

Islam And Women Education

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Abstract: This paper investigates the significance of equality in education for men and women. Through verifiable content view of researchers' works in Islamic world from the stories in Sahabah's time as of recently in Indonesian period, the researchers found that the society's view about access to education for women and also women's inclusion as pioneers in political field were fluctuated and element. In some portion of Islamic history, women were frequently seen as the useless of society while had no equivalent access to instruction and self advancement contrasted with men. The researchers then explained the exchange to Indonesian setting. The review reasoned that woman ought to be freed from any sort of mistreatment with the goal that they could enhance their self possibilities. Open arrangements ought to be performed to make it feasible for woman to end up specialists in their social, governmental issues, and social parts other than and together with men.

Keywords: Women, Men, Equality, Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aristotle, the greatest philosophers in history, defined human as "a rational animal". This definition is still universally accepted today. It means that human is a God's creation with double intrinsic potentials: thinking, moral as well sexual being. On top of the two, human is an evolving creature. As far as God's creatures are called human beings, both men and women, they have the potential of thinking, moral, sexual desire and reproducing. If the cultural conversation says that men and women are different, then the question is "what distinguishes men and women?". In a feminism study, it has always said that men and women are only distinguished from their biological aspects. Men have a penis (dzakar) and testes while women have a vagina, uterus and breast. This is the difference in nature created by God. While both aspects of the intrinsic potential are the same as the relative levels.

Nevertheless, the mainstream view in the different cultures of the world until this day still shows that men are distinguished from women, especially from the aspect of intelligence. Men become second-class, intelligent, and powerful beings, while women are second-class, stupid and weak. In other words, the intelligence of men is superior than the intelligence women or the intelligence of women is lower than the intelligence of men. This view is not only embedded in the brain/mind of the general public and most of the philosophers, but is also believed by the religionists. Syekh Nawawi, one of the Muslim scholars of the archipelago, in his popular book famous at boarding school and taught on an ongoing basis stated:

"Men are superior to women." This can be seen in many ways, both in nature (*fitrah* or *qudrah*) as well as in the religious law (*syari'iyah*). According to the essence, intelligence and knowledge of men are superior, they are more courageous to bear heavy burden and their bodies are stronger. Therefore, only men who become prophets, Muslim scholars, leaders of nation and leaders of prayer. In addition, only men are required to jihad (war), azan, khutbah, Jumah prayer, witness in criminal and legal retribution. Men also get double portions of inheritance than women. Only men also have the right to marry, divorce and polygamy. The liability and responsibility for the mahr (dowry) and bread for his family are on the shoulders of men. The above statement is delivered in the reflection on the verse of the Quran: "*Al-Rijal Qawwamun 'ala al-Nisa bi ma Faddhala Allah Ba'dhahum 'ala Ba'dh wa Bi Ma Anfaqu min Amwalihim*". (Q.S. Al-Nisa, [4]:34).

Such view is not only expressed by Kyai Nawawi al-Bantani, but also by almost all authoritative commentators and jurisprudents. Al-Zamakhshari, a great commentator of the rationalists, said that the superiority of men includes the intelligence (*aql*), firmness (*al-Hazm*), spirit (*al-'azm*), physical strength (*al-quwwah*) courage and dexterity (*al-*

furusiyah wal al-ramy). Al-Razi (d. 606 H), other commentator from the Sunni (traditional), said that the factors of men superiority are, among others, the potential of knowledge (*al-Ilm*) and physical strength (*al-qudrah*). Briefly, all commentators agreed that the superiority of men over women lies mainly on the dimension of the intellectual sense. They further said that the superiority of intelligence of these men is “*fi nafsihi*” (inherent) or as referred by Muhammad Tahir bin Assyria, a contemporary commentator, as *al-Mazaya al-Jibilliyyah* (natural privilege).

From the explanation, we clearly see the sharp and fundamental differences among experts in view of men and women. The differences certainly bring serious implications on the position, function, expression and self-actualization space of both genders. However, I think we need to look critically on social phenomena in front of us. We did notice that most of men have intellectual levels than women. This fact certainly shows no absolute superiority of men over women. Throughout the history of human civilization and in every human community, there is always relativity of this superiority. In other words, there is always a woman who is superior intellectually than man. This noun relativity fact is an undeniable proof that the potential intellect is not natural. Likewise, the dimension of morality.

