

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENDER EDUCATION BETWEEN PKS INDONESIA AND MUSLIM LEAGUE INDIA

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This paper compares the gender education conducted by two Islamic political parties in Indonesia and India represented by PKS (Prosperous and Justice Party) and the Muslim League. This comparative is essential since both countries face inequality in gender issues, and both parties claim as Islamic representation.

Methodology: This research is a comparative study model by the interviews and survey-based collecting data methodology. The object of this research is the leader of PKS and Muslim Leagues. The data were analysed and discussed with various literature reviews to perform the similarities and differences in gender education playing by both parties.

Main Findings: Both PKS and the Muslim League have a concern about women's education and participation in the public sphere and have done some programs and establishing some infrastructure to gain their goals. However, since Indonesia and India have different cultural and political backgrounds, gender education in Indonesia has fewer constraints than the India case.

Applications of this study: This study is helpful for the particular political parties to evaluate their programs in gender education. Moreover, it also will inspire the other to optimize the participation of women in public areas.

Novelty/Originality of this study: No research has been conducted on the comparative study of gender education between PKS in Indonesia and Muslim league in India.

Keywords: *Islam, Political Party, Gender, Indonesia, India.*

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on gender issues in the global world has impacted the Muslim society either in major Muslim population country and minority Muslim country like India. During the development of democracy in both countries, the views that the social and political rights of women and men because of their physical difference often become the justification of discrimination toward the women.

For some reason, biology claiming that women are less intelligent and more emotional than men, often used as the justification to limit the participation of women in the public sphere. On the other hand, men are supposed to have stronger physical capacity than women, less emotional, and smarter. They, therefore, are considered to be appropriate to participate actively in public life. Thus, the differences in biological matters have influenced the differences in law, rights, and obligations.

This general perception also emerged in Indonesia and India as two big democratic countries in the world with a lot of background similarities. In Indonesia, all religions are the same before the law, and all religious obligations must respect all others, without exception in Islam. The declining application of Sharia differs from secular groups, which promote the full isolation of the state and religion to moderate secularisation, which opposes shariah formalization in the Indonesian legal system (Machmudi, 2008).

With the position of Indonesia having a Muslim majority population, one of the unique Islamic parties in Indonesia, PKS (Welfare and Justice Party), bring the spirit of dakwah in the frame of the ummah and nation unification. For this party, the civilized Islamic society of Indonesia can be achieved if they can influence the political power and public opinion of the people. PKS want to show that Islam is the solution of people life in various fields living within the concept of nation-state in this contemporary time, including also in facing the issue of gender equality between men and women.

Meanwhile, in the case of India, Muslims are minority groups having only around ten percent of the total population. Muslims are spread all over India with minority characteristics except in the region of Kashmir. Therefore, most Indian Muslims felt being exploited and discriminated against the political system. Some of the Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim League, emerged to struggle for Muslim interests (Habib et al., 1976).

For those Islamic groups, at least some issues are facing the Indian Muslims even become the characteristics of Indian Muslims, such as their failure to take modern education, economic backwardness, and influenced by the local culture of Indian. The loss of Indian Muslim identity caused such conditions, even impact a large number of educated Indian Muslims to migrate to Pakistan (Habib et al., 1976). In terms of gender issues, for instance, the caste system of Hindu has also influenced Indian Muslim society.

Based on such background, this article discusses the comparison of gender education performed by PKS and Muslim League as the Islamic political parties in Indonesia and India to face inequality issues between men and women in both countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though there are two perspectives in understanding the issues of gender in Islam, discrimination on women still exists, especially in the developing democratic countries in the world, such as Indonesia and India.

Moaddelt explained at least there are two different religious discourses about the position of women. In Islamic fundamentalism, women are required to cover their corpses, except for their hands and faces, prevent them from doing some social activities, give them a lower status for brother, and to accept polygamy. Nevertheless, the Quran has been interpreted by contemporary religious scholars with a progressive interpretation of the ties between men and women. They defended women's education rights and equal involvement in social activities, challenged existing constraints on women, criticized men's views and actions towards women, and rejected polygamy (Moaddelt, 1998).

Kumari, in his paper, explains the causes of gender differences in political involvement. He argued that the tradition of strong sentiments and religious and social norms are the deciding factors that will restore active women's political participation. Some of these limiting factors are very subtle and full of sustainable social relations, while others are clear, such as discriminatory laws. With a declining economic situation, low or lack of education, limited or no land, limited mobility, and lack of financial sovereignty, women depend on men to facilitate their access to policies (Kumari, 2018).

