

## The existence of women in Islam studying the film Nyai Ahmad Dahlan

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#### ABSTRACT

In Indonesian society, household matters are usually handled by women. To this day, the patriarchal culture still persists. In a patriarchal culture, women are required to possess three skills: macak (dressing up), masak (cooking), and manak (giving birth). A woman's success is measured by her ability to master these three skills; failure to do so results in her being considered worthless within a family and society. However, Islam highly regards women and does not differentiate between men and women except in terms of piety and natural disposition. Siti Walidah fought for this situation, emphasizing that women should reclaim their rights, particularly in education. This study aims to analyze the existence of women in Islam by examining the film 'Nyai Ahmad Dahlan,' which portrays Siti Walidah as a heroine of emancipation in Islamic education. The research uses a descriptive qualitative method and a literature review, drawing data from journals, books, and websites. This literature review concludes that Siti Walidah spread Islam by advocating for women's rights. Throughout her life, Siti Walidah made numerous contributions, such as founding the 'Sopo Tresno' study group, which later became 'Aisyiyah,' teaching literacy, and providing job opportunities for women. All these efforts were made by Siti Walidah to ensure that women have the same opportunities as men, thereby advancing the nation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Women work but also have to take care of the household, even though household matters can be done by both men and women. Until now, many people still think that women and men have different degrees. Women are required to have three skills, namely macak (grooming), cooking (cooking), manak (giving birth). The success of a woman is if she is able to master these three skills, if she fails to carry them out then a woman is considered to have no value in a family and society because she is considered a family disgrace. This is a form of stereotype that occurs to women in society. (Aulia et al., 2018)

Efforts to fight for gender equality were mostly carried out by women fighters at that time, namely R.A Kartini. R.A Kartini voiced what are the basic rights of women. What was expressed was written in a book entitled "After Darkness Comes Light". Apart from that, there is also Siti Walidah or Nyai Ahmad Dahlan, she is the wife of the founder of Muhammadiyah, namely K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Siti Walidah became a woman who was active in organizing and supporting all

the activities of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Siti Walidah was also the pioneer of the founding of 'Aisyiyah. Siti Walidah's role is felt in several fields, for example her role in education, religion, social affairs, and as a female hero who fought for Indonesia. Siti Walidah made various kinds of obstacles full of sacrifices to fight for the existence of women (Wulandari & Rahmawati, 2010).

The Quran has also explained that women and men have no different roles in doing good deeds. The existence of women on an equal footing with men is in accordance with universal humanity. As Allah says in Q.S. An-Nahl/16:97 which is a command for all of us not to dichotomy the roles of women and men. Islam creates human equality by paying attention to the concepts of balance, justice, harmony, harmony and wholeness. The same rights and obligations for men and women in carrying out their roles as servants and caliphs. Regarding the prohibition on women's social roles in society, it is not explained in the Al-Quran and hadith, in fact many suggest that women are allowed to choose and pursue their profession (Izati Mardiah et al., 2022).

During Siti Walidah's time, education for women was still taboo. Pursuing higher education does not apply to ordinary women. Only descendants of the noble class were allowed to experience education and even then it was only limited to basic education. The remaining role of women is to complement men, taking care of the family. This patriarchal thinking makes education for women not considered important. Seeing the inappropriate situation, Siti Waidah also carried out a movement for women which illustrates that women also have the power to advance their family and country (Ardiyani, 2017)

Siti Walidah is a Muslim woman figure who fights for equal rights for women. He was not only active in the educational, religious and social fields, but also had an important role in the history of the Indonesian nation's struggle. Her life was full of challenges, and she sacrificed her thoughts and possessions for the sake of education, especially for women. Siti Walidah plays an important role in the development and advancement of women, especially those involved in the 'Aisyiyah organization and who live in Kauman village, Yogyakarta. She is also considered a pioneer of the Muslim women's movement in Indonesia (Nasution Halimatussa'diyah, 2019).