The question needs to be raised is why the number of smart and intelligent women is less than the number of smart and intelligent men. The answer lies to the will of the social, culture, politics of the community itself, and the more basic is about the education system. Ibn Rushd, great medieval Muslim philosopher, expressed a brilliant view about this. He said:

“As far as the women grow up with intelligence and sufficient intellectual capacity, it is not impossible, we will find among them the philosophers of wise people (*bijak bestari*), the leaders of public-political and so on. Indeed, there are those who argue that such women are rare, moreover there are religious laws that do not recognize women’s political leadership, even though there is also the law that allows. As far as there is woman as above, however, it (the leadership of women) is not impossible “.

From here, Ibn Rushd later stated: “Thus it is clear that women need to be involved (participate) with men in the war and the like. It is also feasible for us giving them the opportunity to work in the fields as the men does. It can happen only when they have equal access with men (among others) in the music arts and mathematics.“

2. ISLAM AND EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

1. Islamic Education:

As a religious of humanity, Islamic teachings include and cover all aspects of life and livelihoods. From the beginning, Islam has taught and appreciated the principles of human rights. Respect and appreciation for the humanitarian and human become the principal and important teachings in Islam. Among these are the basic teachings regarding the procedure to be done by human in knowledge, charity and relationship (*ta’aruf*) with fellow human beings and all other creatures of God. In the context of human rights for education, Islamic teachings are highly concerned about the people who seek knowledge. Many verses of the Quran and Hadith encourage and glorify every knowledgeable people, even the law of seeking knowledge is obligatory for every human being, both men, women, children and adults, and in gaining access to education, they have the same rights. Islam means submission and obedience. In terms, Islam is used as the name of religion and order of life brought by the Prophet Muhammad through the revelations of Allah contained in the Quran and Hadith.

Regarding education, Sayid Sabiq, in his book entitled “*Islamuna*”, said that education is an attempt to prepare children both in terms of physical, intellectual, and spiritual senses so that she/he becomes a beneficial member of the community, both for him/herself and for his/her people. Similar view was delivered by Athiyah al-Abrasyi who defined education as an attempt to prepare the individual so that he/she can live with a perfect life. Meanwhile, Anwar Jundi, in his book entitled “*at-Tarbiyyah wa Binaul Ajyal fi Dhau’il Islam*”, stated that the definition of education is to nurture the human with the continuing growth from birth until death. Of the three definitions have been put forward, it is clear that it does not contain a difference of principle, even to provide reinforcement one another that education is an attempt to prepare and nurture the human individual from the time he/she was born until the end of life to have physical strength, intellect, and spirit of man, not only for men, but also women based on Islamic values.

The practice of rights and obligations towards education for human has indeed been implied in the life of the Prophet as outlined in the Charter of Medina. The Charter essentially underlines five main things as basic life of society and the state. *First* is the principle of fraternity which asserts that all humans are originated from a single origin, therefore, they are

brothers. *Second* is the principle of helping and protecting the people of Medina consisting of various ethnic, religious and linguistic to help each other in the face of an opponent. *Third* is the principle of protecting the weak and persecuted. *Fourth* is the principle of mutual counsel and *fifth* is the principle of religious freedom. The civil life of the people emphasized by the Prophet at that time could not be achieved if they did not have knowledge, namely by enabling and optimizing the potential of mind through education.

2. Women Education in Islam;

Prophet Muhammad presented among Arab nations in the 6th century AD embracing the system of patriarchal power relations, as the nations of the world at the time. Patriarchal system had long existed in this society. It was a system in which men were positioned as decision makers over people's lives. In this system, the pattern of division of labor was formed based on gender. Men worked and actualized in the public sphere and women were in the domestic space. Such position and role of women necessitated the lack of experience, knowledge and skills of women. Women were also not a human being with full independence as men. Women were highly dependent on men. They became a "*konco wingking*" and "*swarga nunut, neroko katut*". Umar bin Khattab informed of this situation. He said:

"We never used to give significance to women in the days of the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance, but when Islam came and Allah mentioned their rights, we used to give them their rights but did not allow them to interfere in our affairs."

