

## **British Female Muslim Converts: An Investigation into Their De-Conversions from Islam**

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**Abstract :** This study, which is based on a qualitative study sample of thirty-four British converts from different ages, ethnicities, social classes, areas and religious backgrounds in London, investigates the common challenges, problems and abuse in the name of Islam that many British female Muslim converts experienced during their time as Muslims, which caused them to leave the faith. It is an important study, as it creates an awareness of the weaknesses found in western Muslim societies and in various Islamic educational programs that causes people to leave Islam and contribute towards its negative reputation in the media. The women in this study shared common problems regarding gender and racial discrimination, identity development, feminism, marriage, parenting, Muslim culture, isolation, extremism, belonging and practising Islam in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies with differing sacrifices and consequences that caused them to de-convert. The study argues that many of the personal, religious and social problems female Muslim converts experience are due to a lack of knowledge about Islam and their rights as Muslim women, which often results in them being vulnerable and influenced by the opinions, attitudes and actions of uneducated, abusive, non-practising and extremist Muslims. For example, it was found that young female converts in particular were often taken advantage of and manipulated into believing that many negative actions displayed by patriarchal Muslim husbands were a part of Islam. This created much confusion, especially when their husbands used specific Quran texts and Hadiths to justify their abuse, authority and attitudes that made them miserable. As a result and based on the positive experiences of some converts, the study found that obtaining a broad Islamic education that started with an intimate study of the Prophet Muhammad's biography alongside being guided by the teachings of western Muslim scholars contributed greatly towards a more enjoyable conversion journey, as women were able to identify and avoid problematic Muslims and abuse in the name of Islam. This in turn helped to create a healthier family unit and Muslim society. Those who enjoyed being Muslims were able to create a balanced western Muslim identity by negotiating and applying their own morals and western values to their understanding of The Prophet's biography and The Quran and integrated Islamic values into their own secular western environments that were free from foreign cultural practices. The outcomes of the study also highlight some effective modern approaches to da'wah based on the teachings of The Prophet Mohammad and other prophets for young Arab and Asian Muslims who marry, study and live among non-Muslims and converts.

**Keywords :** abuse, apostasy, converts, Muslims

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