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**Female- Muslim Leadership in Yogyakarta after Earthquake 2006  
A Case Study of Female Jamu Makers in Kiringan Bantul Yogyakarta**



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**PUSAT STUDI WANITA  
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI YOGYAKARTA  
2007**

**Female-Muslims Leadership in Yogyakarta Families after Earthquake 2006  
A Case Study of Female *Jamu* Makers in Kiringan Bantul Yogyakarta**

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The debate over female leadership in Islam is a splinter of the debate on Islam's views of women in general. Any discussion of an Islamic point-of-view on the concept of leadership with regard of gender begins with a study of relevant verses from the Quran. Does the Quran designate women as the unconditional followers of men within the family and/or within society? This Quranic verse seems to acknowledge men's leadership over women. *And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them* [2:228]. Conservative Muslims frequently quote this verse to promulgate the view that a man is the head of the Muslim family and that a woman may never take charge of men. This view opposes any possibility of female leadership as it claims the Quran prefers men as leaders both within the family and within society. On the other hand, some scholars restrict the applicability of the verses to the family. As men provide for women, they earn the privilege of being in charge of women within the conjugal relationship. Scholars restrict the privilege of men over women to within the family as the preceding and following verses deal with conjugal relations and not with the status of each sex in society.

This paper focuses the concept of female leadership and its role in families in Bantul. The quake hit Bantul in 2006 results in both mentally and economically collapsed. Members of family try hard to survive from the condition. The trauma suffered by the victims hinders the capability to accept the worse condition as well as to earn money. In this condition, all members of family need guidance from their ruler to face and solve the problem. Some heads of family (men) are incapable of ruling the family after the quake for several



reasons. Some of them suffer injuries, trauma, or pass away. Therefore, in some families, the ruler of the family turns to female (mother).

This paper does not explore the acceptability of female leadership in society. The female leadership explored in this paper is related to the struggle of the women in supporting their family. It examines both how women can take over the function of men in family and how they support men in family. This paper also focuses on the perception of men on the leadership showed by women. This paper results in the conception of Muslim community toward the chosen or accepted female leadership.

### **A. Introduction**

Leadership becomes a topic that comes up in most discussions at least weekly in our professional lives. Leadership is a term that evokes strong feelings and inspires spirited debate. Everyone seems to have an opinion on the subject. Leaders themselves are both reviled and revered. There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Even a cursory view of the literature on the topic reveals that situational context, historical time, national origin and many other variables significantly influence our notions of what it is and how it should be exercised. These variables impact our beliefs regarding who enacts it and how it should look literally and figuratively. The intersection of leadership and gender brings us to the locus of powerful, and sometimes, colliding, belief systems with consequences to our society that we still struggle to understand.

Throughout history, many have come to believe that leadership is a traditionally masculine activity. If women in organizations are to emerge as leaders, it is important that they be perceived as individuals who can influence or

motivate others. "A look at research on this dating back to the 1970's indicated that there was a tremendous amount of gender bias regarding women's achievements in the business sector. More frightening is that as late as 1991, much of this gender bias still exists as seen by the following. A study conducted in 1991 revealed the following: —when we reviewed this literature we were struck by the prejudice against women. Research has demonstrated that there are far more similarities than differences in the leadership behaviors of women and men, and that they are equally effective. Still, women are less likely to be pre-selected as leaders, and the same leadership behavior is often evaluated more positively when attributed to a male than to a female.

The role of women, in many cases, is still neglected by some parties. It is due to the strong patriarchal ideology in society. In the context of economy, a lot of women must work to support family need. What the women do is the same as those husbands who work. However, many parties close their eyes of this struggle. Leader in a family takes the responsibility to earn money for all members of family. How about if they need more and the husband cannot fulfill it? It is not *haram* for women to work.

## **B. Position of Women and Men in Islam**

The patriarchal view always puts the position of women one degree lower than men's. This tendency results in abuse to women. People hardly listen to the news of abuse to men. Abuse in Muslim homes includes pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, beating, bondage, and refusing to help a wife when she is sick or injured. There are different types of abuse (physical, verbal, emotional, etc). Violent behaviors include shoving, pushing, destruction of valuables, hurting pets and loved ones- even children.



Physical violence may lead to broken bones, head injury, vision loss, and death. Among victims, emotional abuse leads to a broken spirit and feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and oppression. Gender violence is not a private matter between a husband and wife that it should be ignored. Domestic violence can lead to the destruction and separation of a Muslim family, which is already so fragile in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. The destruction of one family is the destruction of one unit of the Muslim community. Muslim community leaders or Imams have a duty to help those suffering in this crisis. Not only must we help the sister who is being abused, but also the abuser must be stopped.

