

# Gender Equality in Women's Leadership Through The Perspective of The Qur'an and Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha

**1<sup>st</sup> Lilik Huriyah**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*lilikhuriyah@gmail.com*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Yeni Endiana**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*yeniendiana02@gmail.com*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Yuni Setya Ningsih**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*yunisetyanmn@gmail.com*

**4<sup>th</sup> Lum'atul Hajar**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*lumatulbasan@gmail.com*

**5<sup>th</sup> Afra Nafisah**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

*Afranafisah12@gmail.com*

## Abstract

Gender equality which is implemented correctly can have positive impacts on all social aspects. As in the case of aspects of women's leadership that need to be respected without any discrimination. The aim of this research focuses on how to understand gender equality and women's leadership through the perspective of the Qur'an and Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha that can be applied to fulfill society's understanding regarding all issues in the aspect of gender equality. The research method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques through literature study by collecting relevant data from books, journals, etc. without having to conduct field reviews. The research results that contain the concept of gender equality and women's leadership from the perspective of the Qur'an, are explained in several surahs; some of them are Surah An-Nisa:124, An-Nahl:97, Al-Hujurat:13, An-Naml:23-44, Al-Furqan:74 and also understanding the leadership of Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha; such as her leadership of the Jamal war, as well as the military. She was also involved in politics and most importantly she was a



defender of women. Viewed from these two perspectives, it proves that Islam recognizes gender equality. Men and women have the same right to be leaders.

**Keywords:** *Gender equality, Women's leadership, Al-Qur'an perspective, Sayyidah Aisyah*

## Introduction

Women are creatures created by God who are given special privileges. There are many interesting things, if we discuss women further. Especially when it comes to gender and female leadership. Women's leadership is part of the principle of gender equality. The emergence of women's leadership has existed since BC which broke the tradition of limiting women's roles in social life. Starting with Queen Balqis, leader of the kingdom of Saba'. Sayyidah Aisyah (*ummul mukminin*) led Jamal's war. These facts show that leadership qualities are not only possessed by men, but women have also proven that they are capable of becoming successful leaders. However, it must also be understood that women's leadership is not absolute in all fields. This is because there are several jobs or positions where male leadership cannot be replaced by women. Philosophically, gender equality is defined as a situation where men and women have an equal and comparable position in executing their rights as human beings in all aspects of life. Gender equality is

a concept where stereotypes no longer limit the roles of men and women in developing their potential.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, leadership according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) can be interpreted as everything related to leaders or how to lead. Therefore, female leadership is a woman's way of leading and influencing individuals or groups to achieve certain goals. Legally, gender equality in the issue of women's leadership from the perspective of the Qur'an is permitted. This is based on surah An-Naml verse 23 which describes the leadership of Queen Balqis who ruled the Kingdom of Saba' (Yemen) during the time of Prophet Sulaiman AS. It is an example that Islam does not prohibit women from holding leadership roles in society.

The same thing was also confirmed by the opinion of the ulama who explained that Ibn Hazm, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari and Imam Abu Hanifah said that women were allowed to occupy any position. The views of these last three scholars are one of the reasons why modern scholars believe that women can hold any position as long as they meet the requirements.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dhea Januastasya Audina, "Kesetaraan Gender dalam Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia" (2022).

<sup>2</sup> Mhd. Abror, "Kepemimpinan Wanita Perspektif Hukum Islam," *TERAJU* 2, no. 01 (March 25, 2020): 53–63. 62

However, the problem in the digital era is that quite a few women feel limited in their self-development. The first is due to internal factors, feelings arise within the woman herself; like she does not want to develop herself and feels afraid of competing with the outside world, so she feels inferior. Finally, she confirms the opinion of ordinary people that women are weaker than men. The second factor is an external factor. There are many suggestions and assumptions from society that women cannot compete with men, especially in terms of leadership. Ultimately, leadership positions are dominated by men. In the absence of support from the environment, in the end, the position of women is marginalized and limited to being a housewife. In line with Rudi Hartono's research that in reality women are still marginalized, it turns out there are 2 factors: 1) Internal factors, originating from the quality of the woman. 2) External factors, generally the leadership position is dominated by men.<sup>3</sup>

