

# Reinterpreting Gender in the Qur'an: Realizing Inclusive Interpretation in the Modern Era

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## Abstract

**Keywords:** gender interpretation, equality, reconstruction of interpretation

This study aims to analyze various forms of gender discrimination in interpreting the Qur'an and explore the opportunities and challenges in reconstructing a more inclusive interpretation in the modern era. This study uses gender hermeneutics to uncover gender bias in traditional interpretations of the Qur'an through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. This study identifies patriarchal bias by selecting and analyzing relevant literature. The analysis process involves critically evaluating biased classical interpretations compared to more inclusive contemporary interpretations, using a thematic approach to understand gender discrimination in the text. The research findings indicate that efforts to realize an inclusive interpretation of the Qur'an require a multidimensional approach that includes critical analysis of patriarchal bias in traditional interpretations, empowerment of women in religious discourse, and adoption of contextual hermeneutics that consider historical and social aspects. Social change, educational progress, and digital technology provide great opportunities to reconstruct a more gender-just interpretation. Initiatives such as including women in interpretation, gender-based educational reform, and advocacy through digital platforms can open up space for more progressive discussions. International collaboration through conferences and seminars further strengthens this movement, allowing for exchanging ideas across countries to create interpretations that support gender equality. With this combination of strategies, Qur'anic interpretation can reflect principles of justice that align with modern social dynamics, significantly contributing to more just and inclusive social change.

## Introduction

Quranic interpretation has long played a significant role in shaping gender understanding among Muslims, often reinforcing patriarchal norms through interpretations dominated by male scholars (Siddiqui-Dennis, 2021; Carrasco-Santos et al., 2024; Rahmaniah & Taufik, 2024). According to Cook's (2000) research in *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction*, interpretation influences spiritual, social, and political aspects, including shaping accepted gender norms among Muslims. Classical scholars such as Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and Al-Qurtubi tend to give men more roles in social and family authority structures, often placing women in subordinate positions (Geissinger, 2015; Tasmin, 2021; Fahdzlan et al., 2023). For example, the use of the interpretation of verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa about qiwamah (male leadership over women) is often used as a basis to justify male dominance in the family (Shomad, 2022; Begum et al., 2024). However, in recent decades, new interpretations have emerged that are more responsive to the issue of gender equality.

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Contemporary thinkers such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Fazlur Rahman have proposed a more just and inclusive hermeneutic approach, suggesting that the verses of the Qur'an can be interpreted in a way that affirms the equal standing of men and women in social and spiritual responsibilities (Sya'rani, 2017; Crabtree, 2022). This approach opens up opportunities for inclusivity in Qur'anic interpretation in the modern era, reducing gender discrimination and promoting greater equality.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of women's empowerment in advancing economic and social stability. According to *The World's Women* (2022), women's empowerment positively affects economic growth. Meanwhile, the International Labor Organization (ILO) reported in (2017) that women's participation in the workforce is still lower than men, creating significant disparities. This is also evident from the lack of representation of women in the interpretation of the Qur'an, which has the potential to hinder progress on gender equality. UNESCO (2019) also shows that gender inequality in education is still a significant issue in many countries with a Muslim majority. Studies by Supriatna et al. (2023) explore methods to reduce gender bias in interpreting the Qur'an using a more inclusive and contextual approach. Research by Deroncele-Acosta et al (2024) suggests that advances in education technology and international cooperation can help overcome these barriers and facilitate a more inclusive approach to gender interpretation. This study attempts to answer three main questions: What types of gender discrimination exist in interpretation, what are the opportunities for reconstructing interpretation that is more inclusive of women, and what are the challenges in eliminating gender discrimination in interpreting the Qur'an?

This research focuses on the analysis of gender discrimination in the interpretation of the Qur'an and efforts to find solutions for a more inclusive and gender-just interpretation in the modern era. The main objective is to explore new insights that will reform the understanding of Qur'anic interpretation by emphasizing the principles of gender equality and justice, supporting more sustainable and just social change in Muslim communities. The benefits of this research include: first, enriching the understanding of how gender discrimination manifests in the interpretation of religious texts and developing inclusive strategies to address it. Second, this research will identify new approaches that can improve gender justice in religious practice, with broad implications for academic literature, policy, and education, positively impacting society. Third, this research supports a more egalitarian interpretation of the Qur'an, which is essential to supporting just and inclusive social change. Thus, this research has the potential to make a significant contribution to advancing gender equality and justice.

