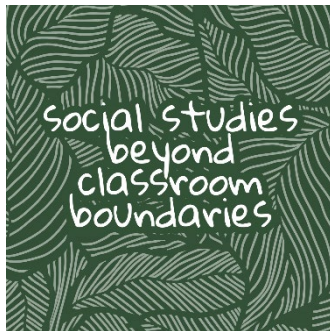


Women's Contributions in Islam: Tracing Their Journey from Historical Contexts to Modern Digital Educational Environments



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ABSTRAK

Isu kesetaraan gender dan keadilan bagi perempuan seolah tak ada habisnya untuk didiskusikan, melalui penelitian ini dimaksudkan untuk memberikan wawasan komprehensif mengenai peran wanita dalam Islam, dari perspektif sejarah hingga tantangan dan peran mereka dalam era digital. Melalui analisis sejarah, penelitian ini menguraikan bagaimana wanita memainkan peran yang signifikan dalam perkembangan peradaban Islam dengan membeberkan kisah tokoh-tokoh wanita inspiratif. Penekanan diberikan pada pengkajian peran wanita sebagai agen pendidikan, sosial, dan kontributor penting dalam pembangunan masyarakat. Pengenalan era digital memunculkan dinamika baru yang mempengaruhi peran wanita dalam masyarakat Islam. Ketersediaan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi membuka akses yang lebih luas namun juga menghadirkan tantangan baru seperti kesenjangan akses dan penguasaan teknologi antar gender. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi literatur dengan menggali berbagai rujukan yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa perempuan dalam masyarakat Islam memiliki potensi besar untuk berperan secara aktif dalam era digital, mempengaruhi perkembangan sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya. Namun, kesenjangan akses teknologi dan norma sosial yang masih mengikat perempuan memerlukan tindakan kolaboratif dari berbagai elemen agar memungkinkan perempuan memanfaatkan potensi penuh mereka dalam era digital.

KATA KUNCI: Peran Wanita, Sejarah, Pendidikan, Era Digital

ABSTRACT

The issue of gender equality and justice for women seems endless to discuss, through this research is intended to provide a comprehensive insight into the role of women in Islam, from a historical perspective to their challenges and roles in the digital age. Through historical analysis, this study outlines how women played a significant role in the development of Islamic civilization by revealing the stories of inspirational female figures. Emphasis is placed on assessing the role of women as educational, social, and important contributors in community development. The introduction of the digital age gave rise to new dynamics that influenced the role of women in Islamic societies. The availability of information and communication technology opens wider access but also presents new challenges such as gaps in access and mastery of technology between genders. This research uses qualitative methods with literature studies by exploring various references relevant to the research topic. The study concluded that women in Islamic societies have great potential to play an active role in the digital age, influencing social, economic, and cultural development. However, the gap in access to technology and social norms that still bind women requires collaborative action from various elements to enable women to harness their full potential in the digital age.

KEYWORDS: Role of Women, History, Education, Digital Age

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A. Introduction

The prevailing negative perceptions in society, particularly in rural areas, regarding education for women, have significantly impacted the motivation and participation of women in pursuing higher education. Although not explicitly outlined in written laws, these social norms create tangible barriers for women aspiring to advance in higher education. Strong convictions persist regarding traditional gender roles, where women are considered more suitable for fulfilling the role of a mother and focusing on family care. Such views have been inherited from generation to generation, perpetuating the belief that women pursuing higher education may find it challenging to secure a life partner or may struggle to fulfill their roles as mothers and wives effectively.¹

The stigma surrounding women is challenging to eradicate, particularly when supported by misunderstandings about theological perspectives that assert women as a part of men, created from the rib of a man. This forms the basis for the perception that, in the gender hierarchy, women hold a lower position than men. The concept that women are the "rib" of men is used as a rationale to place men as fundamental elements, while women are considered as derivatives or originating from men. Men are categorized as equivalent to the bourgeois class, while women are seen as part of the proletariat. This situation gives rise to accessibility issues, particularly in the realm of education. Education is deemed more crucial for men because they are perceived as the backbone of the family, the head of the household, and decision-makers in various aspects. Meanwhile, women are only considered as companions to men responsible for domestic tasks, thus deemed unnecessary to have high levels of education.²

Essentially, education is a necessity that must be provided for every generation, regardless of gender. Because education is crucial for building civilization, and the progress of a nation is not something that can be achieved solely by men. Islam, as a religion that upholds justice, has never prohibited women from seeking knowledge to the highest extent. Throughout the history of Islamic civilization, numerous success stories portray women playing roles as wives, mothers, and individuals with significant impacts on society.³ Names like Siti Khadidjah, a wealthy merchant who played a significant role in Islamic preaching, Rufaidah Al-Aslamiah, a pioneer in the field of health during the early period of Islam entering the city of Medina, Zainab binti Ahmad, a Muslim scholar with profound knowledge in hadith and a teacher at the Hanbali Madrasah in the city of Damascus, and Fatimah Al-Fihri, one of the founders of Al-Qarawiyyin University, one of the oldest universities in the world, are noteworthy. Not to be forgotten are the roles of Indonesian women in the modern era who actively contribute to the development of civilization, such as Tjut Nyak Dien and RA Kartini.