As an appreciation, all forms of Siti Walidah's struggles were documented through a film entitled "Nyai Ahmad Dahlan". This film tells the story of Javanese women of that time and the struggle of Siti Walidah. This film is characterized by the appearance of Javanese women with kebaya and batik, the use of Javanese language, the submissive nature of women and gentle behavior as interpreted by Javanese women. Her struggle meant that women in Java had the opportunity to take part in education as well as men (Wlandari & Rahmawatui, n.d.).

Previous research regarding the results of Siti Walidah's struggle for women has also been widely studied. For example, research from Nasution et al., regarding Siti Walidah's contribution, namely establishing schools, women's dormitories, special prayer rooms for women, establishing

literacy and Islamic education programs for women, establishing schools for early childhood and her thoughts against forced marriage (Nasution et al., 2019 ). Siti Walidah's real action in establishing dormitories for women in various regions throughout Indonesia. This action gained the trust of the students' parents. Apart from that, in social work, Siti Walidah also involved women to establish the 'Aisyiyah organization. 'Aisyiyah is a place for women's freedom to preach (Setiya & Kusnwo, 2019).

Previous research discussed Siti Walidah's leadership through the field of education which was examined in a film. The research in this article will also discuss Siti Walidah's struggle as a form of women's existence in Islam. The aim of this research is to analyze the existence of women in Islam as has been done by Siti Walidah, whose struggles were documented in film.

## 2. METHODS

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with a type of library research through collecting information and data from journals, documents and books. Meanwhile, the nature of this research is subjective by observing the research object to get the message and intent (Suyanti, 2018).

Primary data is in the form of a video of the film *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan* and then several necessary data are selected, such as the characters in the film *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan* as well as the meaning contained. Meanwhile, secondary data are books, documents or articles and journals related to research. Secondary data is used by researchers to complete problem analysis so that more comprehensive research results are obtained. The form of data taken from the film *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan* is scenes that display or contain elements of the existence of women in Islam and their emancipation as well as dialogue between characters if necessary. The analysis in this research will focus observations on the film *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan*. The data collected was then analyzed using the existing theoretical framework and conclusions were drawn

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Women in Religious Aspects

Women are born unique and women also have duties and responsibilities for their lives. There are many tasks that women must carry out due to nature and culture, namely carrying, giving birth, breastfeeding, raising and educating children, and serving their husbands. As a form of respect for women, Islam came to raise their status, which before the arrival of Islam in the Jahiliyah era, women were a disgrace, the views of women in the Jahiliyah era were very cruel. Women are considered not to have the power to lead. In Syafiq Hasyim's view, the injustice that occurs is caused by patriarchy, men are superior to women, of course this understanding is contrary to Islam. According to Kyai

Husein, the Quran is a reference for humans to live a life full of moral, noble values and respect for human values. Men and women have the same rights except outside their nature. (Hsb et al., 2023).

Religious studies related to feminism or issues that touch women, especially those related to gender equality. This discourse emerged from accusations of Islamic hegemony over Muslim women in Islamic countries. This gives the impression that women's space for movement is limited and their position is discriminated against in society, and sometimes their aspirations and inner voices are not even heard. It is very possible that feminism in Islam is in harmony with Islamic teachings, namely the Koran and Sunnah, which comprehensively explain the equality of human rights between women and men, including the rights to worship, belief, potential and education, without denying the existence of natural differences. between both. In fact, the Koran glorifies women with one special letter among the 114 existing letters, namely the An-Nisa letter (Karim, 2014).

The Prophet as a role model for Muslims really respected the position of women. As the hadith states, as a sign of respect for the mother, she is mentioned three times. There is also a famous hadith that says heaven is in the mother's feet. Apart from that, Rasulullah also gave women the opportunity to appear in public spaces (Kurniawan, 2022). The Koran firmly explains that men and women are rewarded with the same wages when the deeds performed are of the same quality and quantity. The essence of this explanation is stated in Q.S. al-Ahzab/33:35. This verse broadly explains the equal position of men and women, apart from that, every action has a response, be it good or bad (Almutamah, 2021). Islam upholds the dignity of women, the only thing that devalues it is piety, as in the words of Allah Q.S A-l-Hujurat/ 49:13, it is explained that men and women are created into various tribes and cultures but all are equal in the eyes of Allah, who differentiates them. namely from the perspective of devotion (Nihayah, 2021).

