



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## INCREASING POLITICAL AWARENESS THROUGH POLITICAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN SAMBENG SUB-DISTRICT, LAMONGAN DISTRICT

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### *Abstract*

*This article aims to describe the increase in public understanding and awareness (especially of women) in Sambeng District. To achieve these objectives, research is carried out using community education methods, namely educational activities used to improve people's perceptions and awareness, especially political awareness for women. The research produced an illustration that the participants had limited understanding and awareness, especially about the role and position of women in family and society. The participants did not understand and were not aware of their political role. In addition, the participants also did not understand the procedures and mechanisms for becoming people's representatives as members of the legislative council. During the research, the participants were very enthusiastic and asked many questions about how religion views women who are actively involved in political activities, how to balance family obligations with their socio-political roles, how to get involved in politics if their husbands do not permit, and how must be a qualified and qualified board member.*

**Keywords:** *awareness, politics, women.*

### **Abstrak**

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk untuk menggambarkan peningkatan pemahaman dan kesadaran publik (khususnya perempuan) di Kabupaten Sambeng. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut dilakukan penelitian dengan menggunakan metode pendidikan komunitas, yaitu kegiatan pendidikan yang digunakan untuk meningkatkan persepsi dan kesadaran masyarakat, terutama kesadaran politik bagi perempuan. Penelitian menghasilkan gambaran bahwa para peserta memiliki pemahaman dan kesadaran terbatas, terutama tentang peran dan posisi perempuan dalam keluarga dan masyarakat. Para peserta tidak mengerti dan tidak menyadari peran politiknya. Selain itu, para peserta juga tidak memahami prosedur dan mekanisme untuk menjadi wakil rakyat sebagai anggota dewan legislatif. Selama penelitian berlangsung, para peserta sangat antusias dan mengajukan banyak pertanyaan tentang bagaimana agama memandang perempuan yang aktif terlibat dalam kegiatan politik, bagaimana menyeimbangkan kewajiban keluarga dengan peran sosial-politik mereka, bagaimana memulai untuk terlibat dalam dunia politik jika suami mereka tidak mengizinkan, serta bagaimana harus menjadi anggota dewan yang cakap dan berkualitas.

**Kata kunci:** kesadaran, politik, perempuan.

## A. INTRODUCTION

The universe has the best and perfect order system. Everything has its roles to connect to each other. The existence of the type of male and female is not only for humans, but also exist in all objects, plants, and animals. Even atom has a paired element that comes from one material.

Based on the system of creation, human beings both men and women are the same and there is no distinction between one another. God also presumes that all creations are just the same and there is no shortage in His creation. He said: "Who makes everything that He created the best." (Surah As-Sajdah: 7)

In Islam, it is acknowledged that men and women have the same essence and there is no distinction between the two. Both physical and other differences in men and women are not essential differences. The Qur'an states that the purpose of the creation of men and women is to worship Him. He says: "And make not another an object of worship with Allah. I am from Him a Warner to you, clear and open!" (Surah Adz-Dzaariyaat: 51).

Humankind, in the holy Qur'an, is the *Kholifah* of Allah on earth. *Kholifah* is often translated as a representative of God or a holder of God's message on earth. Their duty is to flourish the earth in order to create a prosperous life for all humankind. These texts are sacred texts that publicize the necessity of human to politics. Al Qurthubi states that the verse in the letter of Al-Baqoroh: 30 shows the necessity of human to elect the leader to regulate the order of human life, enforce the law correctly and realize justice and other important things to live together. These are all the elements of political elements.

In Islamic discourse, politics is defined as a way of managing the affairs of mutual affairs to achieve prosperity in the world and the hereafter. Therefore, politics has a huge portion of living aspect. It may appear in domestic, public, cultural or structural, personal and communal aspect. However, nowadays, the ideology of political understanding is limited to become a member of Legislative, Executive, Judicial, Regent,

Governor, President, Minister, Judge and others.