With similar logic, Arimbi discussed that there are religious and cultural factors causing discrimination toward women. She wrote that the interpretation of hadith literature regarding the condemn of the angels until sunrise for a wife refusing her husband to have sexual intercourse strengthens the domination of men toward women. Moreover, she said that the Islamic organization has prominent roles in improving the power of religious doctrine toward the political system (Arimbi, 2009).

In terms of culture, she explained that the role of women reflects three known Javanese theorists. The first is in the adage 'koncowinging' (literally meaning: the companion area is behind the house); The second in 'Suargonunut hell katut' (i.e., a woman who goes wherever her husband goes, in hell or heaven, makes the only follower of the partner's will); And the third said the role of women is 'Manak, cook, macak' (in competitions, to cook and decorate for her husband) which is assuming that the position of women is in mattresses, kitchens, and wells (Arimbi, 2009).

Abusharaf in his paper explained that tackling women's rights through secular public law is a clear and theoretical solution to the problem of reform in civil law because it does not conflict with Islamic principles that oversee the role of women in the public sector (Abusharaf, 2006).

Moreover, Indonesia also has a long history related to political issues, sexuality, moral standards, and Islam. Since the end of the colonial era, discussions have repeated the right of women to marry, for example, often focusing on polygamy issues, which are legal with restrictions in Indonesia and are usually maintained by Islamic organizations as Muslim rights. The discourse has been related to main political issues, such as existing nationality in Indonesia and the conformity, whether the Indonesian and State constitutions have to comply with Islamic law or no (Brenner, 2011).

In the case of India, Banerjee claims that the birth rate of Muslims is higher than Hindu. Moreover, he questioned the reasons that the Quran allows a man to marry four wives, which this one man needs to fulfill the sexual appetite of all his wives. Therefore, he said that the picture of a Muslim man is a violent killer (Banerjee, 1999).

Such a kind of image, according to Burlet, cause the law and order system cannot objectively dealing with the violence. Even some of the formal resources acknowledge that the polices often participated using violence against Muslim and lower or non-caste groups (Burlet, 1999). Meanwhile, the position of religious toward the discrimination on women in public and private sectors is different. While talking about the outside issues such as recreation and employment, the religion gives the freedom for the women, meanwhile, in term of the domestic problems such as the household decision making, and other local discrimination, the religion is absent (Desai & Temsah, 2018).

The issues that happened since texts and traditions over religion are often the norms in the discussion of Islamic law from other family law systems in India. It has led critics to assume that Islamic law gives women the lowest rights and the smallest changes. However, Islamic law in all areas does not grant women fewer rights and does not fight against reform in contrast with other systems of familial law in India. Muslim women, for example, are given more authority to control the possession of Hindu women in most of India, before the law on Hindu heritage is amended in 2006. Muslim women can also get divorce ceremonies more quickly in court (Subramanian, 2008).

To gain the equality between men and women, some of Islamic feminism emerged both in Indonesia and India. In India, for instance, "Muslim women" aim to achieve gender equality under the personal status of the Islamic state. These activists do not refer to the constitution or the global principles of human rights that guide secular feminists who campaign for unified adoption, and there is no gender-neutral law of personal status law, but not the power of the Koran,

which seeks to give many rights Muslim women are generally rejected in training. They accused the “scientist” man of forcing him to play a ringing Muslim ([Vatuk, 2011](#)).

Facing such kind of condition, the Islamic parties in both countries, by its claim as the representative of Islam supposed to show their efforts. Here, the Islamic parties have received considerable attention from the ulama in these last few years. As the understanding of Islam is diverse around the world, there is no objective view of how an Islamic Party is. Still, in the broadest sense, the party could be viewed as a group that seeks to enforce Islamic (Sharia) law in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural aspects of lives.

For many people, even if there is no way for all Islamic parties, democracy is not in harmony with this shariah vision because sovereignty, in their opinion, falls to God, not to humans. In this primary topic, some Islamists often seem to take an undemocratic view on critical issues of fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech, the rights of women and religious freedom. Although many Islamic parties world-wide did not follow the democratic system and participated in fair elections, if permitted. Some have held ministerial positions in democratically elected governments ([Tomsa, 2012](#)).

However, since the issue of gender in politics is fascinating, women are also often used as symbolic for gaining political goals, especially during instability times and change ([Rinaldo, 2008a](#)). Somehow, there is an indication that gender education among political parties, including within the Islamic ones, cannot precisely assure as to the real support toward the women.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This research is field research with a comparative study model through interviews and survey-based. The informants of this research were the leaders of PKS in Indonesia and the Muslim League in India, giving information on the cultural values of Indonesian and Indian society. Three leaders represented each party, so the total of the participants of this research were six political parties leaders.