This research aims to explore the role of women in Islam, spanning from the early history of the spread of Islam to the modern era. It seeks to investigate the potential of women in the digital age, examining the challenges and opportunities they face, and exploring efforts to develop inclusive and equitable religious education for women. This research is crucial to provide women with an understanding of the significant roles they have played throughout history, enabling them to maximize their potential in contributing to the digital era. Simultaneously, it serves as a reminder to treat women fairly and continue supporting them to actively participate in building civilization.

¹ Harum Natasha, "Ketidaksetaraan Gender Bidang Pendidikan: Faktor Penyebab, Dampak, Dan Solusi," *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama dan Jender* 12, no. 1 (2013).

² Lailatuzzuhriyah, "Perempuan, Pendidikan Dan Arsitek Peradaban Bangsa," *Martabat* 2, no. 2 (2018).

³ Agustin Hanapi, "Peran Perempuan Dalam Islam," *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015).

Research with a similar theme has been conducted before, but this study has significant differences. Some earlier research that can be correlated with this study includes "The Role of Women in the Development of Islamic Education in Aceh (A Study on Women's Contributions in Historical Review)," which explores the role of women in the field of education throughout the history of Aceh's development. It emphasizes that not involving women in various aspects is a form of wasting half of the community's potential.⁴ "The Role of Women's Muslim in Da'wah to Family and Community" which describes the role of women as mothers, wives, and preachers for the family and community and examines what roles women preachers can play in society.⁵ "The Role of Career Women in Islamic Education in the Digital Era" which reviews the role of career women in Islam and motivates women to have careers in various fields without having to neglect their duties in taking care of children and households.⁶

In this study, we will conduct a deeper and more comprehensive study which not only reviews from historical aspects or only discusses in the context of the present but investigates the contribution of women in history and makes it a learning in developing women's potential in the digital era and provides recommendations on how women are treated in the context of education in the future. With the hope that this research can be a reference in developing equitable inclusive education without differentiating gender.

The methodology used in this study uses qualitative methods with literature studies (library research).⁷ This method is used to explore reference sources that discuss the role of women in Islam from historical to contemporary sides and collect articles, books, and related scholarly works to frame an understanding of the role of women in Islam from various sources. In compiling this article, researchers also conducted interviews with women who have experience and are involved in the world of education in the digital era to deepen understanding of the role of women in the context of modern and current life in society.

B. Literature Review

Islamic Views and Teachings on the Role of Women

Islamic teachings regard men and women as equal beings in the eyes of Allah, meaning they have equal opportunities to contribute to building civilization. This perspective is grounded in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, which serve as guidance for the entire Muslim community. Surah At-Taubah, verse 71 of the Quran, explicitly states that men and women are companions and partners to each other. Islam positions women as partners for men, not rivals, and their presence in the public sphere is not considered a threat. According to Islamic principles, both men and women share equal responsibilities in constructing society and fulfilling religious duties. This perspective emphasizes the

⁴ Sri Astuti A Samad, "Peran Perempuan Dalam Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Aceh (Kajian Terhadap Kontribusi Wanita Dalam Tinjauan Sejarah)," *AL-MAIYYAH: Media Transformasi Gender dalam Paradigma Sosial Keagamaan* 9, no. 2 (2016).

⁵ Nurul Effa Atiekah Abdullah, and Berhanundin Abdullah, "Peranan Wanita Muslimah Dalam Dakwah Kepada Keluarga Dan Masyarakat [the Role of Women's Muslim in Da'wah to Family and Community]," *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporer* 20, no. 2 (2019).

⁶ Anisa Dwi Makrufi, "Peran Wanita Karir Dalam Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital," *Vicratina: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan* 2, no. 2 (2018).

⁷ Albi Anggito, and Johan Setiawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher), 2018).

collaborative efforts of men and women in contributing to the development of a community and carrying out religious obligations.⁸

Islam provides guidance that women have a central role as mothers, wives, and caregivers of the family who are at the forefront of educating the next generation. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ordered Muslims to study, this command does not distinguish gender with the intention that men and women are obliged to study. Because in maximizing the role of building civilization cannot be done except with science.⁹

The Role of Women in Islam from a Historical Perspective

In Islam, women have shown their role since the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and continue to experience developments throughout history influenced by cultural, social, economic, political factors. At the beginning of the khulafaur rashidin women played an active role in advancing education and social humanity, even the wives of the prophet at that time also contributed to providing political advice and religious guidance.¹⁰

In the history of Islamic civilization after the time of the Prophet, there are many examples of the important and significant role played by women. One of them was Sultanah Radiyah who held power in Delhi, India in 634 AH. ini was part of the rule of the Abbasid Daulat. Radiyah power was achieved through the military power of the Mamluks. Radiyah inherited the throne from her father, Sultan Iltutmisy. She had two titles, namely Radiyah Ad-Dunya wa Ad-Din and Balqis Jihan, and her name was even printed on currency with the inscription: "Pillar of women, Queen of all ages, Sultanah Radiyah bint Shamsuddin Iltutmisy".¹¹

This historical fact illustrates that in Islam, there is no difference in status between women and men. This reflects gender equality in Islamic teachings. If there are opinions or attitudes that seem to distinguish between men and women, then it is due to cultural influences that still follow the patrilineal hereditary system in Muslim societies.