Based on the objectives and benefits outlined in this study, the hypotheses that can be proposed are as follows: First, gender discrimination in the interpretation of the Qur'an significantly affects social views and practices in the Muslim community. Second, developing and implementing more inclusive and gender-just solutions and approaches to interpreting the Qur'an will increase gender equality in religious practices. Third, a more inclusive and egalitarian interpretation of the Qur'anic texts will support more just and sustainable social change. It is hoped that through this study, the new approaches will strengthen academic literature and policy practices that support gender equality and justice and substantially positively impact social dynamics in the Muslim community. These hypotheses will be tested through in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected, examining the relationship between the interpretation of religious texts and gender-related social practices in the context of different Muslim communities.

## Method

This research method uses gender hermeneutics to analyze sacred texts and uncover hidden gender biases in traditional interpretations (Hasan et al., 2022; Giang & Dan, 2024). This approach allows for the reinterpretation of Qur'anic verses with a more equal perspective, using the feminist

hermeneutic approach that considers the social and historical context of the text. The data sources used in this study are secondary data collected through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) (Salama et al., 2017; Mengist et al., 2020). This study refers to literature on classical and contemporary interpretations and scientific studies relevant to gender issues in Qur'anic interpretation. Some of the literature used includes works such as *Qur'an and Woman* by Wadud (1999) and *Believing Women in Islam* by Barlas (2002). Keywords used in the literature search include "feminist," "Qur'anic interpretation," "patriarchy," "Islamic law," and "gender discrimination." The search was conducted through various academic databases to find relevant and high-quality sources. This approach aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of gender bias in traditional interpretations and offer alternative interpretations that are fairer and more equal (Llorens et al., 2021; Nemani et al., 2024).

In this study, the data collection technique through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was carried out through several structured stages (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022; Rocco et al., 2023). The first step is source identification, where predetermined keywords are used to find journal articles, books, and academic reports relevant to gender issues and Qur'anic interpretation. After that, source selection is carried out by considering the relevance to the topic, the quality of the publication, and its contribution to the issues. The literature that passes the selection is then grouped and classified based on themes, such as comparing classical and contemporary interpretations or focusing on patriarchal bias in the holy text.

The literature collected and selected is analyzed in more depth at the data analysis stage. This process begins with critical reading to understand the context and main themes related to gender bias in interpretation. Then, the main themes are identified through thematic analysis, where topics such as patriarchal bias, gender discrimination, and feminist interpretation are raised. This analysis allows researchers to find general patterns or trends in interpreting the Qur'an related to gender (Liehr-Storm et al., 2023; Naeem et al., 2023).

The next stage is a critical evaluation of classical and contemporary interpretations. In this case, classical interpretations that often contain patriarchal bias are compared with more inclusive contemporary interpretations, using literature such as Wadud (1999) and Barlas (2002) as a basis. Finally, this analysis reaches the stage of reconstructing a more just and inclusive interpretation, where arguments are put forward to interpret the verses of the Qur'an that are often considered demeaning to women from a more equal perspective. In this way, the study identifies biases in traditional interpretations and provides solutions in feminist interpretations that offer a more just approach to women in Islam.

## Result and Discussion

### Result

#### Unraveling Gender Bias in the Interpretation of Qur'anic Texts

Recent research has shown that interpretations of the Qur'an are often tainted by deep-seated patriarchal biases, resulting in interpretations that tend to discriminate against women and reinforce unequal social structures. Muslim feminists such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas have played a key role in challenging this paradigm, proposing a contextual hermeneutical approach that is more just and more in line with Islamic principles of justice. Through their work, we gain insight that a more inclusive and gender-equitable interpretation is possible and essential to advancing contemporary understandings of Islamic teachings. Here is a table of the findings of this research:

**Table 1. Gender Bias in Interpretation of the Qur'an**

No	Findings	Description
1	Patriarchal Domination in Traditional Interpretation	This study refers to classical interpretations such as Tafsir al-Jalalayn and Tafsir Ibn Kathir, which emphasize the patriarchal interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisa: 34,

		this verse is often translated as a justification for male dominance, showing how the patriarchal context has influenced the interpretation (Masoud et al., 2016).
2	Reform of Interpretation by Muslim Feminists	Amina Wadud, in her book "Qur'an and Woman" (1999), and Asma Barlas, in "Believing Women in Islam" (2002), offer interpretations that question and challenge the patriarchal views underlying many traditional interpretations. Both authors argue that the term "qawwali" should be interpreted in the context of support rather than authority.
3	Hermeneutical Context and Social Relevance	Nasr Abu Zayd (2018). supports the emphasis on contextual hermeneutics in "Rethinking the Qur'an". He highlights the importance of considering the social and historical context in interpreting Qur'anic verses to avoid bias and distortion.
4	The Influence of Academic Studies on Modern Interpretation	Research by Hyder (2008) and Takim (2009) reveals that most accepted interpretations come from a highly patriarchal socio-political context. They point to reinterpreting the verse with a more inclusive contemporary understanding.
5	Global Discourse and Gender Equality in Islam	A report by the Pew Research Center (2015) highlights how the debate about the role of women in Islam is growing, with more and more.

Table 1 reviews gender bias in Qur'anic interpretation, revealing how patriarchal structures have profoundly influenced the interpretation of sacred texts in Islam. Research referring to classical commentaries such as Tafsir al-Jalalayn and Tafsir Ibn Kathir shows how verses such as Q.S. An-Nisa: 34 are often translated in a way that justifies male dominance, reflecting how patriarchal norms influence the interpretation of religious texts. This shows the importance of revisiting traditional interpretations that can reinforce gender inequality.

On the other hand, efforts to reform interpretations by Muslim feminists such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas offer new perspectives that challenge the patriarchal views that are long-rooted in Qur'anic interpretation. They argue that "qawwali" should be interpreted as a form of support, not authority, demonstrating the importance of a more inclusive and socially relevant hermeneutical approach. Nasr Abu Zayd adds the importance of paying attention to the social and historical context to avoid bias and distortion in interpretation in favor of a more dynamic and adaptive understanding of contemporary social realities.

Furthermore, Hyder and Takim's study reveals that many prevailing interpretations originate from a highly patriarchal socio-political context, highlighting the need for more inclusive and progressive reinterpretations. The Pew Research Center report also highlights the dynamics of global discourse on gender equality in Islam, reflecting growing debate and awareness about the role of women. This critique suggests a shift in the understanding and interpretation of sacred texts that could help advocate for gender equality and reduce gender bias in religious practice.

### Forms of Gender Discrimination in Al-Quran Interpretation

Recent research has revealed that Qur'anic interpretations are often trapped in deep-seated patriarchal structures, with specific verses used to justify male domination over women. Scholars such as Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud have highlighted how dominant cultural and social norms among interpreters, especially during the Abbasid era, have created interpretations that reinforce gender inequality. They argue that a literal approach to interpretation often ignores the broader historical and social context, failing to capture the principles of justice that should be at the heart of the Qur'anic teachings. Instead, a more inclusive and contextual approach is needed to overcome these biases, offering more just interpretations and in keeping with changing social dynamics.

**Table 2. Forms of Gender Discrimination**

No	Findings	Description
1	Patriarchal Structure in the Interpretation of the Qur'an	Historical patriarchal structures influence the interpretation of the Qur'an, especially in verses such as QS. An-Nisa: 34, which is often interpreted to justify male leadership and domination over women ( <a href="#">Hosseini et al., 2015</a> ; <a href="#">Noor, 2024</a> )
2	The Impact of Cultural and Social Norms on Gender Interpretation	Gender interpretations are often influenced by dominant cultural and social norms, reflecting social ideologies that place men in a superior position ( <a href="#">Ahmed, 1992</a> ; <a href="#">Ayubi, 2020</a> ; <a href="#">Saffari, 2024</a> ).
3	Literal Interpretation Approach	Criticism of literal interpretations that fail to capture the broader dimensions of justice in the Qur'an, emphasizing that historical and social context are crucial in understanding the verses ( <a href="#">Zayd et al., 2006</a> ; <a href="#">Hillman &amp; Baydoun, 2020</a> ).
4	Traditional Resistance	Inclusive and contextual approaches often generate resistance from traditionalist groups who view changes in the interpretation of sacred texts as a threat to long-standing norms and traditions. They fear these new approaches could obscure understandings that have been considered final and indisputable ( <a href="#">Wadud, 1999</a> ; <a href="#">Sachedina, 2009</a> ).
5	Risk of Interpretation Fragmentation	Introducing flexibility in interpretation through a historical-sociological lens can lead to fragmentation in the understanding of the people. This can lead to diverse and often contradictory interpretations, thus causing confusion and division within the community ( <a href="#">Rahman, 1982</a> ).