Empirically, if we look at the glory of women in the past and women today, there are many examples, such as the 5th president

of Indonesia led by a woman, Mrs. Megawati Soekarnoputri. Then there are quite a few female ministers, female school principals, etc. So there is a need for further research regarding the existence of women's leadership in Indonesia. Because women have a dual role, sometimes being mothers and on the other hand being career women. Similarly, Hikmatul Hasanah and Suprianik's research shows that women have the same multitasking abilities as men, women have the opportunity to become successful, loving wives and have opportunities in social life.<sup>4</sup>

Referring to the problems above, this article will explain and provide further understanding to readers so that they are aware of gender equality in women's leadership. By using a literature review, this research aims to conceptually explain gender equality from the perspective of the Qur'an, women's leadership in previous times, and women's leadership from the perspective of Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha.

Although research on similar topics has been conducted, there are significant differences between them. Previous research that may be related to this research is entitled

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<sup>3</sup> Rudi Hartono, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Di Era Globalisasi," *Jurnal Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* 1, No. 1 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> Hikmatul Hasanah And Suprianik Suprianik, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Islam Dan

Gender," *An-Nisa': Jurnal Kajian Perempuan Dan Keislaman* 12, No. 1 (April 5, 2019): 22-44, <https://doi.org/10.35719/Annisa.V12i1.6>.

"Discourse on Women's Leadership in Islam: Asghar Ali Engineer's Thought Analysis Study" which discusses women's leadership through the views of Engineer Asghar Ali who emphasized that women can become leaders. This is different from the view of classical ulama which prohibits women from becoming leaders. Asghar Ali explained that this was based on the fact that they had not seen the problems in the social sphere when the verse was revealed. So this also has an impact on deviations in interpretation related to gender issues.<sup>5</sup> Another one entitled "Optimizing Women's Empowerment in Effective Leadership" discusses the differences in leadership styles of women and men. It is assumed that women work relying on their emotions while men work assertively.<sup>6</sup> "Women's Leadership from an Islamic Perspective and Gender" discusses the role of women that can be seen from various aspects, both natural (reproductive), economic (productive), social (community), political and leadership in Islam.<sup>7</sup>

In this article, researchers will conduct a deeper and more comprehensive study of gender equality through the perspective of the Qur'an, namely QS. An-Nisa': 124, QS. An-Nahl: 97, and QS. Al-Hujurat:13. The

researchers also outlined several interpretations of the Qur'an taken from Ibnu Katsir's interpretation, Buya Hamka's Al-Azhar interpretation and the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia on each of these verses. Meanwhile, women's leadership from the perspective of the Qur'an is explained in QS.Al-Naml/27:23-44 and QS.Al-Furqan/25:74. Based on that thing, the researchers studied further regarding the role of women's leadership through the perspective of Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha that she is an intelligent role model in the scientific, religious, social and governmental fields. So gender equality in women's leadership is very important to study further.

## Method

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method, using a library research approach. The library research approach or library research is the use of library data in the form of books as a data source, reading and studying various existing literature in the form of the Qur'an, hadith, books and other research results related to

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Adress Prawira Negara, "Discourse on Women's Leadership in Islam: Asghar Ali Engineer's Thought Analysis Study," *An-Nisa': Journal of Gender Studies* Vol. 15 No. 2 (Oktober 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Rini Puji Astuti, "Optimalisasi Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dalam Kepemimpinan Efektif," *An-*

*Nisa': Jurnal Kajian Perempuan Dan Keislaman* 12, No. 2 (Oktober 21, 2019): 263-91, <https://doi.org/10.35719/Annisa.V12i2.19>.

<sup>7</sup> Hasanah And Suprianik, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Islam Dan Gender."

the research topic.<sup>8</sup> The data collection technique is by studying literature; and by collecting relevant data from books, journals, etc. without the field investigations.

In literature studies, there are at least four main characteristics that researchers must pay attention to, including: First, researchers do not go into the field, but deal directly with text or numbers. Second, "ready-to-use" literacy data. This means that researchers do not need to do anything other than deal directly with source materials that are already available in the library. Third, library data is generally a secondary source. In other words, researchers do not get original data from first hand in the field but data from second hand (secondary data). Fourth, the state of library data is not limited by space and time. This means that even though the data comes and goes, it will never change. because it is "dead" data stored in written records (text numbers, photo recordings and films)<sup>9</sup>.

