

BUILDING AN EGALITARIAN FAMILY THROUGH MUSLIMAT AND FATAYAT NAHDLATUL ULAMA (NU)

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Abstract- The purpose of this study generally is to describe the role of Muslimat and Fatayat (an organization of Muslim women) in forming an egalitarian family. Specifically, this study discusses the role of Muslimat and Fatayat NU and gender in forming an egalitarian family. Both of these problems were approached using qualitative methods. The concept of gender is offered as capital to form an egalitarian family. The results of the study indicate that Muslimat and Fatayat NU have a strategic role in guiding Muslim families towards friendly Islamic life. Friendliness will be created if each family member respects each other and there is no discrimination between men and women. Gender stereotypes that give rise to discrimination must be eroded to create equality that characterizes egalitarian families. Gender stereotypes are found in children's play, types of child work, and children's attitudes. Stereotypically differentiated games of boys and girls are based on risk. Boys tend to play hard and risky games such as soccer, playing kites, and playing car toys. Whereas girls play dolls, cook, and trade. Likewise it happens in work life. The attitude of girls tends to be weak, gentle, and whiny, while boys must be brave. These stereotypical things must be eliminated. Muslimat and Fatayat NU which are formed by Muslim women and mother are as social movers. In addition, mother has a big role in directing egalitarian in the family.

Keyword: friendliness, mutual respect, equality

I. Introduction

Religious radicalism, multiculturalism, and pluralism in this context are important issues. In addition, to other major issues such as democracy and human rights color public discourses in the past two decades. The mainstreaming of the discourse on the phenomenon becomes more actual when it is associated with the role of Muslimat and Fatayat's religious elements. There are some fundamental arguments that can be put forward to explain it, such as in the structure of violence produced by the social system of globalization with its dominative, hegemonic, and exploitative character ^[1]. It is almost can be proven that

religious elements are drawn in it. Many cases can be referred to, such as the incidents of the Book Bombing, the Bali bombing, the bombing of the J.W Marriot Hotel, bomb blasted in Kuningan, and also the violence against Jama'ah Ahmadiyah which posts were from santri (Muslims) or even santri from Islamic boarding school. This condition, obviously, is very worrying because it can threaten the destruction of the social ecology of the religious plurality of the people. In addition, at the same time it can threaten the destruction of the existence of the Indonesian nation as the *locus classicus*, the classic place of pluralism ^[2].

Muslimat and Fatayat, as one of the socio-religious elements, should have their own attention in maintaining and caring for the ecology of religious pluralism in order to remain conducive. The development of religious life cannot be separated from the role of Muslimat and Fatayat women in fostering and developing the religious life of the people, especially the vital role in the family, both through the role of education, proselytizing, and social transformation which are the real potential owned by Muslimat and Fatayat. As stated by Minister of Human Development and Culture (Coordinating Minister for PMK) Puan Maharani, during the peak celebration of the 71st Muslim Day of NU at the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, the role of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) for the development of the Indonesian nation is enormous. Muslimat NU not only safeguards the integrity of the nation, but also it fills the development with many concrete steps consistently (Tuesday, 28/3/2017). Through these three elements, Muslimat and Fatayat have great potential to contribute. That role has been played proportionally by Muslimat and Fatayat with its moderate character and the principle of Tasamuh / Tolerant being inherent and able to become the connection of various social problems and nationalities of the people.

Starting from the importance of maintaining religious harmony that starts from the family and the environment, the

problem that will be raised in this paper is how the role of Muslimat and fatayat in building an egalitarian family is. The role of the family becomes very important as a foundation for character building. The concept of gender will be offered as a solution to build an egalitarian family among Muslims.

Recent studies on gender have been increasingly talked about, from intellectuals to general people all talking about and using the term of gender; even though the word of 'gender' is often misunderstood. Gender is a relatively new term. According to Elaine Showalter, gender discourse began to be discussed by people in early 1977, when a group of feminists in London no longer used old issues such as patriarchal or sexist, but replaced them with gender issues (gender discourse) [3].

Talking about women and their position in social life is certainly very interesting; especially in a society that is generally misogyny patrilineal. Lately, woman has become a more intense topic conversation than before, especially after the emergence of the women's emancipation movement. The views that arise also vary; even one tends to be the opposite of the other. This also happened among religious groups, including Muslims itself.

There are several variables that can be used as standards in analyzing the principles of gender equality in the Qur'an. The variables include:

1. Men and women are both as servants
2. Men and women are both as caliphs
3. Men and women accept primordial agreements
4. Adam and Hawa, actively involved in the cosmic drama
5. Men and women have the potential to reach achievement [4].

At present, many old social structures are rapidly destroyed and replaced by new rational and liberal social institutions. In this new social structure, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the old behavior of these women. Therefore, at present, the holy books begin to be reviewed and reinterpreted, at least among the creative, dynamic, and pro-religious community. Through these backgrounds, it is expected to attract researchers to deconstruct gender discourse in Islam in accordance with the socio-cultural development of modern society. All of those were done to avoid interpretation bias that only benefits one party and harms the other.