Table 2 outlines the various forms of gender discrimination that are manifested in the interpretation of the Qur'an, highlighting the complexity and persistence of deep-seated patriarchal structures in religious literature. These structures have historically crystallized in the interpretation of verses such as Surah An-Nisa: 34, which are often used to justify male dominance over women, reflecting the significant influence of the patriarchal context. Furthermore, gender interpretations are also heavily influenced by dominant cultural and social norms, which consistently place men in a superior position, illustrating how social ideology can shape religious understanding. The literalist approach to interpretation is often criticized for failing to encompass the broader dimensions of justice that should be reflected in the sacred text, emphasizing the importance of historical and social context in understanding the verses. Furthermore, attempts to adopt an inclusive and contextual approach often encounter resistance from traditionalists, who view changes in interpretation as a threat to long-standing norms and traditions, fearing that new interpretations could obscure understandings that are considered final and indisputable. The risk of interpretive fragmentation resulting from introducing flexibility through a historical-sociological lens also creates challenges, often leading to diverse and contradictory interpretations, which can cause confusion and division within the community ([Rahman, 1982](#)). These findings emphasize the need for a more dynamic and reflective approach to interpreting religious texts, which can adapt to contemporary social changes without losing the core teachings.

### Challenges in Realizing Inclusive Interpretation

Recent research has uncovered significant obstacles to efforts to achieve inclusive interpretation of the Qur'an, including strong resistance from conservative groups who see inclusive interpretations as a threat to traditional interpretations of Islam. Changes related to gender issues are often seen as unacceptable deviations. In addition, countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan use Sharia law to legitimize patriarchal interpretations, reinforcing legal and social barriers against women. This resistance often hampers efforts to reform more inclusive family law. Male dominance in religious institutions continues to perpetuate gender bias, minimize women's participation, and reduce the potential for egalitarian approaches. Women who try to contribute to theological discussions also face deep-rooted social and political barriers, demonstrating the



continued influence of patriarchy on the interpretation of religious texts. Berikut adalah point-point temuan dari deskripsi tersebut dengan referensi spesifik:

**Table 3. Challenges In Inclusive Interpretation**

No	Findings	Description
1	Resistance from Conservative Groups	Strong resistance from conservatives who see inclusive interpretation as a threat to the purity of Islam. They argue that changes in interpretation, especially related to gender, are unacceptable deviations (Wahid, 2006; Al-Omari, 2016).
2	The Use of Sharia Law to Legitimize Conservative Interpretations	In countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, Sharia law is used to support patriarchal interpretations that limit women's rights in various aspects of life (Hosseini, 2015; Khalishah & Rosyid, 2023).
3	Resistance to More Inclusive Legal Reform	Efforts at more inclusive family law reform are often stymied by conservative groups who use Sharia law as a tool to maintain patriarchal social structures (Badran, 1995; Maslim & Bjorck, 2009).
4	Male Domination in Religious Institutions	Male dominance in religious institutions results in highly gender-biased interpretations. The lack of female participation in these institutions reduces the ability to promote a more inclusive and egalitarian approach (Wadud, 1999; Fauziyah & Farisi, 2024).
5	Social and Political Barriers to Women's Participation	Women who attempt to participate in interpretation often face significant social and political barriers, including strong gender discrimination in many Muslim countries (Ahmed, 1992).

Table 3 clearly illustrates some of the key challenges facing efforts to achieve inclusive interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly about gender. The resistance from conservative groups expressed by Wahid and Al-Omari highlights concerns that inclusive interpretations may deviate from what they consider to be the pure and authentic interpretation of Islam, with gender-related changes seen as a threat to long-standing traditions. The use of Sharia law to legitimize conservative interpretations, as noted by Hosseini, shows how this legal tool can reinforce existing patriarchal structures and limit women's rights, particularly in countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.