The Muslim community should develop protection plans in order to assess the level of crisis in a home and help women. This is important because when there is an emergency involving a Muslim woman who wants to contact Muslims, shelters and crisis lines can refer the woman to the mosque or Islamic center and the Imam or another Muslim. One should remember that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was married for 37 years of his life and never hit his wives.

The Qur'an warns about those men who oppress or ill-treat women:

*O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them - except when they have become guilty of open lewdness. On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike something and Allah will bring about through it a great deal of good. (4:19)*

Unlike other religions, which regard women as being fixated of inherent sin and wickedness and men as being possessed of inherent virtue and nobility, Islam

regards men and women as being of the same essence created from a single soul. The Qur'an says:

*O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from this pair scattered (like seeds) countless men and women. Reverence Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and reverence the wombs (that bore you); for Allah ever watches over you. (4:1)*

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Women are the twin halves of men." The Qur'an emphasizes the essential unity of men and women in a most beautiful simile:

*They (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them. (2:187)*

Just as a garment hides our nakedness, so do husband and wife, by entering into the relationship of marriage, secure each other's chastity. The garment gives comfort to the body; so does the husband find comfort in his wife's company and she in his. "The garment is the grace, the beauty, chastity or the embellishment of the body, so too are wives to their husbands as their husbands are to them." It is for this reason that marriage was considered by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a most virtuous act. He said: "When a man marries, he has completed one half of his religion." He enjoined matrimony on Muslims by saying: "Marriage is part of my way and whoever keeps away from my way is not from me (i.e. is not my follower)." The Qur'an has given the reason for the existence of marriage in the following words:

And among His signs is this, that He has created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with



them; and He has put love and mercy between you. Verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (30:21)

Before the advent of Islam women were often treated worse than animals. The Prophet wanted to put a stop to all cruelties to women. He preached kindness towards them. He told the Muslims: "Fear Allah in respect of women." And: "The best of you are they who behave best to their wives." And: "A Muslim must not hate his wife, and if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, let him be pleased with one that is good." And: "The more civil and kind a Muslim is to his wife, the more perfect in faith he is."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was most emphatic in enjoining upon Muslims to be kind to their women when he delivered his famous Khutbah on the Mount of Mercy at Arafat in the presence of one hundred thousand of his Companions who had gathered there for the Hajj al-Wada (Farewell Pilgrimage). In his Khutbah he ordered those present, and through them all those Muslims who were to come later, to be respectful and kind towards women. He said:

"Fear Allah regarding women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got (rights) over them, and they have got (rights) over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means."

The predominant idea in the teachings of Islam with regard to men and women is that a husband and wife should be full-fledged partners in making their home a happy and prosperous place, that they should be loyal and faithful to one another, and genuinely interested in each other's welfare and the welfare of their children. A woman is expected to exercise a humanizing influence over her husband and to soften the sternness inherent in his nature. A man is enjoined to

educate the women in his care so that they cultivate the qualities in which they excel.

The Shari'ah requires a man, as head of the family, to consult with his family and then to have the final say in decisions concerning it. In doing so he must not abuse his prerogative to cause any injury to his wife. Any wrongdoing of this principle involves for him the risk of losing the favor of Allah, because his wife is not his subordinate but she is, to use the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him), *'The Queen of the House'*, and this is the position a true Muslim is expected to give his wife. In contrast to these enlightened teachings of Islam in respect of women, Western talk of women's liberation or emancipation is actually a disguised form of exploitation of her body, dispossession of her honor, and deprivation of her soul.

Violence against women is not an Islamic tradition. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) instructed Muslims regarding women, "I command you to be kind to women." He said also, "The best of you is the best to his family (wife). The Quran urges husbands to be kind and considerate to their wives, even if a wife falls out of favor with her husband or disinclination for her arises within him. It also outlawed the pre-Islamic practice of inheriting women as part of the estate of the deceased.

### **C. Female Workers**

Kiringan village is located in Bantul district, about 30 kilometers to the south of Yogyakarta city. To reach Yogyakarta, one can fly or take land transportation. It will take about 45 minutes by plane from Jakarta or seven to eight hours by train or car from Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Kiringan Village is very famous as a *jamu* village among the Yogyakartaans. Entering the



village, we can see a statue of a woman *jamu* seller in traditional dress as a symbol of the village. This village is one of earthquake-hit area whose houses were damaged. The role of wives after the disaster to survive becomes so clear. This is due to the jobs of the women as *jamu* makers and sellers. Although disaster hit this village, people still consume *jamu*.

