[**Hijab or Job - Picture of Ka'abah in Mosque**](http://syedabdullahtariq.blogspot.com/2012/06/hijab-or-job-picture-of-kaabah-in.html)

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**Q. I have a problem which I would like to tell you. I am a graduate in the field of commerce. I wear hijab and due to which I am finding it very difficult to get jobs. As a result I idle away time which is leading to frustration. Sometimes I feel it is not fair for the companies to reject us outright because they should judge us on our performance rather than our appearance.**

If your circumstances force you to do a job in an office or institution of mixed gender, you must be clear about the minimum requirement of your attire. Following are the three relevant orders.

**1. “And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and not to display of their adornment except that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands’ fathers, or their sons or their husbands’ sons, or their brothers or their brothers’ sons or sisters’ sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women’s nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed.”** (Qur’an 24:31)

A brief explanation of the underlined phrases in the above verse is as follows:

**Lower their gaze:** Lowering the gaze does not mean to look towards the earth, especially while conversation with men is necessary. In most cases, the communication between the two will be greatly hampered when both of them are looking downwards. (Remember the men are also asked to lower their gaze in verse 24:30). The Arabic word ‘Ghadh’ means to check and lessen the intensity. The same word has also been used in Qur’an in relation to voice:

**“And be moderate in thy pace and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass.”** (31:19)

The instruction in the relevant verse is not to stare in a frank, provoking and bold way at men. The gaze should be modest if you have to look at them.

**Except that which is apparent:** There has been much debate over the explanation of this phrase among scholars. Following is one of the most reasonable explanations from the pen of Maulana Maudoodi, a staunch advocate of Purdah.

“Every one (among the religious scholars) has tried to understand as per his insight and the need of women that to what extent, the necessity calls for exposing which part (of the body). What is exposed inevitably and what is exposed as a habit. We say that you should not bind (the phrase in the verse) ‘except which is apparent’, with any of these. A believing woman who wants to remain obedient by heart to Allah and the Prophet (Pbuh) and who is not ready to be down with temptation, can herself make a decision, depending upon her circumstances and needs whether she should expose her face and hands or not, when and when not to expose, how much to expose and how much to conceal. Neither the Shariah’ (Allah and the Prophet) has decreed the absolute verdict in this respect, nor seeing the variance in circumstances and needs, it is the want of wisdom to frame the absolute orders”. (P. 237-38, Maulana Maudoodi, Purdah, 11th ed., Markazi Maktaba Islami Delhi)

2. Hazrat Asma once came to the house of the Prophet (Pbuh), who was his brother in law (non-Mahram) also, in such clothes through which her body was apparent. The Prophet (Pbuh) turned his face away and said:

***“Asma! After a woman reaches adulthood, it is not lawful to see any part of her body except this and this”. Saying this, the Prophet (Pbuh) indicated towards his face and palms”.***

The Hadith tells us that the *Sat’r* (concealable parts of body) of a woman for a non-Mahram man excludes the face and palms.

3. “O prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons: that is most convenient that they should be known (as such) and not molested: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Q. 33:59)

An outer garment or larger chaddar than the *Dupattas* (veils over bosoms) is necessary while passing through the streets out of home. It is clear from the verse itself that the order does not concern an indoor home or office where she is already known. In an office, the male colleagues would know a modest woman of chaste character and would not tease or molest her, so there is no compulsion in Deen for wearing the outer garments or Burqah or a chaadar inside the office or place of work. The job in such a place of work is not desirable, where a woman is harassed even after being known of possessing a chaste character.

Know that all orders of Qur’an and Hadith regarding covering up of face are exclusive in relation to Ummahat-ul-Momineen (the Prophet’s wives).

It is not clear what you exactly mean by Hijab in your query. You see that you are not necessarily required to wear a burqah or a chaadar, while entering an office for doing a job there. Of course you have to cover your head and hair as it is included in the *Sat’r* of a woman. If that is your Hijab and you are not getting a job for covering your head by your *dupatta*, then you are better off without a job in such an institution. Try in a girls’ or women’s institution.

The life in this world is a life of trial followed by the eternal life hereafter. The nature of trial for each and every individual is different. If you face hardships due to not getting a job for following your Deen, then it is your trial. Face the test with courage and boldness.