Furthermore, the resistance to more inclusive legal reform described by Badran and colleagues shows how legislative efforts aimed at achieving equality and justice are often hampered by conservative views that use Sharia law as a tool to defend the status quo. This problem is compounded by the male dominance of religious institutions, which, as explained by Wadud and Fauziah, results in a strong gender bias in interpretation and reduces the opportunity for a more equitable approach. Finally, the challenges faced by women seeking to participate in the interpretation process, as articulated by Ahmed, highlight significant social and political barriers, including deep-seated gender discrimination, that remain deeply rooted in many Muslim communities. These challenges reflect the urgent need for more effective strategies to overcome resistance to inclusivity and foster broader social transformation to achieve truly egalitarian and just interpretation.

**Discussion**

**Reimagining Quranic Interpretation: The Contribution of Inclusive Interpretation**

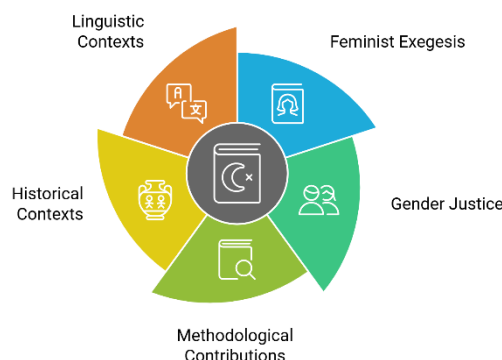
Inclusive interpretation is an approach in the study of Qur'anic interpretation that aims to provide a fairer and more comprehensive representation of marginalized groups, including women. This concept includes efforts to read and interpret sacred texts by considering women's perspectives and experiences so that the resulting interpretation better reflects the diversity of voices in the Muslim community (Darzi et al., 2021; Koburtay et al., 2023). This approach serves to address gender injustice that often appears in traditional interpretations that may ignore or even restrict the role of women. Mernissi (1991) explains that feminist interpretation can reveal new dimensions

in verses considered problematic regarding gender. Her work highlights how a more open interpretation can provide space for women's perspectives in understanding the Qur'an.

The intellectual and methodological contributions of female and feminist exegetes are significant because they offer a more balanced view by highlighting interpretations that traditional exegetes may have overlooked (Gurung, 2020; Lwamba et al., 2022). For example, Wadud (1991) emphasizes the importance of interpretation based on women's experiences. She invites readers to read the Qur'an not only as a normative text but also as a document that must be understood in the context of power and gender relations. Wadud's methodology involves reexamining verses that are potentially misinterpreted as justifying gender inequality, such as verses on polygamy and women's rights in marriage. With this approach, Wadud reveals a more inclusive and just meaning that supports gender equality.

Furthermore, Barlas (2002) also contributes by exploring how traditional interpretations are often misused to justify the oppression of women. Barlas argues that many patriarchal interpretations do not reflect the valid egalitarian message of the Qur'an. Using a deconstructive hermeneutic approach, Barlas attempts to show that the Qur'an does not support gender hierarchy but teaches justice and equality (Rahemtulla, 2023; Kunnummal, 2023).

Methodologically, these feminist commentators also encourage using deeper historical and linguistic contexts to interpret verses often considered problematic in gender issues. This approach enriches the interpretation of the Qur'an by giving a voice to women, who were often relegated to a lower status in traditional interpretations, and by introducing elements of equality that align with the principles of justice in Islam (Anwar et al., 2024).