The Role of Women in the Digital Age

The digital era is an age in which advances in information and communication technology, especially computers and the internet, have a major role in changing the social, economic, cultural, and industrial order. The hallmark of the digital age is broad and efficient access to information through electronic devices such as computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other intelligent technologies. In the digital era, changes in people's values and shifts are inevitable because this era allows wider social interaction, both nationally and internationally, which in the realm of sociology is known as globalization. Modernization is essentially the search for new, more efficient means of achieving predefined goals, reflecting a movement towards perfection.

In this era, women have the opportunity to develop their roles as independent individuals, enabling them to actively contribute to development and face the challenges brought about by the progress of the developmental process. Their roles as wives and mothers can be enhanced by taking

⁸ Annisa Tusadia, Roswida Sri Astuti, and Nurlaili Nurlaili, "Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling (JPDK)* 5, no. 4 (2023).

⁹ Wikhdaton Khasanah, "Kewajiban Menuntut Ilmu Dalam Islam," *Jurnal riset agama* 1, no. 2 (2021).

¹⁰ Syamzan Syukur, "Perempuan Dalam Lintas Sejarah (Studi Atas Peran Publik Sahabiyah-Sahabiyah Di Masa Rasulullah Saw)," *MUWAZAH: Jurnal Kajian Gender* 6, no. 1 (2014).

¹¹ Zainul Muhibbin, "Wanita Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora (JSH)* 4, no. 2 (2011).

responsibility for the well-being and happiness of the family, as well as guiding the younger generation to be of high quality—individuals who are obedient to God, healthy, intelligent, morally upright, creative, and future-oriented. As members of society, women can embody individuals with high awareness and social engagement in fostering a safe and tranquil community life. As citizens, they need to be aware of their rights and obligations and actively participate in various aspects of national life. Finally, as global citizens, awareness of global challenges and active participation in maintaining world peace and promoting more equitable global prosperity are crucial aspects.¹²

Contemporary Issues and Challenges for Women

The ability of individuals to access information, especially in the digital era, is a crucial aspect, and this applies equally to women. The involvement of women today goes beyond the demand for equal rights; it also underscores their roles and contributions to the development of Indonesian society. The specific role of women within the household as mothers responsible for household affairs and child-rearing, shaping a humane character, and so on, appears irreplaceable. The family is the first and foremost institution in education. Currently, society generally still views education within the family as the specific responsibility of women.

However, education within the family should be a shared responsibility between fathers and mothers, complementing each other so that children can grow into emotionally and rationally balanced individuals. The role of women in the domestic realm is crucial, requiring them to possess competence, extensive knowledge, and the ability to educate and provide insights to their children. In the digital era, women must be adaptive to the advancements in science and technology; however, the noble values reflecting Indonesian culture should not be forgotten. The use of technology is also becoming more widespread among children, necessitating guidance to ensure their development is not hindered.¹³

Positive Transformation and Cultural Change

The acceptance of gender equality has become a global debate. Nevertheless, disparities in access to and mastery of information and communication technology between men and women are still glaring. Data released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) indicates that the percentage of female users of information and communication technology is still lower than that of males. Constraints limiting women's access to information and communication technology in developing countries include education, literacy rates, language, availability of time, costs, social norms, and cultural aspects. These constraints impact women's limited participation in the development process. The prevailing societal view places women primarily in the family sphere, constraining them and preventing involvement in work outside the home. Every individual actually has equal rights, freedoms, and unlimited potential for growth and development.¹⁴

C. The Role of Women in Islamic History

¹² Ruwiah Buhungo, "Wanita Dan Kepemimpinan Dalam Pendidikan Islam Di Era Kehidupan Modern," *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2017).

¹³ Ni Wayan Suarmini, Siti Zahrok, and Dyah Satya Yoga Agustin, "Peluang Dan Tantangan Peran Perempuan Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *IPTEK Journal of Proceedings Series*, no. 5 (2018).

¹⁴ *ibid.*

The condition of Arab society before Islam came, where many of them underestimated the position and ability of women. Peremouan is considered a symbol of backwardness and also humiliation in society. During the jahiliyah period, men were considered to have the full right to vote and marry any woman without any conditions, while women were sometimes prevented or even forbidden to choose and marry men of their choice.¹⁵ It is even found that some societies treat women cruelly such as degrading, depriving rights, and even harming which leads to death. In the days of jahiliyah, women were always targeted to blame and belittled so that they had no place in the general public. With this, they do not have equality in terms of rights or position with men. But this situation changed along with the arrival and development of Islam which was introduced by the Prophet Muhammad SAW who was also an Apostle who brought mercy to all.¹⁶

Islam came perfectly, bringing hope for women, where its presence could provide justice to women by giving them fair rights, dignity, and status. There is emancipation in various fields of work that align with their nature and essence as women. Islam upholds equality between women and men. It also teaches the importance of paying attention to women's rights in various aspects of life. In essence, men and women have inherent differences since birth, which can be observed both physically and psychologically. However, in Islam, this does not mean favoring or degrading one over the other; the difference lies only in physical and personality distinctions. This can be considered equal but not identical.

