

Ethical Issues of Gender Equality in Khaliqy's *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*

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Abstract: This paper examines the ethical issues and struggles for gender equality of the main character in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. It focuses on several selected quotations in the novel that represent struggles and ethical issues of gender equality. The study is under the scope of ethical criticism and discusses the ethical ideas on the life of Muslim women by challenging the thorough explanation of three terms, that is, ethics, women, and Islam that relate to each other on the discussion of ethics of gender and women in Islam. Through this research, a number of struggles are revealed. Namely, the struggle for financial independence for woman, struggle against gender biased activities, struggle against women's stereotypes, struggle for equality in domestic affairs, struggle for education, struggle for objection to unfair treatments, struggle for gender equality awareness, struggle for expressing Anisa's love, struggle for expressing Samsudin's torture upon Anisa and struggle for advocating women's right. Correspondingly, several ethical issues are revealed in the process of the main character's struggle for gender equality as in, marital violence, domestic violence, subjugation of women and male domination. Thus, this research aims to offer such ideas in respect of unveiling the ethical issues of gender equality.

Keywords: Ethical issues, Woman, Islam, Gender

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian literature in the first period of twenty first century recognized a large number of Muslim novelists. They produced new creative works, followed by their popularity and influence on other media, such as film and television, (Hoesterey and Clark, 2012; Rani, 2012). The emergence of the large number of Muslim writers indicates their significance in Indonesian literature and Muslim society as well. The factors influencing the emergence of such novels are the celebration of new freedoms by Muslims after the suppression of the New Order era, the emergence of a new Muslim middle class, the commodification of Islam, and the revival of religious expression (Hoesterey and Clark, 2012; Fealy, 2008). Previous studies on Islamic novels concern with patriarchal Islam, gender, Muslim identity, popular culture, Islamic literature in general and

traditional Islamic poems (Abdullah, 1996; Candraningrum, 2007; Arimbi, 2009; Arnez, 2009; Hellwig, 2011; Dewi, 2011; Rani, 2012). The studies conclude that similar to other Islam-labelled products for economic and political reasons. Economically, they are closely related to consumer capitalism, Islamic culture industry, cosmopolitan culture and popular taste (Howell, 2013; Hasan, 2009; Jones, 2010). Politically, they are linked to the government's policy on democratic freedom that gives people freedom of expression, including religious expression (Heriyanto 2008; Widodo, 2008).

Gender issues as one of the main concerns of novels by Muslim writers are also found in the work of one of the Muslim prolific writers, that is, Abidah El Khaliqy. She shares the ideas of a worldwide Muslim community and devotion to Islam as the main principle of life in her novel, that is, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. Gender issues

presented in the novel is specifically concerned with gender equality. The main female character is described as a Muslim woman who tries to find equal rights and independence along her life both in domestic and public spheres.

In this study the discussion of gender equality focuses on the ethical ideas of the issues. Discussion of ethical ideas on the life of Muslim women challenges the thorough explanation of three terms, that is, ethics, women, and Islam that relate to each other on the discussion of ethics of gender and women in Islam. Ethics of gender gives a perspective on how it is to be women and how it is to be men ethically and what it is ethical treatment to women and men. The discussion of women in Islam relates to how women are viewed in Islam and this includes the discussion of ethics.

In accordance with the background of the study, the objectives of this study are to find out the main character of Khalieqy's *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* struggle for gender equality in her life, and to reveal and explore the ethical issues presented in the process of the main character's struggle for gender equality.

Several previous studies elucidate the discussion of making such relation between ethics that has long established in the tradition of western thinking with the notions in gender theory and gender studies (Parsons, 2002). Chaudhry (2013) then focuses on the two different interpretations of the verse (Q 4: 34), that is "Islamic tradition" interpretation and gender-egalitarian interpretation that deals with hermeneutical negotiation that meets its compatibility between Islam and modernity.

Concerning the position of men and women in Islam, Amina Wadud (1999) criticizes the interpretation of traditional Muslim scholars to the Qur'an that only uses verse per verse interpretation from the beginning to the end of the Holy Book. Ziba Mir-Hosseini (1999) reports that one of the approaches used by Shia religious leaders defines traditional patriarchal interpretation

demonstrates complementary but unequal relation between men and women. This approach clearly represents the traditional approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an.