The reasons mentioned afore become the basis of outreach program with the theme of women's political education, specifically to answer the question why women should acknowledge politics. It is because the society, especially the socially in Sambeng Subdistrict Lamongan District in this case, has a wrong perception about the role of women in the political world until now. Many people find themselves inhibited from participating in the political world actively because of several factors, among others: the understanding that women are not worthy to get into the political world, religious standpoint that does not fully support the role of women in the political world, and also the role and support of the husbands to let their wives to actively participate in the political world.

Those factors become a very rational reason for the low interest and participation of residents in Lamongan District, especially women to involve in politics. As a proof, the members of Assembly at Lamongan region consist of 8 women or 16% only. It is still far from the targeted quota granted by the law in Indonesia, which is 30%.

From these data, it can be concluded that the political awareness of women is still quite low. Moreover, it will be a serious problem in the future as it will become a national problem. It is because the number of female population in Indonesia is equal to the male in number. Hence, women also have a very high potential to be able to advance the welfare of the country, yet it will disappear in vain because of the wrong perception believed by most of women.

Based on the background, the author has an interest to engage in the outreach program which related to the efforts to elevate women's political awareness through political education for women by focusing on finding the answers on why women should get involve into politics. The expectation of this program is that the community, especially women, has the awareness that politics is the right of all humankind of the nation, both male and

female. They need to know that politics is a duty of all citizens of both men and women. Therefore, 30% quota for women as legislative member can be fulfilled and, hopefully, the law can be abolished in the future because women have already had a high awareness to actively involve in politics.

## B. WOMEN'S POLITICAL

According to Dictionary of Indonesian Language Politics is the process of formation and distribution of power in society which among other tangible decision-making process, especially in the country. While in the discourse of Islam, politics is defined as a way of set the affairs of life together to achieve prosperity in the world and the hereafter. So that politics has wide space as wide as life space. It can appear in domestic, public, cultural or structural, personal and communal spaces. But today the political comprehension is limited to being a member of the Legislative, Executive, Judiciary, Regent, Governor, President, Minister, Judge and others.

Women are creatures and servants of God as well as men. As a servant of God he also has the responsibility of humanity, prospering the earth and human prosperity. For this task the women are not distinguished from men. God gives them (men and women) the potential/ability to act autonomously as necessary for the responsibility of doing the command. Not a few sacred texts affirm the necessity of the cooperation of men and women for the task of the task of regulating the world, calling for good and abolishing unjust. (Maya, H, 2012).

Some verses of the Qur'an for example Q.S Ali Imran: 195, An Nahl: 97, At Taubah: 91 is enough become the basis the legitimacy of how women's political participation is not distinguished from men. Their participation reaches across the dimensions of life. Along the search on the main Islamic authoritative source ie Al Quran. No single verse/text has been found explicitly mentioning that a particular gender should be a political leader. The Quran actually names women leader in the region of Saba/Sheba, Yemen. The Qur'an does not mention the name of the woman but

the commentators and historians call it Queen Bilqis. He was a head of government from a vast territory. Leadership is called success. The Qur'an Surah An-Naml: 23 states: "I indeed meet a woman who rules over them, and she is blessed with all things and has a great throne" (Muhammad, 2014).

The history of prophethood records a large number of women who participated with Khadija, Aisha, Umm Salamh and Other Prophet's Wives. Fatimah (child), Zainab (Grandson), Sukainah (Cicit) are the leading women of intelligence. They often engage in discussions about social and political themes and even criticize patriarchal domestic and public policies. Women's participation also arises in a number of "baiat" (contracts) for loyalty to the government. A number of female companions of the Prophet such as Nusaibah bint Ka'bk Ummu Athiyyah Al-Anshariyyah, Umm Sulaim bint Malhan, Umm Haram bint Malhan and others participated with the Prophet and the Companions in armed struggle against the oppression and injustice of the unbelievers. (Muhammad, 2014).

Unfortunately in the course of the political history of the Muslims, women's political participation experienced a process of degradation and reduction in a large scale. Women's activity space is restricted to domestic territory and positioned subordinate. These restrictions are not only legible in the books taught in schools, madrassas, colleges, majlis ta'lim and the like, but also appear in social spaces. The history of Islamic politics since the death of Prophet Muhammad and the period of Khulafa al rashidin until the early 20th century did not present many female figures for the role of public-political role. In general the reason for this female domestication is that women have limited and lower intellectual intelligence than men. The assumption that the intelligence of women is more low is expressed by a lot of experts interpretation of the literal Al Quran texts An Nisa: 34. They assume that it is a gift of God. In other words it is something given, which can not be exchanged. (Muhammad, 2014).