Even the status of women in pre-Islamic period by some people was not considered a good human being. A poem says:

"Inna al Nisa Syayathin Khuliqna Lana.

Na'udzu Billah min Syarr al Syayathin"

"Women are devils created for us.

And we seek God's protection from the devils "

In the context of this society, the Prophet then delivered the idea of the need for their education. The first revelation delivered is the appeal to read. "*Iqra*", which literally means reading, also implies seeing, thinking and compiling. This is really interesting since the Prophet did not begin his mission by getting them to believe in God Almighty. This is because knowledge or education is the base or foundation of civilization. On another occasion, the Prophet also said his main prophetic mission. The Quran states:

"Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy". Q.S. Ibrahim, [14]: 1

Darkness in the above verse is a metaphor for the meaning of heresy and ignorance for truth and justice, while "light" is intended as a knowledge and justice. Proverb says: "*Al- 'Ilm Nur*", knowledge is light. "*Al-Insan A 'daa-u Ma Jahilu*" (man is hostile to what he does not know). Knowledge is a major tool for the entire cultural and structural transformation. The entire verses of the Koran are delivered to correct the anti-human situation, and break the chains of oppression of man by man, including, discriminatory system between humans.

It is interesting that the verses of the Quran respond as well as provide space for the human rights of women, among other, by reducing the rights of men and returning the human rights of women. On the other hand, there are many verses of Quran which state that the rights of women are equal to the rights of men. Human majesty excellence are solely based on the kindness and not on the basis of gender nor the other. " O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." (Q.S. al-Hujurat, [49]: 13). The Prophet said, "Women are the siblings of men". The Quran also states that the duty and responsibility of building a society for the better is the duty and responsibility along with men and women: " The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." (Q.S. Al-Tawbah, [9]: 71)

Therefore it is necessary that the women are required to learn and obtain the same knowledge in whatever field is necessary as the attempts of such transformation. A hadith of the Prophet states that every Muslim is required to take

learn and explore knowledge. In another hadith, it is stated that a number of women came to the Prophet and complained about the education of women. Then the Prophet gave his time to teach knowledge to them. The Prophet also praised the women of Ansar blatantly learning knowledge (Lam Yakun Yamna'hunna al-Haya an Yatafaqahna fi al-Din).

3. WOMEN ON THE STAGE OF CIVILIZATION

In a very short time, the world situation Arabia was enlightened. Cultural transformation took place in a quite massive yet wise pattern. The women were given space and time to learn as men. Not long after, women of scholars, intellectuals, scholars, hadith scholars, artists and so on were born. Ahmed Shawqi, the Prince of Arabic Poets, described the situation of women in a very beautiful poem.

This! Messenger of God
 He never profiteer the rights of devoted women
 Knowledge being the life of his family
 They become lawyers, political activists, cultural and literary
 Thanks to the daughters of the Prophet
 The wave of knowledge rises up to the top of the sky
 Look, Sukainah
 Her name is spreading fragrance around the corner of the earth
 She teaches the Prophet's words
 and interpreting the scriptures
 Look
 The beautiful books and calligraphy
 Tell the space of
 Strong Islamic women
 Baghdad
 is the home of smart women
 Padepokan of beautiful women
 chanting the letters and writing literature
 Damascus in the Umayyad era
 Is the mother for scholars girls
 meeting place of one thousand skillfully women.
 Andalusian gardens
 Colorful flowers are chapped
 Beautiful women singing merrily
 And the graceful girls reading a poetry

The poems above clearly express the phenomenon of Islamic women in the early stage of Islamic history. The centers of Islamic education and culture are at least in three places: Damascus, Baghdad and Andalusia, showing the activities, role and position of women. The historical facts in the early civilizations of Islam showed exactly how many women who become Muslim scholars and intellectuals, with various skills and the intellectual capacity that is relatively similar to outperform even some male Muslim scholars. This fact in itself has sued most people believe that women's sense of intellectualism is lower than men's sense of intellectualism. Islam is present to liberate oppression and ignorance towards the realization of equitable life and advance the knowledge for all human beings: men and women.