In the year 620, at a time when many Arab communities doubted the existence and capabilities of women, there were women who could dispel the doubts of Arab society at that time. They demonstrated their existence by playing a role during the migration of the Prophet, wherein there were two female delegates out of 75 residents of Medina, namely Ummu Amara (Nusaibah binti Ka'ab) from the Bani Najjar tribe, and Ummu Mani (Asmaa' binti Amr) from the Bani Salma tribe. Both of them came to meet and requested the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to kindly migrate from Mecca to Medina, as they felt that Medina could be a safer place to propagate the Islamic religion. This signifies that women were actively participating in the life of society.¹⁷

Not only that, but there is also the story of Shajar al-Durr, a woman who became the leader of Egypt during a state of emergency. She successfully navigated the difficulties and critical times faced by the Islamic community during the Crusades led by King Louis IX. Additionally, there is the story of Prophet Muhammad, who appointed a woman named Samra' binti Nahika Al Asadiyah as the supervisor of the market in the Hisbah court in Mecca. Even after the Prophet's demise, during the caliphate of Umar ibn Khattab, Samra' binti Nahika Al Asadiyah continued to serve as a supervisor and was even given a whip by Caliph Umar to discipline the traders. Apart from Samra', Caliph Umar also appointed another woman supervisor, Asy Syifa' binti Abdillah Al Adawiyah, to oversee the market in Medina.¹⁸ In the current context, women can take on leadership roles in critical situations if they possess the necessary capacity and skills, but they are not appointed as leaders of the entire Islamic community like a caliph. Women can hold managerial, directorial, judicial, or other important positions

¹⁵ R Magdalena, "Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah (Studi Tentang Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Masyarakat Islam)," *Harakat an-Nisa: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Anak* 2, no. 1 (2018).

¹⁶ Amelia Husna, Wilaela Wilaela, and Syamruddin Nst, "Hak Dan Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah Sebelum Dan Setelah Datangnya Islam," *Madinatul Iman* 1, no. 2 (2022).

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 86.

¹⁸ Meirison Meirison, "Sejarah Kepemimpinan Wanita Di Timur Tengah Dalam Tinjauan Hukum Islam (Analisa Terhadap Syajar Al Durr)," *Kafaah: Journal of Gender Studies* 9, no. 1 (2019).

as long as they are not related to religious/ritual leadership in Islam. Additionally, women are allowed to work in various sectors outside the home, but their activities are restricted and protected by Islamic law to ensure the preservation of women's purity. It is essential to remember that, fundamentally, women are wives to their husbands and mothers to their children.

In Islamic history, the role of women has undergone significant development. Although there is often a stereotype that women in Islam have only a limited role, the fact that history proves that women have also contributed actively in various aspects of Muslim life. Some of the roles played by women in Islam include mother, wife, sister, and as a Muslim woman who participates in religious, educational, and social life.

As mothers, women become very important figures because they give birth and raise the next generation of mankind. The role of the mother in Islam is highly respected and considered a high worship because one day the children she raises will become the successors of religion and civilization. In addition, as a wife, women also have a role in forming a good household and person and have a noble character to educate children. The life of husband and wife in Islam is referred to as *mawaddah* (compassion) and *rahmah* (tenderness).

As sisters, women also have a responsibility in maintaining family relationships and being a figure who strengthens family relationships. In addition, as a Muslimah, women also have a role in religious life, such as worshiping, learning religion, teaching religion to children, and participating in social and political activities in accordance with the demands of the times and conditions.

Muslim women figures who had an important role during the time of the Prophet Muhammad especially in the field of Islamic education, one of which was Khadija bint Khuwailid bin As'ad bin Qusay Al-Qurasyiah who was the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad who came from a prominent circle of Bani Quraysh who had an extraordinary moral position and glory. She had an abundance of wealth that she invested in trade. She is a successful businessman and leader of her community.

Khadija had an important role in politics and leadership, she was the first to believe in Allah and Her Messenger and believed in Her teachings, joyfully and wholeheartedly, participating in supporting the Prophet's *da'wah* with strong determination. She is a great woman with the title of *Ummul Mukminin*, someone who has a central position and role in the life of Prophet Muhammad SAW. She is also a role model woman who is very patient and noble character, firm in her religion, highly dedicated, has extraordinary devotion and loyalty to her husband which can be a blessing for women in this era.

Khadija's role in accompanying the Prophet's struggle included being the best support system for the Prophet when receiving the first revelation as a Prophet. She always comforted, calmed and gave support to Prophet Muhammad SAW. Khadija also played a role when Prophet Muhammad began to receive orders to spread Islam to the people of Mecca. Khadija with all her soul, body, and property was ready to help the Prophet during her preaching, even she participated in spreading the teachings of Islam as well.