The second reason, women are looked at as the triggers of forbidden sexual intercourse and their presence in public places is looked at as a source of temptation (Arabic is often called "Fitnah") and motivates or stimulates social conflict. Therefore the seclusion of women by them is a necessity of religion as a way of keeping the holiness and the glory of religion. These tendentious perceptions partially refer to the authoritative sources of Islam ie the Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith which are read literally. For a long period of time these interpretive views were widely accepted even by some Muslims today (20th century). Al Azhar University of Cairo once issued a fatwa haram on the basis of Islamic sharia for women to assume public office positions. Said Al Afghani in "Aisyah wa Al Siyasah" says "Politics for women is haram to protect society from chaos". (Muhammad, 2014).

The above classical religious views are now faced with increasingly widespread social dynamics. The openness of space for women to follow to high education has given birth to their abilities in all matters previously claimed to belong only to men. The tendentious perception that women are less rational, more emotional and less competent in dealing with domestic and public affairs than men has now fallen out and is not popular anymore. Women are now moving to embrace her future and bury a gloomy, miserable past. The presumption of the classical scholars about the low intelligence of women's minds has long been broken with the Prophet's own statement about his wife Aisha "Aisha is the women clever and most intelligent, his most brilliant view.

The largest Islamic social organization in Indonesia. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the 30th Congress in 1999 received the political leadership of women. This decision is an affirmation of the decision of the National Congress/National Conference of NU Ulemas in Pondok Pesantren Bagu Lombok NTB 1996. This is a changed view of the previous who has not received. Other major Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah also

respond positively to women as political leaders. (Muhammad, 2014)

### C. METHOD

The method used is a theoretical analysis of a method. The method of the outreach program was implementing Society Education. It was educational activities applied in order to increase the understanding and awareness, especially political awareness, for women. The implementation method of this program was conducted in several activities, namely the survey stage, which consists of dissemination which arrange various things that will be submitted during the devotion activities that would be accomplished including: preparing the material that would be delivered, arranging of the schedule of material that would be conducted, giving specific tasks for each division of the outreach team, and having survey to the targeted location.

The dissemination stage was an activity before the outreach program was conducted in the area. The first thing to do was making a good relationship with Sambeng Sub-district head, conveying the purpose and objective of the outreach program. At this stage, the team needed to also carry out a fine cooperation and to determine the schedule of the outreach program. The outreach program team members were the members of National Unity and Political Bureau (BAKESBANGPOL) of Lamongan Regency in cooperation with Islamic University of Lamongan, especially Gender, Children, and Health Centre (PUSIGAKES) of the Centre for research, development, and outreach program (LITBANG PEMAS).

The participants of the outreach program consisted of the PKK members (a program at village level to educate women on various aspect of family welfare), female village heads, and female village secretaries in Sambeng sub-district. In addition, there were representatives of female students, representatives of community leaders, and some village apparatus in Sambeng District. The age of the participants of this outreach program varied from the age of 17 years old to the age above



50 years old. Therefore, the majority of the participants of this program activity were women.

The implementation of the service was conducted on Thursday, November 16, 2017 and it started at 09.00 until 13.00 WIB. The location of the service activity was in Pendopo Sambeng District, Lamongan District. The outreach program team provided the specific material on why women should get involve in politics. The material contained some important points, which were: (a) The equality between men and Women, (b) The distinction between men and women, (c) The principles of equality in a biological context, (d) Women's political participation, (e) Women's political activity in history context, (f) The point of view of Islamic scholars, and (g) The changing perspective nowadays.