The names of female Muslim scholars/intellectuals/scholars, their journey of life and works are recorded in many books. Ibn Hajar, a prominent hadith scholar in his book: "*Al-Ishabah fi Tamyiz al-Shahabah*", mentioned 500 female hadith scholars. Their names are also written by a number of Muslim scholars: Imam Nawawi, in "*Tahzib wa al-Asma al-Rijal*",

Khalid al-Baghdadi in *"Tarikh Baghdad"*, Ibn Sa'd in *"Al-Thabaqat"* and Sakhawi in *"al-Dhaw al-Lami 'li Ahli al-Qarn al-Tasi"* and others. Imam Dhahabi, a famous hadith scholar, the author of the book *"Mizan al-I'tidal"*, mentioned the 4000 Rijal Hadith, consisting of men and women. He further said: *"Ma 'Alimtu min al-Nisa Man Uttuhimat wa La Man Turika Haditsuha"* (I do not know any women who are disabled in the history nor any unused hadiths). He continued: "There is no news that says that the history of a woman is a lie".

Later, Umar Rida Kahalah wrote a book specifically on Women Muslim Scholars in the Arab and Islamic world, *"A'lam al-Nisa fi 'Alamay al-'Arab wa al-Islam"* (Female scholars in Islamic and Arabic). This book consisting of three sized volumes records with a lovely thick hundreds or even thousands of female scholars following their names, expertises, activities and their roles, in alphabetical order.

The female Muslim scholars have taken the leading role as a religious figure, knowledge figure, political figure and leaders with commendable morality. Their activities are not only from and within the domestic space (the home) but also in the public sphere of politics in a broader sense. They work with male scholars in building Islamic civilization. It is interesting that the presence of their bodies in public space alongside men has never been questioned. Dr. Asma al-Murabit, director of the Center for Islamic Studies and Gender, Morocco, wrote beautifully:

"Islamic scientific lecture is followed by students, both men and women. We did not find, in the early generations of Islam, scholars who do not learn to women, except a few. Education is provided to men and women alike, and there is no separation (segregation) of space between men and women. At this time, rarely male scholars who have not learned to female scholars." (www.annisae.ma).

Sukainah bint al-Husayn (d. 735 AD), the great-granddaughter of the Prophet is a female character leading scholars of her day. Her brilliant thinking, beautiful minds, the great poet, famous Arab poet teacher: Jarir al-Tamimy and Farazdaq. Her father; Imam Husayn bin Ali, calling his beloved daughter: *"Amma Sukainah fa Ghalibun 'alaiha al-Istighraq ma'a Allah"* (day-to-day contemplation). She often gave public lectures in front of public men and women, including the Muslim scholars, in the mosque Umawi. She is also known as a cultural figure. Her home served as the central activity of the humanists and poets.

Regrettably, the history of the Muslims after that, put the women into her cage-cage. Intellectual activity was restricted, their social-political-cultural works were stocked. Muslim women drowned in a heap of historical struggle. They are forgotten and marginalized (al-muhamasyat) from social-cultural-political dialectics. Patriarchal social system is dominant. Dr. Muhammad al-Habasy, Syrian scholars, in his book: *"Al-Mar'ah Baina al-Syari'ah wa al-Hayah"* said that the marginalization of women is based on the principle argument *"Sadd al-Dzari'ah"* (closing the door of damage). The participation or involvement of women in the world of education and knowledge, both as students and teachers, is deemed they could lead to a "slander" and "inhiraf" (deviation) of moral. These two magic words that are keeping women self-actualization. The jargon is: "In order to protect" and "Maintaining Moral Purity". The world seems to have lost the way of "Protecting without Limiting". The next action is "making the rules that restrict the movement of women's bodies in the social, cultural and political spaces."