The Quran also notes the glory of women. As for the women who were so honorable and noble that they received a special revelation from Allah, in the Koran, namely the mother of the Prophet Moses, whose story was told by Allah to throw the baby Moses in the Nile River. Then there was the Prophet Isa's mother, Maryam, who entrusted Jesus to the Prophet Zakaria. The name Maryam was also immortalized as the name of one of the letters in the Koran. This is also the wife of the first Prophet Abraham, Sarah. In the story, Sarah was approached by an angel who brought a message from Allah that she would give birth to a child in her old age. Even in Islamic history, a woman named Umm Yasir died due to torture and this was the first history of a woman's death because of her faith (Suyanti, 2018). This film also displays dialogue from H. Ahmad Dahlan who is teaching his students, "Women are really great. This is why men must honor women. We once lived in a woman's womb. When we were little we cried, we were in our mother's lap, girls. When we grow up and fall in love, our hearts are in women's hearts."

Men and women have each been charged with obligations and rights, Allah says in Q.S At-Taubah/ 9:71-72 that the position of men and women who believe have the same duties and when viewed from all aspects of Q.S. At-Taubah/71-72 explains that the position of women has been guaranteed to be high and noble. The joint task is to amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. Amar ma'ruf upholds religion with truth, justice and upholding morals. Nahi munkar means preventing evil that causes moral damage to society and disrupts peace. The Prophet has warned to uphold the commandments of good and evil so that society remains intact (Hamka, 2014).

The story of Siti Walidah's life journey has been told in the documentary film Nyai Ahmad Dahlan. The film, starring Tika Bravani as Siti Walidah, was produced by director Olla Atta Adonara and producer Dyah Kalsitorini, broadcast on August 24 2017. This film tells the story of the history of the struggle of Muhammadiyah women. This film, with a duration of 1 hour 42 minutes, tells the story of Siti Walidah or known as Nyai Ahmad Dahlan in fighting for women's rights in Islam (Wulandari & Rahmawati, n.d.). 'ruf nahi munkar.

**Table 1.Film Dialog**

No	Dialog
1	"Women must be able to act in a good and evil way, women must also be able to do something for this nation."
2	"I will match you with Muhammad Dawis bin Abu Bakar."
3	"I have to create an organization to bring together Muslims so that later I can help the people, can give goodness, can help the people"
4	"God willing, I will support Kang Dahlan"

Siti Walidah or Nyai Ahmad Dahlan is a female character who was born in Yogyakarta City, precisely in Kauman Village, on January 3 1872. Siti Walidah has 7 siblings and she is the fourth child. Her father's name was Kyai Penghulu Muhammad Fadhil, a trait that passed down to Siti Walidah was her enthusiasm for learning. Siti Walidah is the wife of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan. Marriage to K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is the result of an arranged marriage. Siti Walidah herself received religious education from her family, she was taught the Al-Quran and Arabic. According to her father, studying at home was the right place for education (Santosa & Ocktarani, 2020), Siti Walidah started learning to preach and teach at her father's Kyai Fadhil prayer room (Ardiyani, 2017). Siti Walidah really pays attention to the potential, role and function of women for the progress of the nation. From there, Siti Walidah founded a women's organization called 'Aisyiyah. The changes made by the 'Aisyiyah organization are in the way women dress. (Wantini et al., 2023)

Siti Walidah is a Muhammadiyah tajdid figure, founder of the autonomous Muhammadiyah organization, namely 'Aisyiyah, and the founder of the model of women as pillars of the state, contributing to the development of national character. Building national character demonstrated by Walidah through formal education, informal education and social movements since 1918 has produced results for the Indonesian nation. The pearl of thought is the 'Aisyiyah movement through various activities (Nisa, 2022). In Islamic education for women, Walidah actively carries out educational activities. She is active in the field of Islamic education for women. The movement is always guided by the Koran and Sunnah in the framework of building national character by imitating the morals of the Prophet Muhammad. The movement guide is beautifully written in the 'Aisyiyah march song, which continues to this day (Cahyaningrum & Arif Jamuin, 2018).