#### D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participants of the program consisted of PKK members who were all women, female village heads, and female village secretaries in Sambeng sub-district, and representatives of female students, representatives of community leaders, and village representatives. The age of participants of service varies from the age of 17 years old to over 50 years old. There were 64 people who participated on the program. There were some people who could not attend the program invitation due to other activities that can not be left behind. This activity is intended to be held in Sambeng sub-district hall on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017, but on that date, the sub-district hall was used for the inauguration of the polling committee for general election (PEMILU) all over Sambeng Sub-district. Finally, the activity was postponed on Thursday, the week after which was held on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Unfortunately, on that date, the sub-district hall had a final renovation. Therefore, the outreach program dissemination was moved to the Village Hall of Nogojatisari village on Sambeng sub-district, Lamongan district. Nevertheless, it did not influence or even disturb the activities so that it was able to run successfully. The activity was not only attended by the invited audience, but

also by the sector police head (Muspika) of Sambeng sub-district.

The participants of the program felt very enthusiastic and carefully paid attention to all the materials provided. The results of the observations during the activity showed that the participants understood the material delivered by the speakers ranging from the materials on gender equality, egalitarian principles of creation, explanation of Qur'an verses on the equality of roles and positions between men and women, and the history of political development for women and human obligations (both male and female) in politics quite well. Furthermore, based on the results of observation, it could be concluded that the awareness of the participants also began to increase. It could be figured out from the new motivation of the women to do the same role as the men did, generally, in the effort of performing the activities that might prosper life and humans, and specifically, to participate actively in the world of politics in. In the beginning, there were lots of people did not recognize the importance of women's role in politics. It was not only important, but political activity was also a duty for women.

The questions asked by the audience were about how exactly religion gives the law to women who actively participate in politics, how to start getting involve in politics world since it was so hard for them to deal with the permission and even the restriction from their husband, how to have the duties of women as mothers and wives as well as to have a role in involving the world of politics, and how to become a qualified and eligible board member to be elected to represent the people?

The outreach program team responded to questions well and tried to provide the best answers with clear explanations so that they were easily understood by the participants. The team members, consisting of university representative and from the board of unity of the nation and politics of Lamongan District, explained that the issue had been explicitly and clearly explained in the Qur'an that Allah had commanded humankind as *keholifab* or leader on earth. Humankind, in the holy texts of the

Qur'an, is declared as the *kholifah* of Allah on earth. *Kholifah* is often translated as a representative of God or a holder of God's message on earth. Their duties are to prosper the earth in order to create a prosperous life for all mankind. The sacred texts prove the necessity of human beings for politics. Al Qurthubi states that the verse in the letter of Al Baqoroh (2): 30 shows the necessity of human to appoint the leader of government, to regulate the order of human life, to enforce the law correctly and realize justice, and other important things required to live together. These aspects are all elements of political elements. In the discourse of Islam, politics is defined as a way of managing the affairs of life together to achieve prosperity in the world and the hereafter. Hence, politics has huge portion or space in the life aspect. It may appear in domestic, public, cultural or structural, personal, and communal spaces. However, nowadays, the political awareness is limited to being a member of the legislative, executive, judiciary, regent, governor, president, minister, judge, and others. It does not really matter how people define it. The main point is that we have the crystal clear that actually politics is the obligation of all human beings both men and women because humans have been appointed by Allah to become *kholifah* on earth. The ultimate goal of ours is to achieve prosperity in the world and in the Hereafter.

In response to the next question, the team explained that this kind of education should not only be reserved for women in terms of awareness and common standing between men and women, but also more specifically related to roles and responsibilities between husband and wife. There is a need to share the awareness of the responsibilities of each role and it must be well accomplished between the two roles, husband and wife. It must also be considered that every individual is a servant of Allah who has the responsibility of humanity, the prosperity of earth, and the prosperity of human. The tasks of the women are not distinguished from men. Allah gives us (men and women) the same potential and ability to act autonomously in order to execute the responsibility of fulfilling that mandate. There

are lots of sacred texts affirm the necessity of the cooperation of men and women in the tasks of regulating the world, calling for good things and abolishing bad things. In this case, we should be able to respect and appreciate the potential of each other because it is a gift of Allah SWT. We have the potential to be anything we want, such as to be a painter, a great singer, an educator or teacher, and even to become a leader in a State. If we do not develop the potential given to us well, it is just the same as we are not grateful for the blessings given by Allah to us. Consequently, the awareness of respect each other should be built up carefully. As a result, there will be no significant problems that hinder women to have beneficial activities for their society.