## Discussion

Messenger are the same in doing righteous deeds; doing good deeds following

Allah's commands and Shari'a, then Allah will reward every righteous deed by giving them a good life in the world, which includes a form of calm and other forms and in the afterlife he will receive a better reward for the good deeds he has done.<sup>10</sup>

As stated in the book of tafsir al-Azhar by Buya Hamka, it explains that there is no distinction between the position of a man and a woman in terms of doing good deeds and their faith. Both of them received God's promise, namely that they would be rewarded for their deeds and faith with a good life or *Hayatan Thayyiban*.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, according to the interpretation of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, it is stated that whoever, whether male or female, does good deeds, no matter how small, with sincerity and faith, then Allah's promise is certain, that he will be given a good life in this world and will be rewarded in the afterlife with double and greater rewards. good from what has been done for his good deeds.<sup>12</sup>

As mentioned in the hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad from 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, the

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<sup>8</sup> Mustofa Muhammad et al., *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research)* (Padang: Get Press Indonesia, 2023). 189

<sup>9</sup> Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014). 4-5

<sup>10</sup> Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Alu Syaikh, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 5*, Cetakan

Kesepuluh. (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2017). 234-235

<sup>11</sup> Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 5* (Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD Singapura, n.d.). 3960

<sup>12</sup> Agama Republik Indonesia, "Aplikasi Quran Kemenag."

Messenger of Allah said, "It is truly fortunate for someone who puts his trust in himself, is given sustenance with a sense of *qonaah*, and is given a feeling of *qonaah* by Allah in everything that Allah gives to his servants. (HR. Muslim).<sup>13</sup>

So the conclusion in QS. An-Nahl:97 is that both men and women who do righteous deeds with faith will receive rewards in this world and the afterlife, namely rewards for the deeds they have done.

3) QS. Al-Hujurat:13

The meaning of QS. Al-Hujurat:13 according to Ibn Kathir's interpretation is that the glory of a servant, whether male or female, will be seen equally in terms of his obedience and submission to Allah and His Messenger. This can be then interpreted to mean that what differentiates the status of a servant before Allah is the level of his piety and not his lineage.<sup>14</sup>

According to Tafsir al-Azhar, it can be concluded that a servant essentially comes from one descendant. So, there is no need to bring up the differences between one and another because there is no difference at all. "A servant is truly noble in the sight of Allah, is based on his piety." The end of this verse

explains that the true glory of a servant will be valuable before God with the nobility of heart, mind, and temperament, and obedience to God.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, in the interpretation of the work of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, it is explained that humans were created from men and women from the same lineage, namely Adam and Eve, with equal degrees. There is no difference between one tribe and another. Then they become servants of nations and tribes so that they get to know each other so they can help each other, instead of being hostile to each other or showing off their strengths. Because the noblest one among servants in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most pious.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned in the hadith narrated directly from the Prophet. Imam al-Bukhari narrated from Abu Hurairah, narrated that the Messenger of Allah was once asked: "Who is the noblest?" so he answered: "Among them in the sight of Allah and the noblest among them is the most pious one."<sup>17</sup>

So the conclusion in QS. Al-Hujurat:13 can be understood that the justice obtained by every human being covering all aspects of

<sup>13</sup> bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Alu Syaikh, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 5*. 235

<sup>14</sup> Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Alu Syaikh, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 9*, Cetakan Kesepuluh. (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2017). 132-133

<sup>15</sup> Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 9* (Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD Singapura, n.d.). 6835

<sup>16</sup> Agama Republik Indonesia, "Aplikasi Quran Kemenag."

<sup>17</sup> bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Alu Syaikh, *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Jilid 9*. 133

life on this earth is the same and does not differentiate between men or women, whether based on ethnicity, race, custom, language or gender differences.; and what differentiates a servant is the level of devotion to Allah SWT.

