



Entry of Women in Masjids

For Prelims: Right to Equality, Islamic Laws on Ban on Women's Entry

For Mains: Legal Issue in Ban on Entry of Women, Right to Equality

Why in News?

Recently, the **Jama Masjid in Delhi** prohibited the **entry of single women or women in groups** inside the mosque premises and withdrew after the intervention of Lieutenant-Governor.

- The authorities reasoned that **some women fail to respect the sanctity of the place of worship**, making videos etc.

What is the Islamic Law on Women's Entry?

- **Islamic Law:**
 - The Quran, **at no place prohibits women** from going to mosques for prayers.
 - Wherever the Quran talks of establishing prayer, **it talks in gender neutral terms**.
 - Before the five daily prayers, a prayer call or azaan is pronounced.
 - The azaan is a **general invitation to both men and women for prayers**, reminding the faithful, 'Come for prayer, come for success'.
- **Global Scenario:**
 - Across West Asia, there is **no ban on women coming to the masjid for prayers**.
 - In the U.S. and Canada too, women access mosques for prayers, and even **gather there for special Taraweeh prayers in Ramzan** and lessons on religion.
- **National Scenario:**
 - In India, **only a handful of mosques** maintained or owned by Jamaat-e-Islami and the Ahl-e-Hadith sect have **provisions for women worshippers**.
 - Most mosques, while **not expressly forbidding women's entry in masjids**, have **no provision for women** to do ablutions for prayer or a separate prayer zone for them.
 - They are **built keeping only men in mind**.
 - Under the circumstances, they are reduced to a **'men only' zone**.
- **Opinion of Scholars:**
 - Most Islamic scholars agree that **a prayer can be offered at home** but **can only be established in a group**, hence the importance of going to a mosque.
 - Most also agree that **women have been exempted**, not prohibited from going to the mosque, keeping in mind **their child-rearing and other domestic responsibilities**.

What is the Legal Issue behind the Ban?

- According to the [Constitution of India](#), there is **complete equality between men and women**.
- In the **Haji Ali Dargah case** too, the High Court quoted [Articles 15](#), [Article 16](#) and [Article 25](#) of the Constitution to grant **women the desired access to the dargah**.

- There are petitions filed before the [Supreme Court](#) wherein access has been sought for women in all mosques across the country.
 - The apex court has clubbed them with the [Sabarimala case](#).

Have there been Similar Bans Before?

- Back in 2011, a **grill was put up** on the premises of the vastly popular 15th century dargah, Haji Ali Dargah in Mumbai, **prohibiting women from going beyond it**.
 - Following this, some **women approached the dargah management** for redress.
 - However, with the requests having been denied, they started a campaign, '**Haji Ali for All**', winning over more women in the process.
 - Led by the **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan**, the women approached the **Bombay High Court** which **ruled in their favour in 2016**.

[Source: TH](#)

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