In Indonesia, the research was conducted in Malang, while in India, it was held in New Delhi. The reason for these locations was that both areas have similar characteristics. Indonesia and India, as multicultural countries, have many ethnicities, religions, and political orientations.

Instruments

The data that has been compiled by the observation, interview, and documentation then analyzed with some steps as reduction, display, verification, and conclusion ([Miles & Huberman, 1994](#)). After doing the interview, the authors also conducted Focus Groups Discussion (FGD) by inviting some of political scholars and activists either in Indonesia and India to explore and discuss their notions on the issues.

As quantitative research, the research also used the procedure to evaluate the validity of the data through some steps as follows: (1) prolonging observation time; (2) triangulate sources by checking gone source with others; (3) doing *member check* (4) *peer debriefing*, is when researchers doing discussion with colleagues in Malang and New Delhi, exceptionally expert in University of Muhammadiyah Malang and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

Based on the researches conducted, this part discusses the similarities and the differences between PKS Indonesia and Muslim League India in performing gender education in both countries. For that purpose, this part will discuss the similarities and differences of both parties as to the tool to compare their concern on gender education issues.

The Similarities

Firstly, both PKS and Muslim Leagues believe that Islam supports the participation of women in public life. For PKS, Islam is the only solution for all life issues, even in the level of politics. However, a lot of Muslims have already left the value of Islam. Therefore, they need to return to the moral principles and the way of life guided by Islam. For such purpose, PKS concern about the student movement, such as KAMMI, as the media of cauterization. History has proofed that KAMMI played a prominent role in the collapse to end the new order Indonesia ([Arimbi, 2009](#)).

During the interview with the activities of the Muslim League, the informant said that they are focusing on women's empowerment based on the Qur'an. The members of the party believe that Islam respects the existence of women and consider that Khadijah was the ideal profile of a woman in Islamic society. She was empowered, had her business as well as also being an educated person.

Therefore, there is also a slightly different perspective on the concept of gender equality within both parties and the western perspective. Hughes explains that Islam eternally brings the principle of justice and equality for women's emancipation. Therefore Islam does not require gender equality because, based on the Islamic shariah, men and women are in an equal position ([Hughes, 2012](#)). The most important one is how to actualize the principle and values of Islam in this current life.

Second, both parties were proud that India and Indonesia had experience led by women leaders. In Indonesia, after lengthy debate regarding the leadership of women since the majority of Indonesian populations are Muslim, then Megawati was becoming the first women president from 2001 to 2004 (Budianta, 2006). Such a condition indicated that the position of women in the public sphere is more respected and having equal opportunity as men.

In term of gender justice in India, the participation and the existence of women is quite powerful, and even India had experience led by lay, Indira Gandhi. The women also represent their existence in various sectors. They have the right to expose their life to obtain higher education. In his organisation, he tells that he has women wing in our organisation across the state.

Third, both PKS and the Muslim League have conducted various programs for gender education among their cadres. Based on the interview conducted in both parties, the methods of improving women's participation in the process of gender education are almost similar.

At least, there are three steps of gender education within both parties, consisting of the first way, through a personal approach of the existing members. The second way, recruitment is open through party orientation training, and the third way, through the regeneration path of the preaching and cell group meeting (routine party preaching is held once a month).

Forth, both parties have a special wing for women. Despite the facility for the women to express their interest and notions in the political system. The existence of this special wing because both parties believe that the separation of men and women in public places is needed. However, it doesn't disturb the substance and spirit of equality between men and women. They have equality of opportunity and rights to participate in the political arena.

The participation of women in the wing of both parties is tremendously high. Even they have established some madrasah, especially for women, to give more significant opportunities for those wanting to participate actively in public affairs. Moreover, there are also a considerable number of women who subscribe to the organization as volunteers in all the provinces in Indonesia and states in India.

Fifth, both parties have a mission for enforcing dakwah, which is related to power consistently and continuously within the framework of Islamic law and ethics. Therefore, both parties actively support the right to express opinions under Islamic law and necessary order, the right to propose initiatives and creations in various forms of proposals, and the right to claim rights, defend themselves, file cases, and appeal. Therefore, both parties also believe that there should be no separation between religion and politics, and there should be no dichotomy.

The last, both parties, even also collaborated with secular and cross-border political parties in terms of ideology to gain their interests, including also the issue of gender education. In the case of PKS, for instance, PKS also used to build a coalition with various parties having a different ideological background.

The same effort also was made by Muslim Leagues, which around the 1980s and early 1990s, built a coalition with low caste Hindus, and Non-caste to reduce inequality and underline the disproportionate social robbery faced. This alliance marks the error of the national ideology of a united Hindu group and highlights the general social and economic problems that cross religion (Burlet, 1999).