In response to the third question, the team elucidated that after examining and focusing on the characteristics that differentiate women from men, we will find that each character does not at all diminish its humanitarian significance. On the other hands, it even adds the significance, although we find few differences in the case of natural partition of the potential in divining grace between men's responsibilities and women's obligations in the process of social and individual development.

Women as wives and women as mothers have a different role from all men's roles as husbands or fathers as dads, but these two functions-albeit different-are complementary, one of which can not escape the role others, one role can not replace the other's role.

Women who have multiple roles, as wife and mother, may have different roles from men who become husband and father in the family. Nevertheless, the two different roles always walk side by side to complete each other. They depend on each other and they cannot replace each other's role.

The roles of women do not only present in the family but also in society and the State. For example, if a woman is an expert in the science of religion, it is an obligation for her to spread up her knowledge to other women. Similarly, if she is an expert in a particular field, then she can have a sharing in the affairs, yet with some restrictions that have been

prescribed, and of course after the obligation as a housewife has been fulfilled.

Regarding to the last question, the team explained that the board members starts from the party. A political party needs to conduct the process of regeneration in order to get the cadres who will represent the qualified and competent people so that people will not be perplexed in choosing their leader. The percentage of women participation in board, in this case, is 30% which is set in the law. To be honest, this is also a pretty tough job in a political party. It is in line with the history that people tend to weaken the spirit of women to engage in politics and they set the women in the comfort zone. There are some mindset given to the women that women's role is only to become a housewife, no need to anything else, especially involve actively in politics, because they cannot reach the heaven when they insist to do so. These reasons consistently make very few women decide not to engage politics. Thus, it is also a problem that has not been solved by the government and political party nowadays. Their job is to solve the problem on how to be able to present a capable representative of the people who will be the best candidate to be elected at the end.

The outreach program team had observed the questions raised by the participants of the dissemination. The problem that might appear later was how to transfer the material and, at the same time, elucidated the awareness of the role and position of women both in the household and the position as citizens of Indonesia to the society. It was expected that the clear understanding of women's role and position in society would not only appreciated by the participants in the event, but also the society and people around them. Unfortunately, the participants still have the assumption that the Al-Qur'an's verse which is "*arrijalu qonwamuna alannisa*" ... explains the legitimacy for superior on male's status towards women. Consequently, the life and welfare of women are on the men's decision. Men have full discretion over the activities of their families (wives), and women will not be able to conduct activities that can prosper the community or society when they do not have

the agreement from the husband. The more serious problem is that there are lot of men in the society who keep the mindset in their mind. Hence, the problem that needs to be solved is how to be able discuss the situation, to have the same perception, and to understand the "right" position between men and women by the state, especially by the religion of Islam.

The participants expected that this kind of sustainable educational activity could be more comprehensive, deeper and wider to other communities in society. The participants also hoped that this kind of activity could be carried out periodically. There should be a time for a kind of educational activity at least once year. It was expected that the activity could motivate the society (especially women) to be able to carry out their duties as mothers and wives well as well to develop the potential they have in politics, without having any interference or pressure from other sides.

## E. CONCLUSION

The participants did not fully understand the basic of equality between men and women in both religious and biological perspectives. The participants had more understanding on the striking differences between men and women related to their social roles and household responsibilities. Moreover, in terms of their psychology, women and men are so much different. These factors underlined the striking difference in social treatment between men and women. Furthermore, the participants did not know how to be able to manage their time allotment between the responsibility as a mother or wife and their role as human beings who should be beneficial to their society and environment. In addition, the participants did not know how the terms, conditions, and how to involve in the political world actively then became a representative of the people.

On the program activities, the participants were very enthusiastic and asked questions about how the role and position of women in religion perspective, how to start in the world of politics, how to have the duties and duties of mother and wife as well as her social role at the same time, and how to become an excellence and capable representative for their people.

The outreach program team had provided answers and responses through an understandable explanation to the participants. In the end, the program ran smoothly and there was comprehensible communication between the participants and the program team.

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