**Figure 1. Components of Inclusive Interpretation**

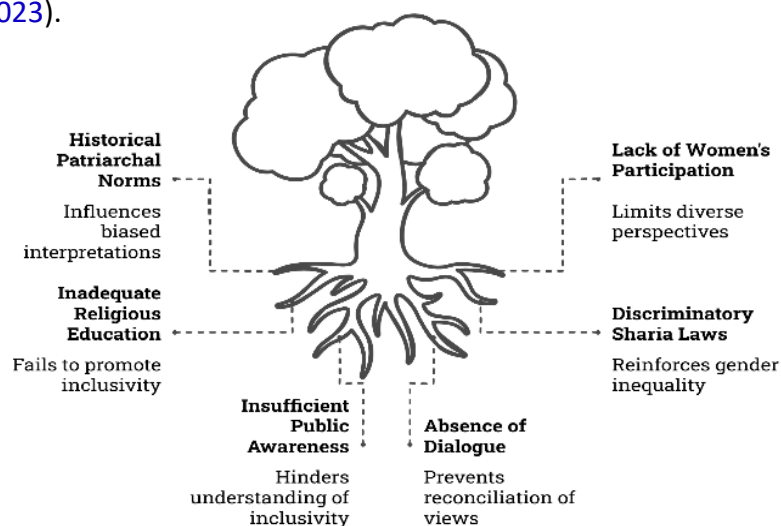
The integral approach to interpreting the Qur'an depicted in this illustration shows an effort to combine various important aspects such as linguistic context, historical context, methodological contributions, feminist exposition, and gender justice. This approach provides space to understand the holy text in a more inclusive and relevant way to modern social dynamics. However, several criticisms need to be considered. Reliance on linguistic and historical contexts often faces resistance from conservative groups who view the text as absolute and do not need recontextualization (Wadud, 1999; Barlas, 2002). Feminist exposition, although very important in exposing gender bias, is often considered controversial and threatening to traditional interpretation, which has the potential to trigger fragmentation in the Muslim community (Sachedina, 2009). In addition, the principle of gender justice that is carried out is often hampered by conservative social and legal structures in patriarchal Muslim countries (Hosseini, 2015). Methodological contributions, such as contextual hermeneutics, also face challenges in ensuring consistency, as diverse interpretations can create confusion and division within the community (Rahman, 1982). Nevertheless, this approach represents a significant innovation in Qur'anic interpretation. To achieve success, it is

important to balance tradition and innovation and encourage dialogue between scholars, intellectuals, and the community to create a space for sustainable and constructive transformation.

### Revealing and Addressing Gender Discrimination in the Interpretation of the Qur'an

Addressing gender discrimination in the interpretation of the Qur'an requires strategic and sustainable steps that can produce fundamental changes in religious understanding and practice. One of the main steps is to review classical commentaries, such as the Tafsir al-Jalalayn and Tafsir Ibn Kathir, to evaluate how historical patriarchal norms have influenced the interpretation of certain verses, including QS. An-Nisa: 34. This verse is often used to justify male domination over women, reflecting the socio-cultural influences of the time of its interpretation (Hosseini et al., 2015; Donahoe, 2017). A contextual hermeneutic approach, such as that proposed by Nasr Abu Zayd, is important to understand these verses more relevantly, taking into account the historical, social, and linguistic contexts so that terms such as "qawwali" can be interpreted as responsibility and support, not domination (Wadud, 1999; Barlas, 2002). Women's participation in the discourse of interpretation is also an important step in reducing the patriarchal bias that has been dominant so far. Religious education that supports inclusivity through interpretation training can open space for women to contribute to shaping a more just understanding of religion. This effort is supported by progressive literature such as the work of Wadud (1999) and Barlas (2002), which offer new perspectives on interpretation that highlight the importance of gender equality.

In addition, advocacy to reform discriminatory Sharia-based laws against women, as expressed by Badran (1995) and Hosseini (2015), is an important step towards creating more just policies. Public awareness campaigns through social media, seminars, and workshops also have a strategic role in educating the public about the importance of a more inclusive and egalitarian approach to interpretation. This step needs to be complemented by empirical research to measure the impact of this approach on Muslim society (Hyder, 2008; Takim, 2009). Discussion forums between conservative and progressive scholars can also help bridge differences of opinion and create a space for productive dialogue. By integrating these various approaches, the interpretation of the Qur'an can move towards an interpretation that reflects the principles of justice and equality through Islamic teachings that are relevant to modern social dynamics (Rahemtulla, 2023; Kunnummal, 2023).