From here, the next education for women experienced a remarkable degradation process for a very long period of time. Only in the 19th century, a number of figures appeared to call for the opening of education for women. Rifa'ah Rafi 'al Tahtawi (1801-1873 AD) was seen as the first campaign with the persistent gender equity and equality and called for equal education access for women. He wrote down ideas and criticisms of this in his famous book; *"Takhlich al-Ibriz fi Talkish Paris"* and *"al-Murshid al-Amin al-Banat wa li al-Banin"*. Then, other figures came that in the Islamic world often referred to as "mujaddid" (reformers). He was Muhammad Abduh of Egypt. Then the most prominent and controversial figures in women's issues appeared named: Qasim Amin. In 1899, he wrote his famous book; *"Tahrir al-Mar'ah"* (women's liberation), and *"al-Mar'ah al-Jadidah"* (New Woman). He aggressively demanded education for women. In Indonesia, the same demand was presented by, among others, RA. Kartini, Dewi Sartika, Rahma el-Yunisiah, KH. A. Wahid Hasyim and others.

1928 is the most important moment in the history of women in Indonesia. A woman Congress was held. Some recommendation items were demanding to the colonial government to increase school for female students; to provide scholarships for female students who have the ability to learn, but have no tuition fees, the agency called *stuidie fonds*; and to establish an institution and establish a literacy courses, medical courses and to enable eradication of child marriage.

4. INDONESIA AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Indonesia is the country with the largest number of Muslims in the world. Over half of whom are women. NKRI Constitution has given equal space for men and women to enter the world of education in the entire level. The great number of women are potential for the progress and prosperity of a nation. However, this progress can only be realized when the potential of humanity can be encouraged and developed. The humanitarian potentials include aspects of intelligence/intellectual, moral and spiritual. Education is essentially a process of developing these potentials to become a complete human being or primary human. It requires a healthy condition in all three dimensions of the human being. A healthy condition is a wide space for self-expression, without hindrance and without violence, both physically, mentally and spiritually. Thus in this context, women must be liberated from the situation of violence in the name of whatever it takes to develop their potentials. Public policies should be formulated to enable women to be an expert to perform social roles, politics and culture in addition to and alongside with men. Both genders are required to work together to build a nation in a relationship of mutual respect.

Women are the source and the center of human civilization. In their hands, the future of the nation and humanity are at stake. A popular Arab proverb says: “*Al-Mar’ah ‘Imad al-Bilad. Idza Shaluhat Shaluha al-Bilad, wa Idza Fasadat Fasada al-Bilad*” (woman is a pillar of the State, if good, then the state will be good, if it is damaged, then the state will be destroyed). The word “shaluha” or “righteous” literally means good, healthy, appropriate, firm, helpful, peaceful, appropriate and so forth. In English, the word “shalih” means; good, right, proper, sound, solid, virtuous, useful, suitable and appropriate. Likewise the meaning “shaluha” (saleh) is not limited to the aspect of personal moral goodness, but also the social moral goodness, physically and mentally healthy, intelligent and has the ability to self-actualize in every room, private, domestic or public.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be expressed in this article is that fundamental differences among experts in view of men and women are still clearly visible. This has serious implications on the position, function, expression and self-actualization space of both genders. Nevertheless, it is a fact of history that in every era there are always women who are superior intellectually than men, this confirms that the potential of the intellectual is not nature, but is a dimension kasbi which can be achieved, sought and cultivated through education.

Departing from this consciousness, a process of education for women experiences tremendous degradation process in a very long time. Only in the 19th century, a number of figures appear to call for the opening of education for women. Rifa’ah Rafi ‘al-Tahtawi (1801-1873 AD) was the first to campaign vigorously gender equality and called for equal education access for women. The same is done in Indonesia by Dewi Sartika, Rahma el-Yunisiah, KH. A. Wahid Hasyim and others. 1928 is the most important moment in the history of women in Indonesia. A woman Congress was held. Some recommendation items were demanding to the colonial government to increase school for female students; to provide scholarships for female students who have the ability to learn, but have no tuition fees, the agency called *stuidie fonds*; and to establish an institution and established a literacy courses, medical courses and to enable eradication of child marriage.

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