The Quraish's boycott of Muslims led Khadija to take up her role again as *Ummul Mukminin*. Her role in the attempt to destroy the covenant hanging from the Kaaba bore fruit. At that time she also gave assistance in the form of her property to Muslims who were struggling to defend the religion of Allah. She is also very responsible for her predicate as a believer who always pays attention to the welfare of her people.¹⁹

¹⁹ Rohmatul Azizah, and Nicky Estu Putu Muchtar, "Khadijah Binti Khuwailid Dan Perannya Dalam Perjuangan Rasulullah Saw," *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan dan Keislaman* 12, no. 2 (2023).

Another figure who was also a wife of the Prophet was Aisha bint Abu Bakr. Sayyidah Aisha RA possessed high intelligence and extraordinary memorization abilities, enabling her to remember a vast amount of information, especially about Islam, learned directly from the Prophet. On many occasions, Prophet Muhammad demonstrated her trust in Aisha's abilities by allowing her to teach fellow Muslims, particularly in the field of Islamic history. Aisha was also recognized as a highly respected female scholar in her time, continuing to contribute to education and advocacy in the period after the Prophet's demise. Therefore, Aisha bint Abu Bakr is considered an influential Muslim figure in education during the time of the Prophet and beyond.²⁰

She has narrated many hadiths totaling 2,210 hadiths that discuss and tell about all the life stories of the Prophet Muhammad such as marriage, the role of a husband as the head of the family and others. Sayyidah Aisha (r) saw the change of leadership under the Khulafaur Rashidin and from there she spent her time correcting opinions about women. She played an important role as an educator of the young generation of Islam, besides she continued da'wah by conducting a study of the briefing assembly for women.

The Companions then learned from Sayyidah Aisha (r) about all the behaviors and habits of the Prophet that they did not know. In addition, when they experience problems in narrating a hadith or even interpreting verses of the Qur'an, then they refer to Sayyidah Aisha (r) as a reference. The companions of the Prophet also gained a lot of knowledge in various branches of basic science from Aisha, this is due to her skills and abilities in mastering various scientific fields such as jurisprudence, hadith, Qur'an exegesis, history, khitobah, literature, and health. Therefore Sayyidah Aisha was one of the earliest Muslim intellectuals such as Caliph Ali, a friend of Abdullah bin Abbas and also a friend of Abdullah bin Umar.²¹

Another inspiring story comes from a Rufaidah bint Sa'ad Al-Bani Aslam Al-Kharaj or known as Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah is an important figure in the field of medicine and nursing who was born in Yathrib (Medina). Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah's medical expertise was obtained from her father Sa'ad Al-Aslami who was a famous physician or physiotherapist of her time.²²

Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah was a convert to Islam during the seventh century when Islam entered the region of Medina. She successfully integrated the knowledge of nursing with Islamic teachings, even modifying the medical practices taught by her father to align with Islamic teachings. One notable change was related to the medical practice environment, which was initially unclean but was transformed into a clean, hygienic, comfortable, and safe space. This adjustment was made in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, who emphasized the significance of cleanliness in Islam, considering it as part of faith.

Moreover, in her medical treatments, Rufaidah eliminated elements that were considered as shirk (associating partners with Allah), a grave sin in Islam, such as spells, offerings, and talismans in the process of treating her patients. She replaced these practices with various prayers and supplications that had been taught to her by Prophet Muhammad. While treating her patients, Rufaidah often

²⁰ Hamdani Alimni, "Peran Wanita Dalam Dunia Pendidikan Pada Masa Rasulullah Saw," *Jurnal Hawa: Studi Pengarus Utamaan Gender dan Anak* 3, no. 2 (2021).

²¹ Saticha Florentina, "Aisyah Perempuan Pengukir Sejarah Pendidikan Pada Masa Rasulullah," *JPT: Jurnal Pendidikan Tematik* 4, no. 2 (2023).

²² Huwaida Huwaida, "Perempuan Islam Dan Pendidikan Dalam Lintasan Sejarah," *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 2, no. 1 (2017).

incorporated Islamic preaching about the virtues of Islam. She encouraged her patients, who were unwell, to seek protection from Allah SWT and reflect on their experiences and afflictions.

Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah was instrumental to the health of Muslims in the Madinah region, Rufaidah helped lead and educate many Muslim women in the field of nursing. From this, she indirectly promoted education for Muslim women and is believed to be the first initiator of the establishment of a special nursing school for women.

During the Islamic wars (623-630), Rufaidah and her fellow female companions actively participated in the battlefield to provide medical assistance to the wounded fighters. They engaged in treating injuries and played a crucial role in supplying provisions and organizing war logistics. In response to the emergency conditions during the wars and the high number of casualties, Rufaidah established a field hospital known as the Khaimah Rufaidah, aiming to support the care and recovery processes for the injured victims. Additionally, Rufaidah formulated ethical nursing guidelines that proved beneficial in coordinating the actions of female nurses during the wartime period.

In the post-war period (era of peace) with the permission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah established a hospital in front of the Masjid Nabawi to provide healthcare services and dedicated her life as a social activist in the community of Medina. Beyond healthcare provision, she demonstrated a deep concern for the underprivileged, orphans, individuals with disabilities, and those with mental disorders.²³ Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah's nursing practices have significantly influenced the global healthcare landscape. Her contributions include pioneering works that hold historical significance in modern nursing, such as nursing theories, field hospitals, nursing codes of ethics, nursing schools, and care methodologies rooted in Islamic principles.

