

CONTRIBUTION OF KARTINI'S THOUGHT ON WOMEN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this paper is to describe Raden Ajeng Kartini's ideas regarding women's education, and to analyze the relevance of Raden Ajeng Kartini's ideas regarding women's education with the development of Islamic education.

Methodology: This is library-based research which used a historical and biographical approach by retelling and revealing the history and important events in the life of Kartini. In analyzing the collected data, this paper used content analysis which was described Kartini's ideas on the women's education that have been manifested and has clear theoretical relevance.

Result: Kartini's idea on education was a critical reaction towards every issue she has faced based on the educational experiences she has received hence emerging as the practical concepts of women's education. Kartini's struggle was not merely through ideas but also involved institutional establishment. She was brave enough to take a step forward to established school for women even though it against the Islamic culture.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teaches, and students.

Novelty/Originality: The impact on further development was that Kartini's fight becoming a stimulant for the development of education, specifically in Islamic education which underwent rapid development through the establishment of women's schools (*pesantren*) and the advancement of Islamic concepts with the growth of various religious organizations after Kartini.

Keywords: *Women Education, Kartini's Thought, Islamic Education, Women Movement, Contribution.*

INTRODUCTION

The discussions related to women are very interesting and never-ending. Women may not be able to entirely occupy "high profile", but issues concerning women such as position, role, activities, equality, and independence continue to be controversial and emotional issues. (Marhaeni, 2008) Before the development of the 20th century, women could not be equated to men in any way respect, especially in education. (Woodward & Bemmelen, 2015) Women were not given the right to be educated and behave in social interaction with society. Women were only allowed to serve at home, as a "good" wife, without any freedom, be it in their thoughts or behavior as a human being given potential. Above issues provoked by several women figures such as Cut Nyak Dien, Raden Dewi Sartika, Rohana Kudus, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, and Raden Ajeng (R.A.) Kartini, to change society's mindset towards women and change women's position to be equal to men, especially in terms of education. (Kaptein, 2017)

Kartini and Her Thought. R.A. Kartini who later was referred as Kartini is one of the figures who was different from the other women figures because of her achievement and spirit to fight for emancipation has been deemed as a form of patriotism and has inaugurated her as an Indonesian hero which was written in the Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 108 dated 02 may 1964 and was commemorated on her birthday, on 21 April, as Kartini's Day. The giving of this conferred title has raised much criticism from the people. Kartini's fight was considered to be a struggle for the local Javanese only, especially for Jepara's people. Kartini's fight was also deemed to have the subjective interest of the Dutch with the existence of the ethical policy. Moreover, Hasja W. Bachtiar considers Kartini's fight as only limited to ideas. (Jean Stewart Taylor, 1976)

Besides, the rumor regarding Kartini's religion was questioned. Kartini's religious history seemed to be hidden from the public. The people assumed that Kartini adhered to westernized beliefs in her ideas without taking any religious aspects into account. However, when further examined, it was found that Kartini was the descendent of a religious Islamic family. (Said, 2014) Ever since she was young, Kartini was educated with a western education by her father and made friendships with Dutch children. However, this education did not make her adhere to the beliefs of the white people. Kartini's nationalism was a social reflection and criticism from an Indonesian woman based on religiousness, wisdom, beauty, and humanity that contains universal values such as education, social solidarity, unity of the youth, and equality. (Sudrajat, 2007) (Wolly, 2017) In the time of Kartini which was very thick of Javanese culture, women were placed as second class persons under men. Women were not given the power even over themselves. Women were not given freedom for self-actualization. Their duties were strictly only in the kitchen, well, and bed, because women were subordinates of men. They were seen as slaves of their masters, where every aspect of a woman's life has been decided in a certain way by her parents and followed obediently, especially within the Javanese nobility. (Agustina, 2014)