This is also in line with the explanation delivered by Muhammad Fadhlulloh Mubarak and M. Misbah that gender equality means that men and women get equal opportunities and rights with other humans, in this case, they can play an active role and take part in various activities. general, such as politics, education and social culture, law, and others.<sup>18</sup> This explains that gender equality needs to be enforced in life in society. The importance of understanding gender equality in the social environment will have a big impact on society's perspectives and views which have been misunderstood. Gender equality does not mean that women must be equal to men, but rather equal treatment without discrimination.<sup>19</sup>

#### **A. Women's Leadership through the perspective of the Qur'an**

God's blessings and mercy always come, one of which is the presence of women in various roles in life. Allah does not

differentiate between men and women. Allah gives the same reward to both of them for their worship and good deeds. The Qur'an glorifies women in Surah An-Nisa'. Women are so special that Allah sent down a letter that discusses women specifically.

Talking about women's leadership in the Qur'an, the Qur'anic verses that discuss women's leadership explicitly are found in QS.Al-Naml/27:23-44. These verses tell about Queen Balqis from the country of Saba' who was famous for her superpowers in leading her prosperous and prosperous country under her leadership. Of course, this will inspire women to become leaders. A female leader is not impossible just because women are known as weak creatures who only depend on men. The story of Queen Balqis is proof that from BC, women have demonstrated their existence as leaders.

There is also the meaning of QS.Al-Furqan/25:74 supporting women to become leaders. Pay attention to the meaning that each word in this verse wants to convey :

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ  
وَأَجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

The word " أَزْوَاجِنَا " shows the meaning of pairing, both male and female, then in the last

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<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Fadhlulloh Mubarak and M. Misbah, "Implikasi Kesenjangan Gender dalam

Pendidikan Islam Studi Analisis Paradigma Fatimah Mernissi" 10, no. 2 (November 2, 2022): 353.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Hal.357

sentence " إِمَامًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ وَاجْعَلْنَا "and make us leaders of the pious". This verse is a prayer for women to become leaders.<sup>20</sup>

It can be concluded that since ancient times, long before the Century, there have been female leaders, namely the leadership of Queen Balqis from the land of Saba'. It has been explained and alluded to in the Qur'an regarding women's leadership. This shows that women's role is not stagnant in matters of just taking care of the household. Even women can play multiple roles. On the one hand, being a wife and mother, on the other hand, being a career woman who exists in the world of work and even holds positions in certain positions. Just like previous great women who were able to lead a large country.

### **B. Women's Leadership Through the Perspective of Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha**

Āishah bint Abu Bakar R.A is an extraordinary woman, her advanced knowledge makes her a role model for Muslim women throughout the world. Because of this, Aisyah became one of the figures who had a real influence on the development of Islamic sciences.

In Islamic Treasures and Thought, Sayyidah Aisyah is a woman who has an

important role in the history of Islam until now. As a beloved wife and the person closest to the Prophet SAW, Aisyah has many important lessons to learn. Because of this, Aisyah was known as an extraordinary wife who not only helped the envoy in household matters but could also act as an important companion in social and government affairs.<sup>21</sup>

Because Aisyah was closest to the Prophet Muhammad and often witnessed the process of revelation, she is also considered the most trusted narrator of hadith. There is an opinion that Aisyah memorized and narrated 2,210 hadiths, hence she got the name *Al-Mukatsirin*, which means the person who narrated many hadiths.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, Aisyah often became a reference for the Prophet's friends and Muslim scholars, especially women's groups, to answer religious questions and laws. The companions of the Prophet learned a lot from Aisyah in various fields of basic sciences, this was because she mastered various scientific fields such as jurisprudence, hadith, interpretation of the Qur'an, history, da'wah, literature, health, and others. It is based on skills and abilities. Therefore, Sayyidah Aisyah was one of the earliest Islamic intellectuals like *Khalifah* Ali, who was a friend of Abdullah

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<sup>20</sup> Lilis Fauziah Balgis, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Al-Qur-An Perspektif Adil Gender," *Mumtaz: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Keislaman* 6, No. 1 (2022): 134–137.

<sup>21</sup> Sugirma And Agustang K, "Antara Khadijah Dan Aisyah (Teladan Moderasi Beragama Perspektif

Gender)," *Al-Wardah: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender Dan Agama* Vol. 14 No. 1 (June 2020), <https://doi.org/10.46339>.