**Figure 2. Gender Discrimination in Qur'an Interpretation**

This figure illustrates the root causes of gender discrimination in Qur'anic interpretation through elements such as historical patriarchal norms, inadequate religious education, lack of female participation, discriminatory sharia law, lack of public awareness, and absence of dialogue. Historical patriarchal norms accurately show how patriarchal culture has shaped the interpretation



of the sacred text, although more progressive approaches have the potential to reverse these biases (Hosseini et al., 2015). Non-inclusive religious education is also a significant obstacle, often controlled by conservative authorities who do not allow room for reform. Lack of female participation in religious institutions exacerbates gender bias in interpretation, but initiatives to increase participation are often symbolic and unsustainable (Wadud, 1999).

Discriminatory Sharia law reinforces gender inequality, but reforms are often blocked by resistance from traditionalist groups who view change as a threat to religious authority (Hosseini, 2015). Furthermore, a lack of public awareness of the importance of gender inclusivity compounds the challenge, especially in areas with low literacy rates. The absence of dialogue between traditionalist and progressive groups is also a significant obstacle to achieving a more inclusive understanding, where existing dialogue forums often do not involve key actors or are limited to academics. Therefore, strategic solutions that involve religious education reform, increasing women's participation, advocating for legal reform, and strengthening public awareness campaigns to create sustainable and profound change are needed.

### **Redefining Gender: The Opportunity for Interpretive Reconstruction in a Modern Context**

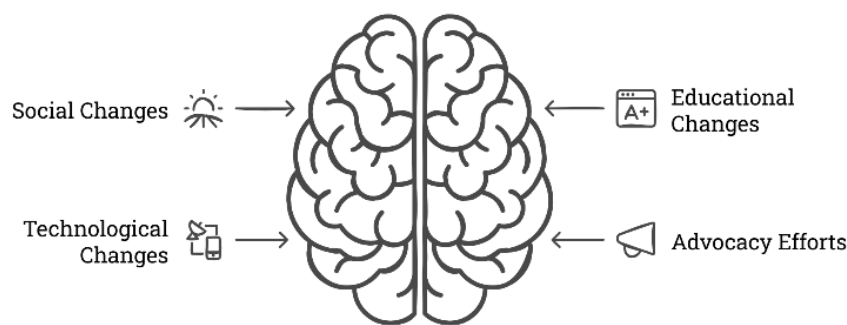
Social, educational, and technological changes in the modern era have contributed significantly to the reconstruction of gender interpretation in Islam, which aims to create a more inclusive interpretation. One of the most striking social changes is the increasing awareness of the importance of gender equality, both domestically and globally (Karimullah, 2023; Bonner, 2024). This awareness is followed by a solid urge to review the interpretation of religious texts that traditionally position women in a lower status than men. Wadud (1999) states that a Qur'anic hermeneutic sensitive to the socio-historical context can provide a new perspective on verses that have been used as a basis for maintaining gender inequality. For example, verses regarding the role of women in the family are often interpreted literally, ignoring the complexity of the social context at the time of revelation. By adopting a more contextual approach, this interpretation can be redesigned to reflect the principles of justice and equality (Zaharin & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2020).

In addition, social developments have also shown changes in the role of women in Muslim society. Research conducted by Hosseini (2015) shows that in various Muslim countries, women are increasingly playing an active role in public and political life. This has implications for increasing demands to renew the interpretation of religious texts that are more inclusive and no longer trapped in patriarchal views. For example, in Indonesia, the emergence of female clerics, such as those who are members of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI), shows that there is more significant space for women to be involved in religious discourse. They fight for an interpretation of the Qur'an that is more responsive to issues of gender equality and women's rights. In addition to social change, education plays a vital role in reconstructing this gender interpretation. Educational institutions, especially universities, are essential for renewing understanding of the Qur'an. Several universities in several Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Indonesia, and Morocco, have begun to include interpretation studies with a gender approach in their curriculum (Uyuni et al., 2023). For example, Al-Azhar University in Egypt and the State Islamic University (UIN) in Indonesia have gradually adopted more progressive approaches to understanding religious texts. Academics in these institutions have begun to review religious education curricula to align them with gender equality principles, highlighting the importance of considering the socio-historical context in understanding Qur'anic verses related to gender. This is expected to trigger a paradigm shift in society, especially regarding women's roles in the public and private spheres (Webb, 2000; Janos & Attar, 2023).