There are about 160 families in this village and 113 of the families are *jamu* makers and sellers. Most of the men in this village are farmers and farm workers, while the women are mostly *jamu* makers and sellers. All the *jamu* makers are Javanese Muslims and almost all of them have stayed in the village for years and several for many generations. *Jamu* is a traditional food supplement as well as medicine made from the medicinal plants, such as *ginger*, *curcuma*, *sonchus arvensis*, *gynura pseudochina*, and others. It is made through a process of grating, scraping, crushing, mixing and cooking, usually boiling. There are two kinds of *jamu* – liquid and instant. The liquid *jamu* is known as *jamu gendong*. Liquid *jamu* is sold by women in a bottled form inside the basket and traditionally they carry the *Jamu* basket on their back with the help of a cloth sling. They walk from door to door selling the *jamu*. The instant *jamu*, is sold in the local market or shops. Instant *jamu* uses plastic for packaging. Instant *jamu* has sugar in it. Therefore, consumers with diabetes cannot consume the instant *jamu*. Both liquid and instant *jamu* are household scale industries and almost all *jamu* makers and sellers are women of low education, not higher than junior high school. Therefore, the *jamu* makers lack knowledge, creativity in making the herbs.

Gender roles in the production of *Jamu* also exist. The role of women is very significant. Since the *jamu* makers and sellers are mostly women, almost all *jamu* related activities, starting from preparation of raw materials, processing and cooking/boiling the *jamu* up to packaging and selling the products were done by women. Women also take part in decision making in *jamu* production, such as in providing, buying and selecting raw materials, taking part in the technology based

credit programs, marketing as well as financial management of the *jamu* production including access to profit. Only when they faced problems with the machines, men would help them to fix the machines. Many men (husbands) also take part in the production process of *jamu*, such as in the grating or crushing of medicinal plants, while women do the mixing and cooking or boiling the *jamu*. However, because women are the persons in charge who understand the detail of *Jamu*, they order their husband to do some activities. Women also do the selling part. There are two schedules for selling, morning from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and afternoon from 12.p.m to 5:30 p.m. The innovation in the production process covered the use of production facilities such as grating machines, stainless pans, improved cook stoves and colored plastic bottles. To reach a wider area to sell *jamu*, the women use bicycles and they put the *jamu* basket at the back. The *jamu* sellers ride their bicycles around five to thirty kilometers every day. Under the pan of *jamu*, they always keep *mukenah* for their prayers.

What is interesting in this society is that the role of women after disaster is considered more powerful than the men. People in this village do not know the concept of leadership. What they know is how to make harmony in their family. Husbands and wives go hand in hand in family management. In addition, the leader of this community is also a woman. She is not only the leader of *Jamu* sellers community but also performs as Head of the village. According to some people, including men, she is good in finding link in purpose of developing *jamu* community as well as rebuilding their village after earthquake. In other words, females in this village play their role not as the leader of the family, but they have significant contribution and influence to the family. The leader of the family is still the husband. However, wives give more contribution regarding their process of selling their products. Therefore, males listen more to the females in this community.



#### **D. Concept of Leadership with Regard to Gender**

Many scholars approach this topic with different lenses for what to look at, how to look at it, and ultimately how to address it for the purpose of changing it. Eagly and Karau suggest that there are three main categories of data to examine. These can be expressed as attitudes towards men and women as leaders, access of men and women to leadership roles, and evaluations of success for men and women in leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In another framing of the data, Klenke notes that the clusters of research that deal with differences focus on how men and women enact leadership style, evaluation of success, and follower satisfaction with male and female leaders. She is particularly concerned that the media and popular culture have tended to overemphasize sex differences and have reduced the complexity of the "gender knot" to simplistic notions with no explanatory power. She cautions that just as leadership theories are bounded by their temporal context, so is the research on gender differences in leadership.

In her view, earlier studies are much more likely to show significant differences in all of these dimensions than would data from current studies. This is due partially to methodological reasons. On the other side, she argues that a great deal of that change can be explained by shifts of context and does not equate to a conclusion that we are now in a situation of gender equity. From a more pragmatic orientation, Oakley suggests that there are three categories of theories and explanations that deal specifically with the barriers faced by women in the attainment of senior leadership positions (Oakley, 2000).