Turning to the country there is Rahmah el-Yunusiyah who is the first female Islamic education figure in Indonesia who was born in Padang Panjang on October 26, 1900. She is the youngest daughter of Sheikh Muhammad Yunus' family with Rafi'ah who has a strong religious education background, this is because her father and grandfather were great scholars in Padang Panjang North Sumatra. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah studied at Madrasah Diniyah led by Zainuddin Labay as her own brother, where the school already uses a modern learning system.

Because she grew up in a family that prioritized education, Rahmah el-Yunusiyah has indirectly begun to be interested in the world of education as well, such as when she was amazed by the educational institution managed by her brother. In addition to religious education, Rahmah also studied many other sciences, namely health sciences. Rahmah began learning about obstetrics and P3K (First Aid in Accidents) from various doctors in North Sumatra.

Rahmah el-Yunusiyah harbored a strong conviction to improve the fate and elevate the status of women through education, particularly Islamic education. This conviction has been ingrained in Rahmah since her adolescence, where education emerged as a potent and appropriate means to enhance the position of women. Rahmah's belief in the role of education materialized with the establishment of Al-Madrasah Ad-Diniyyah Lil-Banat or the Poetri Diniyyah School in 1923, aimed at capturing the attention of the general public, especially mothers, scholars, and groups strongly committed to preserving traditions. The curriculum employed was relatively simple, focusing on expanding knowledge of religion and the Arabic language alongside functional general knowledge and sewing skills. The education system implemented at Poetri Diniyyah School was the Trinity system, emphasizing close collaboration between the school environment, dormitory, and households or the

²³ Abdul Hamid Saputra, and Tolib Rahmatillah, "Rufaidah Al-Aslamiyah: Perawat Pertama Di Dunia Islam (Abad 6-7 M.)," *Historia Madania: Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah* 4, no. 1 (2020).

community. Additionally, Rahmah el-Yunusiah successfully founded Islamic women's colleges, becoming a symbol of female Islamic advocates who strive for progress in the education sector in our homeland.²⁴

Another prominent figure in our history is Raden Ajeng Kartini, born in Jepara on April 21, 1879. She was the daughter of Raden Mas Adipati Ario Sosroningrat, a nobleman from Java and the regent of Jepara. Raden Ajeng Kartini is a figure who advocated for education for Indonesian women, especially in Java. It can be said that indigenous girls had no opportunity to receive formal education at that time. Among the indigenous people, only the children of nobles or government officials could attend school, and this was usually limited to boys. Women had limited freedom of movement in all fields, especially in education. This condition was particularly evident in the low literacy rates among women on the island of Java. Raden Ajeng Kartini symbolizes the national women's movement, and her perseverance in advocating for women's emancipation to ensure equal treatment in social, educational, and cultural spheres makes her a pioneer in the women's movement in Indonesia. Despite being born into a wealthy family, she was open-hearted and dedicated to fighting for the fate of women, who were considered inferior at that time.

Background is what motivated Raden Ajeng Kartini to elevate the status of women. Her goal was not only to advance the strata or status of women but was closely related to community life. Her focus was on advocating for women's rights to freedom, autonomy, and equal legal treatment in society. In addition to establishing girls' schools, Raden Ajeng Kartini also produced works reflecting her thoughts through writings, one of which is the phenomenal "Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang" (Out of Darkness Comes Light). Kartini is not just one figure in the long history of Indonesia. Kartini should be interpreted as the spirit of struggle and sacrifice, and her thoughts and works have given rise to the emergence of a heroic figure in her person. Raden Ajeng Kartini's role in the field of education includes establishing special schools for girls and libraries for girls. Kartini did not desire for women to compete with men. Instead, she fought for women to have equal opportunities to contribute.²⁵

Thus, it can be observed that women had an important contribution in Islamic history. They prove that women are also able to contribute to advancing society in line with the teachings of Islam. Women continue to have a vital role in maintaining and developing a fair and balanced social balance. The role of women in Islam continues to evolve with the times because the important roles played by female figures have previously shown that the religion of Islam provides equal opportunities and recognition to women, and appreciates their potential and contribution in building a better society.

D. The Importance of Educating and Exploring Women's Potential in the Digital Age

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of women in the digital era. Education provides broad knowledge that not only influences individuals but also future generations. Intelligent and educated women have significant opportunities to raise intelligent and morally upright children. They also serve as early educators for children, developing their personalities and instilling strong

²⁴ Asni Furoidah, "Tokoh Pendidikan Islam Perempuan Rahmah El-Yunusiah," *FALASIFA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (2019).

²⁵ Hudaidah Karlina, "Pemikiran Pendidikan Dan Perjuangan Raden Ayu Kartini Untuk Perempuan Indonesia," *Jurnal Humanitas* 7, no. 1 (2020).