II. Research Method

This study on a macro basis used a qualitative research paradigm [5]. In this qualitative research paradigm, it was not only ambitious to collect data from the quantity side, but also gained a deeper understanding behind the phenomena that had been recorded. A qualitative approach was used because the theme of this research focused on conceptual studies in the form of points of thought and how those thoughts are socialized. Data analysis used the Huberman and Saldan models [6]. While on micro basis, this study used the method of developing by Borg and Gall [7].

This article is part of a study entitled "Capacity Building Muslimat and Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama in

counteracting the flow of Islamic Radicalism in East Java". The topic of this article is the initial part of development research. Therefore in collecting the data, this study used literature study method. Data sources are articles and books about gender. Data analysis used is descriptive methods.

III. Discussion

A. *The Role of Muslimat and Fatayat*

Muslimat and Fatayat as Islamic women's organizations that was formed by Nahdlatul Ulama have an important role in the social and family sphere. Hamidah explained that historically Muslimat and Fatayat had a strategic role in the efforts of social transformation [8]. The two women's organizations are women leaders who are able to bring Muslim women to realize a social order that is harmonious.

The role of Muslimat and Fatayat can be realized in increasing the understanding of Islamic moderation in counteracting Islamic Radicalism through three main role principles [9]. First Role is that Muslimat and Fatayat must hold to the principle of the Moderation of Religious Fiction. In the Indonesian context, this moderation of thought can be formed through Islamization/regeneration which later formed intellectual genealogy. The process of spreading a peaceful Islam forms the character of the people who are tawasuth (moderate), tawazun (balanced), and tasamuh (tolerant). Moderate religious thinking among others is characterized by the ability to combine text and context, namely religious thinking which is not solely based on the truth of religious texts and forces the submission of new realities and contexts to the truth of the text. However it is able to connect both of them dynamically.

Second Role is that Muslimat and Fatayat NU must carry out a movement (harakah) based on the spirit of proselytizing and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar based on the principle of carrying out repairs, but must be done in good ways. The missionary movement in the process of Islamization in Indonesia was carried out by prioritizing affection (bil hikmah wal mau'idhatil hasanah), rather than doing violence. Inviting to goodness (al-amru bil ma'ruf) must be done in a good way, as well as preventing defection (an-nahyu 'anil munkar) must be done in a way that brings a new defection (bighairil munkar).

Third Role is Muslimat and Fatayat must maintain traditions and religious practices (al-amaliah al-diniyah), which open the space for creative dialogue between Islam and the traditions or culture of Indonesian society. Although religious practices require legitimacy from primary Islamic sources, Qur'an and Hadith, Islam in Indonesia does not necessarily forbid the traditions and practices of Islam that are based on respect for the traditions. Tradition or culture in the fiqh proposal called al-'urf or al-'Ādat, is not just suppressed, but it is treated and preserved well as long as it does not deviate from the values of Islamic teachings. Such

religious practice is that later became the tradition of religious diversity of the Indonesian.

The three roles must be played by Muslimat and Fatayat simultaneously and integrated so that there is a synchronization among understanding, thought, action in counteracting the flow of Islamic radicalism, and maintaining the moderation of Islam that are the typical of Islamic Indonesian Archipelago in a pluralistic-multiculturalistic society.

The two women's organizations have collaborated with the National Agency for the Eradication of Terrorism (BNPT) in tackling radicalism. Bomb terror incident in Surabaya in May 2018 according to Kholifah ^[10] encouraged Muslim women to reopen the counter radicalism to equip mothers to educate their sons and daughters. In Bandung, Fatayat NU is also a partner of BNPT. To counteract radicalism, BNPT inaugurated 500 women da'i of Fatayat NU ^[11]. The role of the da'i is expected to be able to invite women to respond and provide family education to a full-of-mercy Islam.

Until this day, Indonesian women still have an important role in the family ^[12]. Women are expected to be able to educate children to become qualified and dignified nation cadres. The issue of terror involving children and women has arisen women's enthusiasm to participate in the struggle. The scientific forum on the topic of involving women in counteracting radicalism is also being held to solve the problem of terrorism. Woman is the pillar of the State. If women are good, then it is good for a country ^[13]. The role of women as mothers assigned to educate children has an important role in the family. The character of the child begins to be formed in the family.

B. Gender and Egalitarian Family

Gender has not been properly understood by some Indonesian. Gender is often assumed to be a woman's business. This can be seen from the lack of men's presence in gender-titled activities ^[14]. In fact, there are some people who think that gender is an effort of women to against men and it is a form of women's resistance to their nature. This error is related to the fact that gender tends to raise issues about the condition of women who are left behind, suffering, and subordinated. Moreover, the understanding of gender and gender construction are attached to women.

Etymologically, the word gender comes from English word "gender" which means sexual identity such as "male" or "female". In Webster's New World Dictionary, gender is defined as the apparent difference between men and women in terms of values and behavior. Gender is formed by sexual identity, but it is not sexual organs. Humm ^[15] argues that gender is a set of roles that are attached to men and women. The role is community formation or social construction. Gender is like a costume or mask in a theater that tells others that someone is feminine or masculine. Devices that polish

gender include: appearance, clothing, attitudes, personality, work, sexuality, and family responsibilities.