The equality that was initiated by Kartini was a form of emancipation, one of which is education, where women should have the right to receive education and socialize within the society. Thus, in this day and age, the role of women has become very complex include in the field of education, economy, culture, even politics. (Said, 2014) However, the development help of globalization, which is increasingly widespread, gives the wrong understanding of emancipation related to gender equality. Feminists from the last several decades have voiced, fought for female's rights, and fought against every form of oppression against women in various ways. They have even tried to equalize the position and the role of men and women regardless of their gender hence resulting in the deviation that violates the nature of a woman. (Jean Stewart Taylor, 1976b) The Purpose of the Research is based on the background stated above, the purpose of this research is to describe Raden Ajeng Kartini's ideas regarding women's education and analyze the relevance of Raden Ajeng Kartini's ideas regarding women's education in the development of Islamic education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Criteria of Study Selection. This research used theories on women education which were considered to be appropriate for answering the research questions. Based on several definitions of education by Ki Hajar Dewantara, Sugarda Purkawatja, and Ahmad D. Marimba, it can be concluded that education is the effort made to give understanding and experience in order for students to be competent and skilled in developing their potential either for the individual or for the community, nation, and country. Education is a system consisting of components that are interrelated to one another. These components include education purpose, educator, education material, education method, and educational environment. (Masni, 2018)

Education is not conducted by discrimination against men and women. Based on the UU 1945 article 31 verse 1 which states that each citizen has the right to education. The principles in education democracy include: (1) the basic rights of every citizen to receive an education, (2) the rights of every citizen to receive equal opportunity to receive education, (3) the rights and opportunities based on their ability. Educational democracy in teaching needs to be conducted without forgetting to embed gender ideology so that each gender understands its position to reduce gender inequality. The most significant role in forming gender ideology is played by teachers and textbooks. (Agustina, 2014)

Officially, in the sixth five-year development plan (1994–1999), women's development goals were organized and were based on the direction of the 1998 GBHN, which states that women as the state resources and human resources for the development of all fields. Thereafter, it states that there is a need to develop women's abilities and that technology, skills, and mental and spiritual endurance in order to make them able to have an opportunity to play an active role in every field including in the decision of making and facing change either in the scope of the community or the international world. The role of women in development as stated in the MPR Decree Number IV the year 1978. This Decree used as the foundation of the nation's struggle which stated clearly that women's role is to foster household well-being, nurture the youth, and participate in every aspect of the development of the community and country. (Syamsul Hidayat, Sudarno Shobron, Muthoifin, 2020)

Gender theories used in this research provide an understanding of the difference between men and women are the nature/nurture theory and social theories within the community. Nature theories are theories that based on gender differences on biological functions which resulted in the difference of roles in the society, whereas nurture theories state the differentiation between the roles of men and women exists due to cultural factors. The social theories presented and considered to be important are the functional structural theory and the social conflict theory. Those theories are adopted from social theories that approach to gender issues since there are no theories found specifically on gender, those various theories have been developed using sociological theories. The functional structural theory is popularly made by Robert k, Merton, and Talcot Parson where the social theories are mostly influenced by Karl Marx's ideas, which further become feminist theories. (Rosilawati, 2017)

Islam sees women as special beings created by Allah *subhanahuwata'ala*. The arrival of Islam gave women freedom and independence, especially in terms of freedom to receive an education. Islam's perspective on women can be seen through the following views: (1) the women's position in Islam, it can be seen from history before and past Islam's arrival, furthermore, it is also explained in several verses of the Al- Quran regarding the position of women such in Q.S. Al-Hujarat verse 13 and Q.S. An-Nisaa verse 34 which are interpreted into several interpretations, (2) the base of women's education which can be found in Q.S. Az-Zumar verse 9, (3) the aim of women's education which is based on the aims of Islamic education which is to form students into good human beings and *Khalifah fil ardhi*, (4) the role of women's education is divided into two, namely: their role in the family and their role within the community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is library research which was conducted using the qualitative paradigm, where the characteristics of qualitative research are descriptive and inductive. Kartini's idea of education explained descriptively by revealing and retelling important events that happened in her life. The approach used the historical and biographical approach that retell the history and important events emphasizing on the chronology of the story systematically. It was based on the examination of historical resources, recording of information, evaluation of historical resources, and interpretation of historical resources. (Muthoifin, Eko Supriyanto, 2020)