Siti Walidah was famous for her activeness, but due to her age, in 1939, Siti Walidah did not attend the congress held in Medan due to illness. The following year, 1940, Siti Walidah attended a congress which was also her last congress. Before she died, Siti Walidah said to her beloved husband, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan to continue fighting to advance the nation's future. As a sign of respect, Siti Walidah was declared a National Hero as stated in the Decree of the Republic of Indonesia No.042/TK/Year 1972 (Alfaien & Vashti, 2022).

### **3.2. Women in Educational Aspects**

Siti Walidah is a small Javanese woman who grew up in Yogyakarta. The story of Siti Walidah is known for her struggle to equalize the rights of women and men at a time when Siti Walidah became a family that fought for Islam together. The family becomes a social unit so that the different roles between husband and wife aim to complement and help each other. The division of tasks and roles between the two is the key to harmony in the household (Ardiyani, 2017). (Kamila & Wantini, 2023)

Education is a right for both men and women. There should be no difference in educational rights for men and women. Therefore, women should be allowed to study anything and be educated to the highest level possible. Click or tap here to enter text. However, in some communities there is still inequality in women's education. This is caused by society's male-oriented opinion that men as leaders have more rights to receive higher education. (Khayati, n.d.)

In the midst of male domination and the stereotype that women are considered only "wingking friends" who are not far from the kitchen and other household chores, Siti Walidah and her husband are making efforts to change. Kyai Ahmad Dahlan and his wife Nyai Ahmad Dahlan carry out preaching and teaching specifically for women. In formal schools, women are motivated to obtain the highest education possible. This is considered taboo by the surrounding community, especially

the education built by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was the result of an adaptation of the Dutch school at that time (Suyanti, 2018).

In her role as wife, mother and teacher, Siti Walidah has a passion for introducing women to education (Wulandari & Rahmawati, n.d.), as conveyed in the dialogue, "women as husband's companions also have the right to be smart", because education makes their dignity higher. . Siti Walidah is known as a respected figure in society. Siti Walidah's ability to socialize began by forming a recitation for women known as "Sopo Tresno".

The personality and capacity of women who tend to be irrational and emotional are still doubtful to become responsible leaders. This was revealed in research by Emanratu (2020) which explained that women's leadership in villages still carries the natural attributes of women who are sensitive and emotional, so that village development and community empowerment programs were less successful during the period of their leadership. Apart from that, the election of village heads is not based on a collective will, but rather based on the agenda of the interests of several parties, which causes village development programs to not run optimally and even appear bad. This incongruity and inappropriateness in women's leadership strengthens society's stigma regarding women's ability to become leaders (Iqbal et al., 2023). However, the existence of Islamic education carried out by Siti Walidah is an example that female leaders are able to bring better change to society.

Among Siti Walidah's leadership is a visionary model of leadership that can be marked with other 'Aisyiyah administrators preaching to other cities such as: Boyolali, Purwokerto, Pasuruan, Malang, Kepanjen, Ponorogo, Madiun, and several other cities. In 1927, riding a horse, Siti Walidah came to the Batur area, passing Mount Dieng. The content of Siti Walidah's lecture was none other than teaching women of that time that a woman should not only care for children and take care of household needs, but must be balanced with spiritual needs (Alfaen & Vashti, 2022b). What Siti Walidah conveyed was learning to read the Al-Quran and according to history the first letter that became learning material was the Al-Maun letter, the material was deliberately linked to the situation at that time where Muslims were hit by poverty (Izati Mardiah et al., 2022).

Siti Walidah's journey to invite women to study and recite the Koran has received a lot of rejection from her own family environment, this is because thoughts about the existence of women are still imprisoned. In fact, the husband of one of the women he invited to recite the Koran refused by asking what the woman would gain if she studied. Not knowing despair, with her gentle nature, Siti Walidah continues to invite women to study and recite the Koran. A glimpse of the conversation between Siti Walidah and Padmo, Mini and Mina's parents, when Walidah asked her to recite the Koran. Siti Walidah is an example for women to be more productive.