Islamic values.²⁶ With good education, women can prepare for their future, avoid dependence on men, and respond to life's challenges with calm thinking and rational logic. With extensive knowledge and good skills, they can reduce the risk of negative behavior, overcome poverty, and achieve their dreams and life goals.²⁷

In the continually evolving digital era, it is crucial to provide adequate education and encourage the exploration of women's potential. Women possess extraordinary potential to contribute to the digital world. Offering sufficient education to women is vital because it provides equal opportunities for self-development, exploration of potential, and active participation in community development. Women can contribute maximally to society when granted equal access to education and skill development. Educated women become pillars in society, capable of contributing solutions in various fields, including economics, politics, and social aspects. Digitalization can have a positive impact on enhancing women's self-confidence, driven by several key factors emerging in the context of digitalization.²⁸

Digital education platforms and initiatives can have a significant impact, particularly in empowering women and promoting gender equality within the context of the Islamic community. There are numerous positive implications of digital education platforms and initiatives for advocating gender equality and empowering women. One positive implication is the equitable access to education, where digital education platforms can help reach women living in remote areas or with physical limitations to access conventional education. Furthermore, digital education platforms can also promote inclusive religious education and support gender equality in the understanding of religion, thereby helping counter patriarchal interpretations and facilitating more balanced discussions on gender issues in Islam.

Another implication is empowerment through knowledge, where women can acquire the knowledge necessary to make better decisions in their personal and social lives, including in terms of health, women's rights, and participation in society. In addition, digital education platforms can also be used to raise women's awareness of gender issues and their rights in Islam, thus encouraging more women to engage in activism and advocacy for gender equality in their communities.

The facility of connection and collaboration is also a positive implication of digital education platforms and initiatives, where women can connect and collaborate with individuals and organizations who share the same vision of gender equality in Islam. In addition, teaching modern skills can also give women access to acquire modern skills, such as programming, graphic design, or business management, thereby enhancing women's ability to participate in the digital economy and creating better job opportunities.

In implementing this digital education initiative, it is crucial to ensure that the platform is easily accessible, inclusive, and takes into account the specific needs of women within the Islamic

²⁶ Didik Ariyanto, Muhammad Lukman, and Ahmad Saefudin, "Peran Perempuan Muslimah Dan Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Anak Di Era Digital," *JASNA: Journal For Aswaja Studies* 3, no. 1 (2023).

²⁷ Zainuddin Abdullah, "Peran Perempuan Dalam Dunia Pendidikan Perspektif Hamka," *Al Amin: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Budaya Islam* 4, no. 01 (2021).

²⁸ Achmad Saeful, "Keseimbangan Gender Dalam Dunia Pendidikan," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2019).

community. Furthermore, involving religious leaders, community figures, and families in supporting women's education is also essential for achieving greater gender equality in this context. In the context of religious education, it is important to consider the right to access education, the right to an educational process in an environment that supports gender equality, and the right to benefit from the outcomes of education that support the achievement of justice. Despite relatively high gender participation in education, gender equality has not been fully realized, and there are still aspects that need improvement regarding rights in the educational process.

E. Challenges and Opportunities for Women in the Digital Age

So far, women are often only seen as objects of development, in fact, there is a lot of evidence that shows that women have succeeded in becoming actors in the development process. However, there is still a challenge that often occurs, namely the dominance by men where many break the chain of performance, independence and confidence of women which makes them discouraged again. This makes it necessary to increase opportunities for women's empowerment. This can be started by exploring potential and improving the quality of human resources themselves, to be further distributed according to one's field of ability.

In an increasingly advanced digital age, the challenges and opportunities for women are becoming increasingly complex. Women have to deal with various social, technological, and cultural changes that can affect their lives. However, behind these challenges there are also great opportunities for women to utilize technology and the internet to achieve success and make a positive contribution to society.

One of the challenges faced by Muslim women is the existence of negative stereotypes and prejudices against their religion and identity. In this digital age, information can be easily widespread and often inaccurate or tendentious. Women are required to be open-minded and even need to have high digital intelligence to be able to filter the information received and fight negative stereotypes by providing real examples of peaceful and inclusive Islamic values.

Amidst these challenges, there are significant opportunities for women in the digital world. The internet has opened doors for them to access education, employment, and business opportunities that were previously difficult to reach. Women can utilize online educational platforms offering a variety of courses and training, thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills. This constitutes a crucial step towards empowerment, considering that education forms the primary foundation for success in the digital era. Online educational platforms also enable women to access educational resources tailored to their needs and preferences. They can choose courses relevant to their interests and goals, making education more personalized. This flexibility empowers them to plan their career development and self-empowerment more effectively.

In online educational platforms, there is also an issue concerning the need for tailored educational content. The requirement for educational content that reflects the values, needs, and specific aspirations of women is often inadequately met. In many cases, the available curricula and learning materials tend to be insufficient in addressing issues relevant to women, such as their roles in society, culture, and religion. This can result in a learning experience that is less relevant for them. Therefore, it is crucial to develop more in-depth and diverse educational content covering perspectives, issues,

and roles of women in the increasingly digitized modern world. This will help enhance the quality of education tailored to their needs and encourage more active participation in this digital era.