The source of the primary data used in this research is Kartini's letters collection compiled in the book of "*Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*" translated by Armijn Pane ([Pane, 1972](#)), and Kartini's letters in the book of "*Emansipasi Surat-surat Kepada Bangsaanya 1899-1904*" translated by Sulastin Sutrisno ([Sutrisno, 2014](#)). The source of the secondary data of this research has been taken from library literature that examines Kartini's ideas and field research at the Kartini Museum in Jepara and Sarirejo Elementary School as the first of Kartini's schools established in 1913 by the Van Deventer foundation after her passing. (B. P. Muthoifin, 2020) ([Williams, 2007](#))

This research used document studies as the data collection method, to find the information related to Kartini's ideas in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, artifacts, etc. Content analysis used to analyze the finding, which this technique was used to find a replicative and valid conclusion from the collected data. The steps conducted were: 1) choosing the topic, 2) collecting data related to Kartini's ideas, 3) reviewing Kartini's ideas on women's education as a whole, 4) reviewing Kartini's ideas on women's education comprehensively, 5) analyzing the connection between Kartini's ideas on women's education and Islamic education, 6) analyzing Kartini's ideas within the development of Islamic education, 7) making the conclusion. The article should be written under the planned methodology with the given headings so it would be clear to the reader and they can correlate with this. ([Cholil, 2017](#))

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There have been many previous studies on Kartini, however, those previous studies had different objects and results from this research. The object and result of previous studies focused on finding the meaning behind Kartini's letters which have been translated into English, such as the studies conducted by ([Gouda, 1998](#)), ([Taylor, 2008](#)), ([Hendrik M.J. Maier, 1988](#)), and ([Lawrence, 2015](#)) that compared Kartini's letters to the letters written by an Australian feminist. ([Muchoiyaroh & P, 2014](#)) Other studies have examined the realization of Kartini's dreams in the period after hers, which was fought by her four younger sisters Rukmini, Kardinah, Kartinah, and Sumantri, it makes them become the women Kartini had hoped for. Women who play an important role within her family and the community, such as found in studies conducted by ([Lee, 2008](#)), ([Woodward & Bemmelen, 2015](#)), and ([Bijl & Chin, 2020](#)) that examined women's voices in Asia, one of which was Kartini, in the realization of her dream which had been carried out by her four sisters. ([Coté, 1998](#))

Recent studies also have different objects and results compared to this research. Such as the research conducted by (Mahy, 2012) who examined how it is being a modern-day Kartini by seeing the commemoration on Kartini Day and defining the meaning of this celebration. ([Bennett et al., 2014](#)) Another research was done by ([Mahmudah, 2015](#)) who examined Kartini's religious experiences seen from the perspective of religious philosophy. The explanation above delivers the understanding that this research contains many differences compared to previous studies which this research emphasizes on both the concept and practice of Kartini's women's education and the relevance with the development of Islamic education. ([Hartono et al., 2018](#))

Kartini's Concept on Women Education

Education, for Kartini, is a tool to open society's minds in the direction of modernity- a step towards an advanced civilization, where men and women cooperate together in building the nation. Equality in education is one form of freedom for women. Freedom that is implied is the freedom to stand alone, become an independent woman, a woman who is not dependent on another person. ([Muchoiyaroh & P, 2014](#)) The Kartini's goal for women education is to turn women become good and capable women, who are aware of their nature and can carry out their great obligations in the community. This is in order to make women become a part of the society as a good mother, wise educators, household managers who can manage the finance, and a good helper for anyone who needs their help.

A child's first education begins with its family. Mothers play an extremely important role in educating their children from a young age. A mother who is educated will give a good education to her children thus enhancing intelligence and developing character for the child. Furthermore, a mother should not differentiate the education given to either their sons or daughters. ([Cholil, 2017](#))

Educators in school referred to as teachers, should positioning themselves as mothers of their students. It should never be as if a teacher is only known as someone who has merely facilitated the students with the knowledge, but a teacher should also have an emotional closeness that is full of love with their students that ability to form their character. Ethical education is not only given to children but also adults. The method used in teaching ethical education can be through readings that captivate one's feelings. Such as, songs, fairy tales, and toys that can be used to educate the students. The materials taught are general knowledge, reading and writing, and vocational skills for women such as sewing, embroidery, health education, household education, and ethics education. ([Bennett et al., 2014](#))