Gender is a social construction that is formed through a long process. Mufidah ^[16] explained that gender formation is determined by a number of factors, then socialized, strengthened, and even constructed through socio-culture, perpetuated by the interpretation of religion and myth, as if it had become a belief. Regulation of Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture number 84 year 2008 concerning on Gender Mainstreaming in the Education Sector states that gender is a concept that refers to the differentiation of roles and responsibilities of men and women that occur as a result of changes in the social and cultural conditions of society.

The social process which then makes gender differences become a provision of God that cannot be changed, so that gender differences are considered nature of character. Whereas nature of character is a provision that comes from God, the biological innate nature that is the gift of God Almighty that cannot change over time and cannot be exchanged and attached to women and men. Due to the gender is not natural; gender is not taken for granted. Gender is the results of social processes, social inheritance, and the socialization and learning processes.

The terms gender and sexual identity or sex are often interpreted ambiguously. The term sex in the Indonesian dictionary means sexual organs, which concentrates more on aspects of one's biology, including differences in chemical composition and hormones in the body, physical anatomy, reproduction, and other biological characteristics; while gender is concentrated more on social, cultural, psychological, and other non-biological aspects.

Sex is a gift from God and it is natural, irreversible, interchangeable, and valid throughout the ages and everywhere. Men are predestined to have Adam's apple, penis, mustache, and so on while women are destined to have a uterus, to do breastfeeding, to experience menstruation, and so on.

This is different from gender. Gender is not God's gift. Gender is formed by the community, mutually agreed. Gender is not natural, but it is social. The roles of women and men are distinguished by sex as in the table above. The construction is carried out from generation to generation so it is stereotypical. Gender stereotypes are actually not a problem if justice is realized, meaning that women do a fair division of labor and there is no violence between the two parties.

What is constructed as gender truth in one area may not necessarily be the truth in another place, or gender values that are considered true in a society in the past can be different from current and future facts. In the past, the value of women was considered perfect if they were good at doing tasks in kitchens, mattresses, and wells. At present, this value has changed. In the past, women were considered not

worthy of being leaders, now they are no longer rigid. So, unlike sex which cannot change, gender is dynamic.

Egalitarian means equal. An egalitarian family is a family that has the view that all members have the same rights and obligations. There is no discriminatory treatment against husband and wife or girls and boys.

The word egalitarian has been theoretically implemented in social and family life in Indonesia. However, in practice, there are still many irregularities. There is discrimination between girls and boys in the family. Discrimination against children occurs in games, division of labor, and attitudes [17].

Games for boys are distinguished from girls. Games for boys are more challenging and risky, such as soccer, playing marbles, and playing cars. These three games are generally carried out outside the home. Whereas girls' games tend to be done at home and not at risk, such as playing dolls, cooking, and trades. According to Mac Phee¹⁸, parents still aware the existence of stereotypes in children's games at home through children's toys that are still stereotypical.

In terms of working field, girls do work like adults, namely in the domestic sphere, such as sweeping, washing clothes and dishes, watering flowers, and cooking; whereas the boys are even prohibited from doing all those works.

The attitudes of boys and girls have been distinguished since in the womb. Prospective boys are cared and whispered in hopes of becoming a strong child and can uphold the good name of family. Whereas prospective girls are cared and whispered in hopes to become sweet and beautiful kids. When they were born and were still kids, boys were forbidden to cry, and when they cried they were called shemale. This illustrates that boys must be strong and girls may cry or be whiny. Such treatment is finally brought by the child and becomes inherent in men and women.

Differences in attitude are also evident from children's play. Boys are portrayed as brave and courageous. This can be seen in the distribution of games for boys. The game of soccer creates a boisterous atmosphere and applause. Unlike playing doll that is followed by stories and conversations that do not lead to challenging applause and noise. The depiction of the difference in attitude is still in accordance with the saying "boys must be brave, not be whiny".

Discrimination against women and men should not occur in the formation of an egalitarian family. Men and women must be treated equally and get equal opportunities in all fields, namely education, politics, law, employment, and association. A research by Gok¹⁹ shows that work and education can encourage the building of egalitarian families.

Muslimat and Fatayat which play an active role in the social sphere can provide enlightenment to mothers and Muslim women in general about the equality of the roles of men and women in the public and domestic spheres in formal and informal forums. Their voices are made a role model for

young women and Muslim women. Likewise, as mothers, they can educate children without discrimination.

Feminism in some countries shows a more responsive role towards egalitarian families²⁰. Fatayat, as a young generation is expected to have an egalitarian view more than Muslim women and can be a role model for young people.

IV. Conclusion

Muslimat and Fatayat as NU women's organizations play a strategic role in forming an egalitarian family. Formally they have social forces that are able to influence and shape women in their environment to become agents of gender equality for men and women. It starts from education in the family that seeks to eliminate discrimination against girls and boys in terms of play, division of labor, and attitude.

As mothers, those Muslimat and Fatayat members also carry out educational assignments for their children and their husbands. Mothers who are perspective and sensitive to gender equality will be able to form an egalitarian nation's successor.

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