### 3.3 Women in Social and Independence Aspects

Siti Walidah's kindness is widely depicted in the film *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan*, she provides aid in the form of rice to her neighbors who are experiencing trials in the form of illness, for her as humans we must have the quality of helping each other. "How come Nyai Nyuwun Sewu put it in a sack?" said Daryah when she saw Nyai Walidah put rice into a container. Siti Walidah answered Daryah's question "Atir, Kang Arjun's son is sick, he came here to ask for this honey and I gave him a big one, later we will deliver it together." Siti Walidah also teaches an attitude of generosity shown in helping the Muhammadiyah organization through fundraising activities resulting from selling items that are not used but can still be put to good use (Wulandari & Rahmawati, 2020).

Apart from that, Walidah also handed over what her parents gave her, for the purposes of establishing Muhammadiyah, "I want to take part in building Muhammadiyah, I'm sincere, bro," said Walidah while showing what she wanted to give. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan had refused because what was given was a legacy from Walidah's parents. "Wealth is just a trust, we die without leaving anything," Walidah replied to K.H.'s refusal. Ahmad Dahlan.

Siti Walidah's struggle is in line with the Islamic view which gives equal position and glory to men and women as explained in the Al-Quran, Q.S. Al-Hujurat verse 13 regarding equality between men and women, Q.S. Al-Araf verse 189 that men and women are created from one element of earth and soul, Q.S Al-Qiyamah verse 37-39 about the phases and processes of human development starting from the fetus, Q.S An-Nahl verse 97 that men and women are equally given guarantees by Allah for the happiness of the hereafter with their pious deeds, Q.S Ali-Imran verse 195, the deeds they do will equally be valuable in the sight of Allah, Q.S Al-Ahzab verse 35, Islam views women not as obstacles in progress, Q.S At-Taubah verse 71, apart from the roles derived from their respective natures, for things such as economics, politics, social culture and other aspects, men and women are asked to be partners. Apart from that, Siti Walidah also teaches women to be independent, this is done by employing women in her batik business (Wulandari & Rahmawati, 2020). There is no prohibition on working for women in Islam.

According to Yusuf Qardawi, working for women must meet the requirements, namely obeying the etiquette of leaving the house, for example in dressing, working and talking to people around them. Women also cannot ignore their main obligations towards their husbands and children. Even though earning a living is the husband's obligation, if the wife is in a state of faith and is willing to help her husband in earning a living then Allah will not differentiate between them, as the word of Allah has been conveyed in Q.S. An-Nahl/16:97 (Alifia et al., 2021).

Empowering women to be more productive and become independent women has been around since the colonial era. Including when Siti Walidah was active in the world of da'wah and education,



Siti Walidah was also a role model for being an independent woman who was able to work so she could help the family economy. Women who have free time can take advantage of this opportunity to carry out productive activities so that they can become a source of income. In this way, these women will not only become ordinary housewives, but also economically independent housewives. (Yuniawati Aiddha Rizky, n.d.) (Yulianto & Wantini, 2023)

The existence of women has an important role both in the domestic (family) and public (society) domains. In their role of managing family finances, both from their husband's income and from their own productive work, women become aware of their position in maintaining the family's economic sustainability. Women are able to utilize economic resources through the use of their social capital, such as social networks in the social environment, to maintain and even improve the family economy. Thus, the use of social capital by women and their families becomes a strategic and productive opportunity to maintain the family's economic resilience (Dewi & Puspitasari, 2012). Siti Walidah is also a woman who exists in the role of family and community, so she is able to create strategic and productive opportunities to protect her family and community. Therefore, women are noble human beings.

There are many verses in the Koran and hadith that explain the nobility of a woman. Gender discrimination does not exist in Islamic teachings, what differentiates the two is their respective natures (Anisa & Ikawati, 2021). God has taught humans how to provide appropriate services and education for children. The aisyiah movement was pioneered by Nyai Ahmad Dahlan, until now the aisyiah movement is extraordinary. His charitable efforts are varied, from PAUD, Kindergarten, Elementary School, to Middle School. All these charitable efforts were made possible by the hard work of 'Aisyiah's mothers (Panjaitan, 2021).