The Practice of Women Education in Kartini School Semarang Indonesian

Kartini school was first opened by Kartini and Rukmini in 1903. In the beginning, there were only 9 students, but gradually the number of students increased. The materials taught were reading, writing, sewing, embroidery, etc. based on kartini's education concept. It was initiated without involving the government's curriculum because Kartini's goal was not only to provide general education but also to ethical education. Kartini School was also opened in Rembang

after Kartini's marriage and included her husband too. However, in the end, Kartini's school had to be closed due to the lack of financial funds. [\(Sudarno Shobron, Amrin, Imron Rosyadi, 2020\)](#)

After Kartini's passing, fundraising was held to collect money in order to build a Kartini school just as she had dreamed of. Thus, in 1913 the first Kartini School was established in Semarang and Jakarta, followed by Kartini schools in several other areas. To this day, Kartini schools still exist, one of which is the first Kartini school located in Semarang which has presently been changed into Sarirejo Kartini Elementary School Semarang. Below is the analysis description of the comparison between the Kartini's concept of women's education and the practice of women's education in Kartini schools. [\(Jean Stewart Taylor, 1976b\)](#)

Table 1: Comparison between Kartini's concept of women's education and the practice of Kartini schools at Present

Subject	Kartini's Education Concept	Practice of Kartini Schools	Accordingly/ Un-accordingly
Ownership	Schools should be owned by private sectors so it can have their authority system.	The school has merged into a government-owned school where all provisions must follow the procedures from the national government.	Un-accordingly
Goals	To turn women into intellectual and virtuous women, who does not only play a role within her family but also in the community as carriers of civilization.	The vision of the school is the realization of schools that are caring and cultured, excel in performance, noble in character, and globally educated for the purpose of achieving the goal of national education.	Accordingly
Educator	Educators are not only instructors but also educators who positioning themselves as mothers to their students.	As motivators, supporters, who do not only teach students but also provide them with skills and implement ethics.	Accordingly
Method	Readings, fairy tales, songs, games that can educate, and the authority to give punishment other than corporal punishment (non-physical).	Active learning is creative, characterized, and fun by using sources such as the environment, readings, and technology.	Accordingly (better)
Material	Knowledge related to health and illnesses, art, cooking, sewing, reading and writing, embroidery, and taking care of the household.	Materials that are appropriated to the national education curriculum. Additional material in extracurricular activities such as karawitan, choir, traditional dance, and macapat and other skills in certain activities such as competitions.	Accordingly (skills in different development)
Language	Dutch language mastery is taught in all learning activities, both in reading and writing.	English language material is taught in grade 5 and 6	Accordingly (decrease in quality)
Environment	The very basic education is family, then the family environment that forms the social environment the civilization is created.	In the patterns of harmonious and interactive relations between the school, the students, and the parents that creating a sense of trust among each other.	Accordingly

Source: Various sources

Kartini's notion of women's education is a manifestation of her sensitivity towards social issues that have become a virus and has lodged within Indonesians in the form of feudalism. Kartini's fight to raise women's education to be equal to that of men conforms with Islamic education. Further explanation can be seen in the following table.

Table 2: The Comparison of Kartini's Women's Education and Women's Education from an Islamic perspective

No	Type	Kartini's Idea	Islamic Education	Accordingly/
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				un- accordingly	
1	Women's Position		Kartini fought for women's emancipation to equalize the position of women and men, for women to be able to be men's partners in building a better civilization.	Based on Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13, the position of men and women are equal in Allah's eyes, except for their piety. Furthermore, based on Q.S. An-Nisa: 34, each gender is given something that exceeds the other, accordingly to their roles and functions.	Accordingly
2	The goal of Women's Education	of	To turn women into skilled and good women, who are able and skilled in carrying out their obligations within their family and in their society heading towards an advanced civilization namely in their morals and worship to Allah <i>subhanahuwata'ala</i> .	To turn mankind into <i>kamil</i> human beings who are able to carry out their tasks as humans as a whole, who are aware of their nature as <i>hamba Allah subhanahuwata'ala</i> . Women's education is aimed to turn women into women as a whole who have obligations as a <i>Khalifah</i> .	Accordingly
3	Role of Women's Education	of	Women have two roles within the family where they must remember their nature as wives and mothers, and in the society where they are carriers of civilization. So, only educated women are able to carry out both roles well.	The family of an educated woman can create a string moslem generation and build a <i>sakinah</i> family. Within society, educated women will create a healthy environment based on Al-Quran and As-Sunnah values.	Accordingly