The Differences

Despite the similarities mentioned above, the gender education of both parties also has some differences, as explained as follows.

First, PKS in Indonesia is successfully gained more support from the people to initiate various programs such as gender education. Therefore, in terms of understanding Islam within politics, PKS has transformed to introduce a new perspective. Jemaah Tarbiyah activists at the central leadership in the select committee have started the church's strategy to improve their right image. Sharia practice does not only enforce a compilation of Islamic rules but includes all the beneficial areas of human beliefs and attitudes.

From the PKS point of view, the resolution of the Indonesian political and financial crisis needs to involve ethical and global values. The party has been working to make Sharia more practical for daily affairs to gain popular support. The Sharia law incident has been expanded to cover essential and practical issues, such as the effort against corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Machmudi, 2008).

Therefore, for PKS, sharia campaigns must focus on welfare, stability, and peace in the world. The most precise form of preservation is required for party members to preserve public services, transport, parks, streets, and toilet facilities. The spiritual circle has sought spirituality in all worldly activities covered by Islamic values. Religious beliefs can justify all solutions to the problems by giving the argument based on the Quran and Hadith.

Meanwhile, in India, since most of the Muslims are educationally backward, they obtained a limited number of successfully adapting Islamic principles toward the modern era. The understanding of Islam among the Muslims,

including also in understanding the position of women within the society is influenced mostly by the local culture and textual understanding of Islam.

Second, PKS has successfully also represented by the significant number of women in parliament. However, the Muslim League in India has not got the target. In other words, it can be said that the number of Muslim activists in Indonesia raises significantly. Women's activities also organized other women for social and political transformation.

Moreover, the position of Islam is more robust since the majority number of the population in Indonesia is Muslim. Even among the women activists, many women who advocate equality between men and women refuse to use the word feminism, primarily for its connection to pluralism and socialism (Rinaldo, 2008b).

This vast number of women participation in public spheres of Indonesia also influenced by the movement of educated women on campus. The women's movement and the student movement are growing. The broader mobilization of feminist groups, environmental groups and Muslim student organizations took place in the late 1980s, and the process of mutual ideological convergence seems to have begun (Rinaldo, 2008b).

For some women activists of PKS, their husband is a partner. Some activists are urging Muslim women to be more involved in public places. Indeed a Muslim woman has an essential role in the public area, which of course is needed, to leave home, a position that a husband needs so that his wife has an active role in the development of the Muslim community.

On the other hand, the limited education level, cultural factors, and minority number of people influence the women Muslim of India, especially among the activist to Muslim League to have no representative in parliament.

Third, PKS is working in a majority Muslim population making the constraint regarding the issue of gender from the perspective of Islam get a not significant complaint. Otherwise, the Muslim League in India is in a Muslim minority country. In India, for instance, even the law to understand Islam in other perspectives should be accepted by the Muslim league, such as the law to abolish polygamy. Therefore, the reform of Muslim Personal Law to give Muslim women equality in inheritance and protection after marriage (by abolishing polygamy) is a rising demand which ought to be raised by the democratic movement (Habib et al., 1976). Mawdudi argued that the standard of Islamic understanding and consciousness among women should be the same as men (Robinson, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it is clear the existence of PKS and the Muslim League as Islamic political parties have their particular backgrounds. Therefore, in some condition, the gender educations of both parties have some similarities, and in some other circumstances, they also have some difference.

Some of the similarities are the understanding of the need for women's participation in public lives and their efforts to support such belief, such as by conducting some programs and establishing a special wing for women. In terms of the implementation of their dakwah obtaining their goals and interests, both political parties even built a coalition with secular and cross border parties.

However, as different circumstances, PKS working in majority Muslim countries having fewer constraints and getting more supports and higher women participation in the public sphere, such as indicated by their representative in parliament. However, with limited access to education and minority Muslim country background in India, the Muslim League needs to work harder, improving its target. Therefore, this study also gives inspiration for the Indians to develop and increase the participation of women in Indian politics by following the Indonesian model.

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

This article has discussed the comparative study of gender education between two Islamic parties only in Indonesia and India. Therefore, in the future, the authors plan to analyse the same issues involving both secular and Islamic political parties in two countries, giving a more comprehensive perspective. Moreover, the parsing of determinant factors in the development of gender education in both countries is essential.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

The first author of this article had a responsibility to compile the data and interpret the findings. The second author has contributed to literature reviews, research methods, and became as a corresponding author. Moreover, the third author is a person in charge of reviewing the readiness of the article.

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