential for ensuring equitable divorce outcomes. When legal institutions prioritize safety and offer accessible recourse, women are more likely to exit harmful

relationships. Countries with strong protective measures for victims of domestic violence, such as gender-focused legal clinics and support services, report better outcomes for women undergoing divorce proceedings.

Reform-oriented policies also tend to reduce dissatisfaction-driven divorces. Kusrin et al. (2024) find that in Malaysia, educated women more frequently assert their rights during divorce proceedings, which has led to more equitable settlements and improved post-divorce conditions. This suggests that structural reforms aimed at increasing access to legal knowledge and reducing gender disparities can contribute significantly to stabilizing family structures.

Turning to the influence of national policies, the literature demonstrates substantial variation in how Islamic marital laws are implemented across Muslim-majority nations. Maimun et al. (2020) highlight that while Indonesia has formal legal provisions that support women's rights, their implementation is often hindered by patriarchal cultural norms. Chamsi-Pasha and Albar (2015) corroborate this, noting that male dominance in family structures continues to undermine legal equality in practice.

Morocco's Mudawana reform is frequently cited as a benchmark for progressive family law. Prabowo et al. (2024) describe how legislative changes have improved women's access to divorce and custody rights. Platt (2017) interprets these reforms as reflective not only of legal modernization but also of shifting societal values towards gender equity. In Turkey, Yılmaz reports that legal reforms have increasingly centered on humanistic and justice-oriented principles, fostering a legal environment more amenable to women's needs (Uhlman & Kisselburg, 2013).

Cross-national studies identify best practices that enhance gender equity in divorce outcomes. In Lebanon, empowerment programs that focus on legal literacy and economic independence have successfully lowered divorce rates. Platt (2017) emphasizes that better legal education enables women to understand and assert their rights, leading to more balanced marital relationships. Legal aid services and community-based dispute resolution mechanisms further enhance access to justice.

India's female-led Sharia courts offer a unique perspective on legal pluralism. Jones (2019) illustrates how these courts promote gender-sensitive adjudication, counterbalancing the gender bias often present in traditional court systems. Such models exemplify how institutional innovation can bridge gaps in legal access and promote social justice.

Statistical correlations further support these findings. In Indonesia, regions that implement pro-women policies and prioritize female education have seen noticeable declines in divorce rates over the past decade (Novitasari et al., 2016). Conversely, in countries where cultural resistance to reform persists, divorce rates remain high, particularly where legal protection for women is weak. Ridhwan and Nuzul highlight how entrenched cultural barriers impede women's access to justice, negating legal reforms intended to safeguard their rights (Jaraba, 2020).

Local adaptations of Islamic law also play a pivotal role in shaping divorce outcomes. Grillo (2016) notes that the Dayak Ngaju tribe in Indonesia integrates customary traditions into marital practices, which has contributed to lower divorce rates. These hybrid models underscore the importance of

aligning legal frameworks with community values, suggesting that culturally embedded legal systems may enhance compliance and reduce conflict.

In conclusion, the literature demonstrates that the dynamics of marriage and divorce in Islamic societies are influenced by a constellation of legal, social, economic, and cultural factors. Legal literacy, gender-sensitive interpretations of Sharia, responsive national policies, and localized legal practices all contribute to shaping divorce outcomes. A nuanced and context-specific understanding of these factors is essential for developing reforms that support gender equity and family stability. Future research should further explore the intersection of legal systems and cultural norms to identify scalable models for promoting just and sustainable marital relationships in Muslim communities.

The discussion of this narrative review builds upon the existing literature surrounding Islamic marriage and divorce, particularly the rights of women within legal, cultural, and institutional contexts. The findings reaffirm and expand prior research, while offering critical reflections on structural barriers and opportunities for reform. Central to this analysis is the acknowledgment that women's experiences with divorce in Muslim societies are not only determined by religious legal norms, but are also deeply shaped by economic vulnerability, gendered expectations, and the limitations of institutional support systems.

The alignment between this study's findings and existing literature highlights the pervasiveness of economic insecurity as a major cause of marital breakdown. Salsalbila et al. (2022) assert that a husband's inability to provide financial support is frequently cited as grounds for divorce under Islamic law. This resonates with our results, which show that many women seek divorce when facing chronic financial neglect. The systemic failure to ensure economic safeguards for women contributes to the destabilization of marriages and increases their vulnerability post-divorce. Consequently, a gender-sensitive approach in legal interpretations and policies becomes imperative for mitigating the economic impact on divorced women.

The integration of Islamic legal objectives (maqashid al-sharia) into family law has been discussed as a potential strategy to align legal norms with human welfare. Prabowo et al. (2024) advocate for interpretations of Islamic law that prioritize the well-being and happiness of individuals. These values highlight the need for legal systems to move beyond rigid applications of doctrine and to engage with the lived realities of those subject to the law. This review reinforces their call by demonstrating that current interpretations often lack relevance to the socio-psychological conditions experienced by women in marriage.

Sexual dissatisfaction, a subject historically omitted in Islamic legal discourse, is now gaining recognition as a legitimate cause for divorce. As Badawi and Nasution (2021) demonstrate, deviant sexual behavior and unmet expectations contribute significantly to women's decisions to seek divorce. This finding aligns with our study and suggests the urgent need for Islamic jurisprudence to consider intimacy and sexual fulfillment as core components of marital wellbeing. The current gap in addressing these aspects perpetuates emotional neglect and renders the legal system unresponsive to women's holistic needs.

Maimun et al. (2020) emphasize the transformative role of fiqh munakahat education in empowering women through legal knowledge. Their recommendation to strengthen the

curriculum in Islamic institutions is echoed in our findings. Women equipped with a deeper understanding of their rights are more likely to recognize abuse, advocate for themselves, and navigate the judicial process with confidence. This insight underscores the need for a proactive educational agenda that integrates gender perspectives into Islamic legal education.