Kartini's Contribution to the Development of Islamic Education

Kartini was critical not only in social issues within the society but also in the area of religion. The threat of Christianization from Dutch colonizers who persuaded Muslims to conform to their religion was accompanied by guarantees of social, health, educational welfare, and at times through force, which can separate Muslims and damage Islamic education. Many schools were built for the native people that essentially had hidden motives of Christianization. Kartini often criticized these actions through her writings to her friends. However, she never received a serious response on the matter. Hence, Kartini did not give further emphasis on the threat of Christianization. Besides, at that time, many people did not think about the danger of Christianization, but Kartini had thought of it. Only after her death did the threat of Christianization receive a serious response from various Islamic groups, and the conflict between Muslims and Christians became a serious issue in the development of Islamic education. ([Woodward & Bemmelen, 2015](#))

Kartini's perspective on religion was very universal. Kartini did not see religion from the point of view of Islam itself, but from the eyes outside of Islam who sees religion as a common belief that is embraced by all of humankind. Kartini's limited knowledge of Islam rendered her to act freely towards religion, it was resulting in an abundance of multi-interpretations among society. Kartini once declared that she would no longer carry out fasting, she will not read the Al-Quran because she could not understand its meaning, or carry out other religious acts. Kartini could not understand why a person had to carry out all of these actions. She believed that every action should have a foundation and a clear source that it is right or wrong can be known, the good and bad of action, not based on beliefs of ancestors. ([Muthoifin, 2019](#))

The Islamic community in Kartini's time is those who have a very shallow understanding of Islam itself because there have not been many who had a deep understanding of Islamic teachings. Moreover, the al-Qur'an, which is the guide of human life was not allowed to be translated and only a few people knew the meaning contained inside. Kartini's critical reflection regarding Islam gave understanding to society to interpret Islamic teachings comprehensively. ([S. shobron Muthoifin & Rahman, 2019](#))

Although Kartini has limited religious understanding, she believed that religion played an enormous role in human civilization. Kartini did not explicitly state the importance of religion in education in her letters, but Kartini's understanding of religion that continued to gradually become deeper elucidated the view that the foundation of a child's education was having a good basis of religion, the first thing a mother teaches to her child is ethics.

Kartini School also put religion as one of the materials taught. Religion is given as one of the basic materials to understand other subjects. Kartini emphasized the importance of mastering religion. Al-Quran is not only to be read but also for its meaning to be comprehended to answer all issues of the time. ([B. P. Muthoifin, 2020](#))

Kartini schools achieved quite a significant development in delivering the understanding of the importance of education for women, therefore after her passing, many women's schools that similar to Kartini school were established in various

areas such as Ambon, Makassar, Aceh, Medan, etc. There has even been a Modern Islamic school established in Padang that educates both men and women. ([Suprpto, 2017](#))

The ideas and practices of women's education on the native Indonesian is a stimulant for the growth of knowledge and better understanding, especially in Islamic education. As previously stated, at the time of Kartini and the period before that, Islamic education had not been deeply studied. Kartini's criticality of Islam raised the awareness of Muslim scholars to improve the people's understanding with a clear education concept, hence after the time of Kartini, merely ten years after, Islamic education developed rapidly. ([Nurmila, 2014](#)) After Kartini's passing, many Islamic schools were established and were not only open to boys but also girls. Furthermore, many women's schools were established, especially *pesantren* for girls in various areas. The growth of Islamic movements that had the notions and orientations of developing progressive Islamic education also began. To this day, Islamic education continues to experience extremely rapid development towards education that can withstand the rest of the time. ([Benthall & Benthall, 2016](#))

Vocational Education as a Reorientation of Kartini's Women Education

The concept of education initiated by Kartini has been realized at present. Women are able to access education wherever and whenever they want. Women have the freedom to determine their own lives and are able to move forward to achieve what they hope for. Access to education is opened for women. Since modern Indonesian women are able to raise their level of education to university. Presently, there are many women who hold the title of professor, doctor, etc. At this level, women have achieved equality with men in terms of education. However, the discussion of Kartini does not end at this point, although the equality that she dreamed of has been realized and the future generation still holds the obligation to make progress and fight towards a more progressive Indonesia. ([Celarent, 2016](#))