Through technology, women can also work from home while still honoring their natural roles; this can be advantageous for women. Technology enables women to develop online businesses or become influencers on social media. They can sell halal products globally or spread positive messages through inspirational content. Women can also use digital platforms to advocate for issues they deem important, such as gender equality, education, and human rights, which not only impact themselves but people worldwide. This can serve as a source of inspiration and foster a spirit of change for those who are halfway through their journey or just starting to make a difference.²⁹

In facing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities in the digital age, women need to have sufficient technological knowledge as well as good communication skills. They also need to maintain religious integrity and values in their every step of the way in the digital world. With a willingness to constantly learn and adapt to technological developments, women can become positive agents of change in today's digital society.

F. Developing Inclusive and Equitable Religious Education for Women

Gender justice and equality refer to the condition in which men and women have equal and balanced access to opportunities, involvement, control, and benefits of development, both within and outside the family context. Gender justice entails treating women and men according to their needs. This involves equal or different but balanced treatment in terms of rights, responsibilities, interests, and opportunities. Education is pivotal in achieving gender justice in society as it serves as a tool for conveying norms, knowledge, and skills to individuals. Essentially, educational institutions function as formal means for socialization and the transfer of values and norms prevailing in society, including gender norms. Therefore, early efforts are necessary to realize gender justice in educational institutions.³⁰

It is important to pay attention to how gender factors can affect the educational needs of learners and provide the right approach according to their needs. For example, boys tend to be more prone to learning disorders and hyperactivity, while girls tend to be more prone to anxiety disorders and depression, so the right approach should be tailored to their level of difficulty.

Inclusive education today does not only apply to the public domain, but should also penetrate into the spiritual realm, such as inclusive religious education. Religious education serves as a shaper of attitudes, character, morals and also thoughts that help the formation of noble values, faith and piety to Allah SWT. In Islam, the concept of responsibility and individual independence has been going on since the womb or since the beginning of human history. Thus, Islam does not condone discrimination regarding gender, both men and women both declare the same divine vow. Therefore, women in Islam should have access and fair treatment in education.

The issue of inclusive education in gender issues needs special attention, where there are still many people who underestimate the eyes of women who study or are educated. From here, the thing

²⁹ Dellia Mila Vernia, "Optimalisasi Media Sosial Sebagai Sarana Promosi Bisnis Online Bagi Ibu Rumah Tangga Untuk Meningkatkan Perekonomian Keluarga," *UTILITY: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Ekonomi* 1, no. 2 (2017).

³⁰ Syaefudin Achmad, "Membangun Pendidikan Berwawasan Gender," *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 14, no. 1 (2019).

that can be used as one way to overcome this is by developing inclusive religious education. This is because with the existence of inclusive religious education, it is expected to be the answer and solution to these problems and remain in accordance with the realm of religion that is believed.³¹

Gender-inclusive religious education is one of the important aspects in ensuring equality and justice for all individuals, including women. In an increasingly advanced society, it is important to recognize that every individual has the right to quality religious education without discrimination or restrictions on the basis of gender. Special attention should be paid to developing inclusive and equitable religious education for women by developing collaborative efforts between governments, educational institutions, religious communities, and families.

Governments should ensure policies that support gender equality in religious education and protect women's rights to learn and actively participate in religious activities. Each party must have a large contribution in maintaining the stability and quality of education so that it lasts a long time. Educational institutions must also play an active role in creating an inclusive and difference-friendly learning environment. They can provide curricula that include gender perspectives and involve women as teachers or resource persons in religious education programs. With synergy like this, it is expected to strengthen the initial foundation to create a comfortable learning environment for all.

Religious communities also bear the responsibility of creating safe and inclusive spaces for women to learn and participate in religious activities. They can organize discussions, seminars, or workshops addressing issues related to religious education for women. In doing so, they can foster the potential and improve the quality of life for women in the future. Furthermore, families play a crucial role in supporting inclusive and equitable religious education for women. Families should encourage their daughters to learn and develop a profound understanding of their religion, providing full support for their educational aspirations. Such encouragement motivates daughters to strive in honing the skills and competencies needed for their personal and academic growth.

With collaborative efforts, efforts to develop inclusive and equitable religious education for women will be more easily realized. By providing equal access to knowledge and skills, it not only strengthens the position of women in society, but also builds a more just, harmonious, and prosperous society as a whole. People who work hand in hand to build better and stronger pillars of life in the future.

G. Conclusion

Women have significant potential to actively contribute to the development of civilization in society. However, cultural, normative, and societal perspectives that tend to marginalize women present a tangible obstacle, akin to a tangled thread that needs to be unraveled. Misunderstandings about religious concepts and societal norms must be rectified by emphasizing justice. Opportunities and access to education for women should be broadened to fully harness their potential.

The digital era, offering ease of information access, should foster a more open-minded society that treats women without discrimination. Changes in societal attitudes regarding the role of women, coupled with policy implementations supporting women's empowerment in the context of religion and technology, are essential. In essence, the role of women in Islam should be continually strengthened and adapted to contemporary demands to achieve better gender equality and inclusive social well-being.

³¹ Mahbub Junaidi, "Pendidikan Multikultural Dan Pendidikan Inklusi Gender," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2017).

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