In the first category, barriers are created by corporate practices that tend to favor the recruitment, retention and promotion of males over females. The arguments that women lack the necessary "line experience" needed for senior jobs fits into this category as does the notion that the "pipeline" needed to be filled before the numbers at the top would increase significantly. In the second category are behavioral and cultural causes that center around issues of stereotyping,

tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relations. In the third category are feminist arguments that deal with questions of power and influence. The liberal feminist view focuses on increasing power and influence for women by working for change within the system through a process of incremental reform. The radical feminist view advocates fundamental restructuring of the current corporate model. They argue that tinkering with the hierarchical and bureaucratic models we have inherited, with their embedded and intertwined power and gender relations, is inadequate. In their view, we need to develop new organization forms that ensure a more equitable distribution of power with a gender-integrated or gender -in-common base of experience. This is a perhaps more controversial point of view and one that I do not see many people currently advocating.

Any discussion of an Islamic point-of-view on a matter begins with a study of relevant verses (if any) from the Quran. Most Muslims consider the Quran the unaltered word of God as revealed to Prophet Mohammed in the seventh century of the Common Era. It is the primary source of Islamic law, followed by the Prophet's example or sunnah (a combination of biographies and compilations of records of his sayings and actions), the consensus of scholars, and derivation of law through analogy. Unlike the last two sources of law, Quranic ordinances are binding on all Muslims, as is the Prophet's Sunnah. We will therefore confine our discussion of the scriptural treatment of female leadership to the Quran and Sunnah. Does the Quran designate women as the unconditional followers of men within the family and/or within society? Two Quranic verses seem to acknowledge the leadership over women:

1. Men are in charge of women, because God has made some excel (faddala) some of the others [4:34].
2. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them [2:228].



Conservative Muslims frequently quote these verses to promulgate the view that a man is the head of the Muslim family and that a woman may never take charge of men. For example, extended the role of man as leader and woman as follower within the family. On the other hand, fundamentalists restrict the applicability of the verses to the family. They uphold that as men provide for women, they earn the privilege of being in charge of women within the conjugal relationship. Even some modernists concede that men are the leaders within the family even though they argue women can be leaders at the same time.

Scholars of Islam restrict the privilege of men over women to within the family as the preceding and following verses deal with conjugal relations and not with the status of each sex in society at large. Other scholars reject the idea that the Quran relegates women to an inferior position within the family or society in Quran and Woman. God has given to men as inheritance, the only thing of which God gives more to men in the Quran; she therefore interprets the verse to mean men must use their inheritance and earnings to tend to the needs of women as females play an indispensable and arduous role in assuring the continuation of the human species.

#### **E. Leadership in the Family**

The financial condition of the family in Bantul after the disaster is getting worse. It feels more difficult to earn money. Despite the fact that some houses are still ruined, members of society also find difficulty in getting alternative jobs. Men have more load of the family. In this situation, women play significant role for the family. In this discussion, there are forms of women leadership in that society. This is a leadership they do not learn in formal education. Perhaps, nobody of the female *jamu* sellers in this village understands concept of leadership. What they do is due to love to the family. Disaster perpetuates their

love to the family reflected through their struggle in supporting the live of the family.

Women still and always acknowledge their husbands as the leaders of the family. They are forbidden to lead a prayer as what they believe in Islam. However, it does not mean that they do not have influencing position before the husbands. Due to the activities of making and selling the herbs, women in this society play role as leaders in certain context. Negotiation on how to find raw material, deciding the price, and making rule of production are in the hands of women. Husbands must obey what their wives want regarding process of production. In other words, some people believe that making herb is “women business”. Because this business is considered as women’s belonging, men can only follow women’s instruction. It does not mean that men become lower in their position. They know some detail the women do not know, like fixing the bicycle, the machine, and the lines.

Regarding the money earned by the women, the most of the family in this village depends on the business of *jamu*. Therefore, the role of women is sometimes considered bigger than men. However, the focal point is not which party is higher in position than another. Rather, this is a natural solution from the society – a local wisdom of Javanese Muslims – to solve the problems of live faced by members of family. This is a struggle to get harmony. This is the way they live.

#### **F. Concluding Thought**

Debate over female leadership in Islam is ever lasting. People try to interpret the position of women in line with some verses in Quran. In addition, some people try to advance different interpretation. Upon the debate, the big question is not which position is lower or higher. This paper explores theoretical bases on leadership in accordance to some Islamic values. However, this is not



about philosophy of leadership for women. Rather, it is a portrait of particular leadership shown by female members of society.

Considering the function and influence of the female *jamu* sellers in Kiringan Bantul, they might perform specific leadership. The members of family depend their live on the selling of herb products. To some people, this business belongs to women. Therefore, the role of women is the most significant in this context. No problem emerges due to this conception. This is not a war of ideology between the men and the women of the village. This is their struggle to live. This is a natural corporation they learn from their fathers and mothers. The female leadership exists.

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