Furthermore, education plays a role at the university level and at the grassroots level, where women activists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in educating the

public on more inclusive interpretations. For example, NGOs such as Sisters in Islam in Malaysia have actively championed gender equality through education campaigns and public advocacy (Sands, 2003; Merry, 2006). They use various platforms to discuss issues related to gender and Islam and emphasize the importance of understanding religious texts more inclusively and responsively to contemporary challenges (Mahmood, 2005). This shows how formal and non-formal education can facilitate a shift in religious understanding that is more open to gender equality.

Technology, especially digital technology, has also significantly facilitated discourse on more inclusive gender interpretations. Digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and online academic journals allow for rapid and global dissemination of information. Indirectly, digital technology has removed many geographical and cultural barriers that previously hampered the spread of progressive exegetical discourse (Gil Guerrero, 2024). Through technology, a wider audience can access more inclusive interpretations of the Qur'an, especially the younger generation active in the digital world. For example, platforms such as Musawah, a global movement for gender equality in Muslim families, use social media and websites to disseminate progressive interpretations and encourage dialogue between scholars, academics, and activists worldwide.



**Figure 3. Pathways to Inclusive Gender Interpretations in Islam**

Collaboration between countries is increasingly relevant in this context. Sardar et al. (2019) noted that opportunities for international collaboration through conferences, seminars, and joint publications have helped broaden the discourse on more inclusive gender interpretations. For example, the annual conference hosted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has become an essential platform for scholars and academics from various countries to exchange ideas and strategies in promoting more gender-just interpretations. Through this collaboration, Muslim countries can share experiences and best practices in education and interpretation of religious texts, thereby creating a more robust global movement supporting gender equality among Muslims (Mahmood, 2005). With increasing global connectivity, this cross-border collaboration has become more accessible. Digital technology has enabled scholars, academics, and activists from different countries to participate in broader discussions without meeting physically. For example, webinars and online conferences hosted by institutions such as the University of Oxford and Georgetown University have become venues for Muslim intellectuals from different countries to discuss gender interpretations and advocate for more just and inclusive interpretations (Sardar, 2019). Such collaborations enrich intellectual discourse and strengthen efforts to create interpretations that reflect the principles of justice and gender equality in a modern context. Thus, the combination of social change, increased access to education, and the development of modern technology offers excellent opportunities to reconstruct a more inclusive interpretation of gender in Islam. Collaboration between countries and the use of digital technology accelerates the spread of new narratives that support gender equality. It strengthens the movement for more just and progressive interpretations among Muslims worldwide.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, efforts to realize an inclusive Qur'anic interpretation require a multidimensional approach that includes a critical analysis of patriarchal bias in traditional interpretations, empowerment of women in religious discourse, and adoption of contextual hermeneutics that consider historical and social aspects. Social change, educational advancement, and digital technology provide great opportunities to reconstruct a more gender-just interpretation. Initiatives such as the involvement of women in interpretation, gender-based educational reform, and advocacy through digital platforms can open up space for more progressive discussions. International collaboration through conferences and seminars further strengthens this movement, allowing for exchanging ideas across countries to create interpretations that support gender equality. With this combination of strategies, Qur'anic interpretation can reflect principles of justice that align with modern social dynamics, significantly contributing to more just and inclusive social change.

This research theoretically contributes to the development of interpretation and gender studies in Islam through a contextual hermeneutic approach that emphasizes justice and equality. Practically, the reform of the religious education curriculum and the use of digital technology allow for the widespread dissemination of progressive interpretation narratives, especially to the younger generation. Cross-country collaboration through conferences and joint publications strengthens the global movement to create inclusive and relevant religious interpretations. This effort is expected to accelerate more equitable social change and overcome gender bias in the interpretation tradition.

Future research should address how these inclusive approaches can be implemented in diverse cultural and socio-political contexts. Recommendations for future directions include: (1) encouraging more academic research on inclusive exegesis to develop robust theoretical frameworks; (2) promoting programs that empower female scholars to enrich religious discourse; and (3) prioritizing gender-based Islamic legal reform to ensure that laws reflect the principles of justice and equality. Through these steps, it is hoped that Qur'anic interpretation can inspire the creation of a more just and equal society, aligning religious practices with contemporary values of gender justice and equity.

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