<sup>22</sup> Dedi Sahputra Napitupulu And Novita Sari, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Islam," N.D.



bin Abbas and also a friend of Abdullah bin Umar.<sup>23</sup> Aisyah's charm is even more special with her brilliant thinking and leadership skills. Aisyah is a very capable woman. Therefore, Aisyah also taught the people about *Tafsir* and *Asbāb Al-Nuzūl, Fiqh*, Arabic language, poetry, *Farā'id* science, and even medical science and literature.<sup>24</sup> Imam Az-Zuhri said: "If 'Āisyah's knowledge had been gathered with the knowledge of the entire *Ummahāt Al-Mu'minin* and the knowledge of all women, 'Āisyah's knowledge would have been preeminent (superior)".

Apart from having very extensive knowledge, Aisyah is also famous as a critic, a leader and a hero for women who fight for women's issues. She is a fighter for helpless women, because of her high position regarding knowledge, manners and religion.<sup>25</sup> In the history of Jamal's war where appeared that Aisyah was a respected and charismatic figure in handling the leadership of her troops. Avoiding the perspective of whether history is controversial because from the perspective of opponents of *Khalifah* Ali bin Abi Talib. However, this history serves as an

important indication of Aisyah's ability to solidify her army to reject what she felt was enforcing constitutional sovereignty.

The involvement of Aisyah in leading the army highlights the talent for political leadership which according to most people is perceived as the 'domain' of men. So in fact it was Aisyah who laid the foundation for awareness of the equality of women and the exposure of women's abilities as political and state leaders.<sup>26</sup>

Through her example, Islam also gives an example to the people about being a good married couple today until the end of time. In Imam Tirmidhi's editorial, it was stated: "The angel said: "This is your wife in this world and the hereafter." HR at-Tirmidhi no: 2880.

The Prophet Muhammad SAW also reported that Aisyah was one of the women he loved most, the Prophet did not marry a girl except her. There is a special verse revealed by Allah that relates to her purity, and only in her lap was the Prophet's wife who ever witnessed how the revelation came down. Many occasions glorified Aisyah because she often faced the Prophet directly,

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<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Adib Nuruzzaman et al., "Women's Contributions in Islam: Tracing Their Journey from Historical Contexts to Modern Digital Educational Environments" 01, no. 1 (2023).

<sup>24</sup> Aisyah Tidjani, "Āishah Binti Abū Bakr r.a. Wanita Istemewa yang Melampaui Zamannya,"

*Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* Vol. 1 No. 1 (June 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Napitupulu And Sari, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Islam."

<sup>26</sup> K, "Antara Khadijah Dan Aisyah (Teladan Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Gender)."

especially when she was still alive when she was sick and even towards the end of the Prophet's life.<sup>27</sup>

With this, Sayyidah Aisyah's role is very large both in the course of the development of the Islamic religion, in the relationship between the household and Rasulullah SAW and the context of life with society, both politically and socially, this shows that Islam is a balanced religion, an enlightening religion and most importantly is a religion that gives special space to women especially in the context of leadership and the position of a woman, one exemplary example is Sayyidah Aisyah R.A regarding her intelligence which was able to master many scientific fields, how to form a good and romantic household with the Messenger of Allah, her abilities as a political and state leader.

## **Conclusion**

Gender equality can be interpreted as a form of perspective in seeing men and women as social creatures who have the same level without any discrimination due to gender differences. This is confirmed in the Qur'an which is explained in several letters, including an-Nisa: 124 and an-Nahl: 97, explaining that men and women who do pious deeds have equal rights before Allah. Then, in the letter Hujurat: 13, it is explained

that the justice obtained by every human being, covering all aspects of life on this earth, is the same for both men and women.

The Qur'anic argument that discusses women's leadership explicitly is found in QS.Al-Naml/27:23-44 tells the story of Queen Balqis from the land of Saba' who was famous for her superpowers in leading her prosperous and prosperous country. Then about the meaning of QS.Al-Furqan/25:74 which supports women to become leaders.

As for women's leadership through the example of Sayyidah Aisyah Radhiyallahu'Anha, she is a woman whose intelligence is very high, who masters many scientific fields and is the most trusted hadith transmitter so that she is a reference for the companions of the Prophet and Muslim scholars, she is also famous as a critic, as a leader. and a hero for women, even his ability to solidify the ranks in the Jamal war. Not only that, Aisyah also plays an important role as an important companion in social and government affairs.

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<sup>27</sup> Syaikh Amin bin Abdullah asy-Syaqawi, "Kisah Keteladanan Aisyah Radhiyallahu 'anha" (2013).

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