Kartini's figure and ideas need to be re-interpreted, especially her ideas on education. Education is the tool used by Kartini for Indonesia in advance. Education enables women to gain freedom, which is the freedom to stand alone, to be independent, and not to be dependent on others. Kartini really wanted women to obtain freedom both physically and mentally, in order to make women able to develop their abilities and potential. The highlighted line does not clarify from where it is referred i.e any book or others. ([Sudarno Shobron, Syamsul Hidayat, Muthoifin, 2020](#))

The concept of education initiated by Kartini highly emphasizes on vocational, where Kartini asked Abendanon as the Director of the Dutch Department of Education, Religion, and Crafts to establish vocational education for Indonesian. Kartini hoped that with vocational skills, a person can become independent and would be able to carry out any task without being a burden to anyone. In its practice, Kartini provided several skills for her students, such as sewing, crocheting, cooking, etc. In general, to make women independent and to have the preparation of building a family and the community. At present, vocational education is more commonly known as a vocational school. Vocational education is education that trains a student's skills and abilities, improves their personal, social, intellectual, behavioral, and vocational skills which enables the students to live independently and not to depend on others. Furthermore, vocational education also aimed to fulfill the quality of the working market competition so that an individual has the will and courage to face various problems in life and has the ability to solve them with creative solutions. ([Hartono et al., 2018](#))

Kartini's vocational education requires the formation of character to improve an individual's personal skills. Kartini stated that the advancement of civilization has not only determined by the high level of knowledge, but also by the level of ethics. Kartini essentially stated that morals play an important role in human life. Morals cannot arise by itself, rather there needs continuous and repeated practice until it is planted in one's soul. This can be seen through Kartini's character which is polite, gracious, respectful, humble, wise, uplifting, caring, courageous, tolerant, etc. Kartini is a noble who has the responsibility of setting a good example for the people. Kartini's characteristics as a true woman must be followed by the present society. This means the knowledge must be followed by morality and noble character. ([Bambang Sumardjoko, Sudarno Shobron, Muthoifin, 2020](#))

In terms of intellectuality, Kartini was a true learner. Kartini was very fond of reading. A wide variety of books and reading sources became Kartini's center of attention. Not only in reading books, but she also comprehended, studied, and re-wrote what she read into her own ideas. Kartini extracted the essence of good cultures and assimilated them with Indonesian culture. Present education has fast access due to globalization. Development that has become more and more rapid and advanced must be accompanied by a high level of intellectuality. Thus, it will not be left behind by other countries. Intellectuality also plays a role in creating an advanced civilization in this digital era. ([Cholil, 2017](#))

Other than personal skills and intellectuality, vocational education also develops vocational skills. Kartini emphasized vocational education for women through cooking, sewing, crocheting, and other skills that could support their independence. Women must be free, where this freedom refers to independence as a woman. Women are not bound to cultures that restrain their lives. With those skills, women can become independent and do not depend on others. At present, vocational education is the practice that applied expertise in their respective fields, then women are able to compete with men in the working world, produce skilled workers who have good qualifications and knowledge, and support for achievement. This paragraph could be written in the conclusion section. ([Askuri & Kuipers, 2019](#))

CONCLUSIONS

Kartini's concept of education is practical and applicable to women's education. Kartini's concept of education is not only a notion but also an idea that has been realized through the establishment of Kartini schools for women. The result of Kartini's heroic fight within the Javanese society which still adhered to feudalism customs stimulated the development of education in its time, especially Islamic education. While, not long after Kartini's passing, many Muslim scholars developed Islamic education progressively through movements of various religious organizations engaged in politics, social, and education. Based on the conclusion, everyone, especially women, should be able to position themselves accordingly in their family life and their life within the society in order to build an advanced civilization by raising a generation of Muslims with a strong faith in knowledge and technology.

Implications, this research can be used for universities, teachers, and students, especially for the authors of this article.

Recommendations for future studies, the impact on further development was that Kartini's fight becoming a stimulant for the development of education, specifically in Islamic education and women education.

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