The woman who is looked up to by Siti Walidah remains based on the Koran because she has not forgotten her nature. Because at that time it was interpreted as good deeds for the good of the world and the afterlife as Allah said in Q.S. An-Nahl/16:97 that men or women who do good deeds will receive a reward for what they do (Wulandari & Rahmawati, 2020). Siti Walidah also gave advice on transmitting the spirit of leadership to General Soedirman when fighting Japan. Walidah advised, "Keep fighting for the people, don't let them die in vain. Remember, don't let your clothes make you forget your purpose." "Thank you for your advice, Nyai, it's not only an encouragement for me but all the people of this country," the general answered Nyai Walidah.

Living in a society with a patriarchal culture is not easy. Men are the main figures in society, while women are not limited by this patriarchal culture (Irma Sakina & Siti, 2017). This culture is very visible in the film Nyai Ahmad Dahlan with the dialogue "Women don't need to be smart. "Later, you'll be poor, forget that it's hard to find a soul mate." At that time, women were prohibited from

pursuing education due to concerns that if women were smarter they would compete with their husbands (Aulia et al., 2018).

Women must also receive the best possible attention because he believes that without women the struggle will not be successful. Siti Walidah is a female figure known to the Aisyiyah movement organization. Siti Walidah plays a role in an Aisyiyah organization. The main activities are promoting education and religion for women, caring for orphans, and instilling a sense of nationality through organizational activities so that women can take an active role in the national movement (Wati & Agustono, 2017). Walidah "women are the foundation of education for their children, with this association it is hoped that women will have their dignity raised and not be looked down upon." Aisyiyah as a women's movement organization realizes that women have a very large role in shaping the character of a nation. The progress of a nation depends on the condition of its women. Women also exert a great influence in increasing the level of human decency. (Siti Nura, n.d.)

In the 'Aisyiyah institution, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan tries to introduce her idea that women have the same right to seek the highest level of knowledge. Apart from that, he also opposed the practice of forced marriage. Pressure on women has opened up Nyai Ahmad Dahlan's discourse in fighting for women. From her strong determination and encouragement from her husband, in 1914 she created a study group whose members were mothers and young women. Among these studies are Sopo Tresno, Wal 'Asri, and Magribi School. Recitation materials include religious matters, reading and writing so that you can be honest and not feel discouraged because you think you are stupid (Ardiyani, 2017).

Nyai Ahmad Dahlan was able to adapt to her husband's thoughts on modern Islamic education. Nyai Ahmad Dahlan realized that he had a huge obligation in education to rid his people of the shackles of ignorance. For this reason, he began to educate the nation's young cadres through the medium of Islamic boarding schools, especially for girls. So it is proven in the Koran that women receive more attention. The educational context as a whole is not far from gender issues and women's emancipation, especially the existence of women whose status and role in education and teaching have equal rights with men (Abidin, 2015)

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

Islam provides a special space for women, there is no patriarchal culture in Islam. Islam views the position of men and women as equal, the difference between the two is piety as well as nature. There are several words of Allah mentioned in the Koran which discuss that men and women have equal opportunities. Mainly in education, as was fought for at that time by Indonesian hero figures, one of whom was Siti Walidah. Siti Walidah is a very inspiring female figure in Islamic education.

Siti Walidah, who really cared and even fought for women's education at that time, made an impact on society. The wrong idea about education for women, which was thought to be of no benefit because they were not allowed to surpass men, plus the role of women in cooking and cooking at that time, meant that women did not have the same space to obtain an education. Therefore, Siti Walidah created an association for mothers to study called "sopo tresno". In this association, Siti Walidah teaches and preaches to mothers in the Kauman village of Yogyakarta. Even though at first she faced opposition from many parties, Siti Walida remained patient and determined to continue fighting. Until finally the mothers' association was replaced with the name 'Aisyiah. Due to Siti Walidah's persistence and perseverance in fighting for the right to education for women, the government awarded her the title of national hero. The autonomous organization 'Asiyiah, which is part of Muhammadiyah, still exists today and is even more advanced and has many followers throughout Indonesia and even in several neighboring countries.

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