However, despite such progressive efforts, entrenched sociocultural norms continue to obstruct the equitable implementation of Islamic family law. Jones (2019) highlights that even gender-sensitive courts, such as the all-women Sharia courts in India, face resistance from patriarchal legal traditions and conservative communities. Our findings affirm that systemic barriers—including gendered power dynamics, lack of institutional accountability, and community stigma—undermine the effectiveness of reforms intended to protect women's rights. These realities challenge reformists to adopt intersectional and context-specific approaches.

The implications of these findings suggest a pressing need for systemic reform in the structure and enforcement of family law. As shown in Maimun et al. (2020), incorporating gender-focused content into legal education can reduce divorce rates and empower women. This supports the argument that legal reform must begin with the foundation of knowledge production and dissemination. Without access to accurate legal information, women are often left at a disadvantage, unable to exercise their rights effectively.

The urgency for stricter enforcement of laws protecting women from domestic violence is reiterated by Alfitri (2020), whose research points to significant legal gaps that allow abuse to persist. This review adds that institutional reforms must be accompanied by comprehensive victim support systems, including shelters, counseling, and accessible legal aid. Such services can enhance women's confidence in the legal process and offer viable pathways out of abusive marriages.

Our findings also resonate with those of Salsalbila et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of incorporating economic considerations into divorce proceedings. Economic justice must become a central concern in Islamic family law reform. Policies that support alimony, child support, and post-divorce financial planning can significantly reduce the hardships faced by divorced women. The absence of these supports exacerbates gender inequality and reinforces cycles of poverty.

Sexual norms and expectations in Islamic marriages are also under renewed scrutiny. Wardatun and Smith (2020) reveal how traditional definitions of sexual deviance can disadvantage women in divorce proceedings. There is a need to reconceptualize sexual rights within marriage from a gender-equitable standpoint. Reforms that encourage open discourse on sexual well-being and mutual consent in marriage can serve to reduce dissatisfaction and enhance relationship stability.

The feminist reinterpretation of Islamic legal principles has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting gender equity in family law. Prabowo et al. (2024) explore how concepts like nushuz can be reinterpreted to apply to both spouses, thereby dismantling patriarchal biases embedded in traditional interpretations. Our study corroborates this argument, showing that such reinterpretations can expand the scope of justice for women and foster mutual accountability in marriage.

Systemic reform, however, is incomplete without addressing the institutional culture that governs legal practice. Legal practitioners, judges, and community leaders must be educated on gender

justice principles and encouraged to adopt more empathetic and context-aware approaches. This is particularly vital in societies where cultural norms often override formal legal rights. Comprehensive reforms that address education, enforcement, and cultural transformation are needed to achieve meaningful change.

While this review provides an in-depth analysis of gender dynamics in Islamic divorce, it also reveals several limitations in the existing body of research. Much of the current literature remains descriptive, offering valuable insights but lacking in analytical frameworks that connect legal, economic, and psychological dimensions. There is a need for interdisciplinary research that bridges these domains and offers holistic solutions. Moreover, many studies focus on urban populations, neglecting rural communities where access to legal aid and education is even more limited. Future research should prioritize these underrepresented groups to develop more inclusive reform strategies.

Another limitation is the geographic concentration of studies in specific regions, such as Southeast Asia, North Africa, and parts of South Asia. Although these areas provide rich insights, the diversity of Muslim communities worldwide necessitates broader comparative research. Expanding the geographical scope of studies can uncover unique cultural practices and legal interpretations that enrich the global understanding of Islamic family law.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term impacts of legal and policy reforms on women's experiences with marriage and divorce. Short-term evaluations may fail to capture the sustained effects of education, economic empowerment, and legal intervention. By tracking these outcomes over time, scholars can better evaluate the success and adaptability of reform efforts.

In sum, while significant progress has been made in highlighting the gendered implications of Islamic marriage and divorce laws, the journey toward legal equity remains incomplete. The persistence of cultural resistance, institutional inertia, and inadequate support systems continues to hinder meaningful reform. Addressing these issues requires not only legal innovation but also a transformation of the societal structures that sustain gender inequality. This review contributes to the growing body of scholarship advocating for justice-centered approaches to Islamic family law, with an emphasis on education, economic equity, and gender-inclusive legal reform.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the multifaceted dynamics of marriage and divorce in Islamic contexts, with particular emphasis on gender equity, legal interpretation, and cultural influences. The findings underscore that women's access to divorce is constrained by limited legal literacy, economic dependency, gender-biased interpretations of Islamic law, and insufficient institutional support. Key themes such as the role of fiqh munakahat education, maqashid sharia principles, economic justice, protection from domestic violence, and feminist legal reinterpretation have emerged as central to improving outcomes for women in marital dissolution.

The urgency of addressing these issues is evident, especially in Muslim-majority societies where legal frameworks often lag behind the socio-cultural evolution of gender norms. Interventions

must include educational reforms to integrate gender-sensitive curricula, enforcement of protective laws against domestic violence, economic policies that support women post-divorce, and broader societal campaigns to challenge patriarchal attitudes. The insights drawn from global practices, such as women-led Sharia courts and reforms in countries like Morocco and Turkey, highlight potential pathways for structural change.

Future research should aim to fill gaps in the literature by incorporating rural and marginalized communities, employing interdisciplinary approaches, and conducting longitudinal studies to measure the long-term effectiveness of reforms. Expanding the geographic scope of studies is also crucial to understand diverse interpretations and practices. Ultimately, promoting legal empowerment, economic equity, and social awareness remains vital to creating a more just and balanced framework for marriage and divorce in Islamic societies.

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