Ismah (2016) in her study finds that the existence of female ulama is identified as destabilizing the male domination. On the other hand, Hefner (2016) concludes that in spite of the decreasing interest of girls to attend modernist Islamic boarding shows a positive change of Muslim women to involve in a broader scope and proceed to the higher ranks of various social and educational fields.

In this current study, the researchers aim to discuss the ethical ideas on the life of Muslim women by challenging the thorough explanation of three terms, that is, ethics, women, and Islam that relate to each other on the discussion of ethics of gender and women in Islam using Nie Zhenzhao's ethical criticism. Nie developed his theory from an ethical perspective on the relationships between literature and culture, the relationships between authors and their works, and the relationships between readers and works.

Nie describes the term and methodology in *Ethical Literary Criticism and Other Issues* as "a critical theory that examines literary works and their authors from an ethical perspective" Nie invites people to see the source and role of literature from an ethical perspective. However it also clarifies the detailed mechanisms of ethical literary criticism and its terminology including ethical taboo, ethical environment, ethical identity, ethical confusion, human factor, animal factor, rational will, irrational will, natural will, free will, etc. (Shang, 2013)

METHOD

This study is a literary criticism and uses ethical criticism as the literary theory to analyze the novels. Ethical criticism is employed with the ethical and moral values of literary works and how the values affect the readers (Gregory, 2010; Booth, 2005). As

a literary criticism it assesses value systems (Womack, 2002: 106-107). The significance of ethical criticism has been shown in many studies. Marshall W Gregory (2010) shows ethical criticism can even work to a literary work that does not apparently show any ethical references. Stephen K. George (1997) finds out that in spite of bad experience the character still has responsibility and moral progress in the end. This insight can only be done by the application of ethical perspective to literature. In another study James Phelan (1998) analyses the ethical perspectives on the choice of the main character to kill her children rather than let them return to slavery. The choice is considered beyond the standard ethical judgement, but it clarifies that slavery is really an evil, not any more an abstract evil. Ethical criticism enables critics to explore such ideas.

ANALYSIS

Anisa, as the main character in the novel, is fully aware of her restricted rights compared to her other siblings. Her attempt of protesting yields in no response. The only one who supports her is Khudori. After graduating from elementary school, she is then set up to be married to a Kiyai's child named Samsudin.

Initially, Anisa does not agree to the marriage but she cannot refuse. She is not happy with the marriage as the marriage itself is not based on love. Furthermore, Samsudin is also not a pleasant person. He is rude and often tortures Anisa even when having sex. The mistreatment continues until suddenly a woman who is getting pregnant has come and revealed that the child in her stomach is Samsudin's child.

Anisa is then willing to accept the act of polygamy. Anisa has a good relationship with the second wife. They do not even hesitate to share any problems they encounter mainly regarding Samsudin's misbehaviors. In line with the sense of sharing, Anisa then makes a confession to Khudori against all of Samsudin's act of brutality against her.

Finally, she chooses to get divorce. Meanwhile, Anisa and Khudori have special feeling towards each other. Anisa and Khudori's love cannot be hidden. However, they are both prevented by Anisa's family's blessing and they decide to move on to their own lives while waiting for Anisa's *iddah* period to end.

Anisa pursues her studies in Jogjakarta while Khudori is busy working. Eventually, Khudori proposes to Anisa and marries her. They live happily and are blessed with a child named Mahbub. However, the couple once unfavorably meets Samsudin who still holds a grudge upon Anisa in a party.

Suddenly, Khudori is reported to have died in an accident. Anisa believes her husband's death is caused by Samsudin. Nevertheless, she does not have enough evidence to prove it. She eventually chooses to let it pass and live with her child.

Struggle for Gender Equality

There are several struggles for gender equality revealed in the novel. Namely, the struggle for financial independence for woman, struggle against gender biased activities, struggle against women's stereotypes, struggle for equality in domestic affairs, struggle for education, struggle for objection to unfair treatments, struggle for gender equality awareness, struggle for expressing Anisa's love, struggle for expressing Samsudin's torture upon Anisa and struggle for advocating women's right.

The Struggle for Financial Independence for Woman

The struggle for financial independence refers to the incapacity of women to earn their own finances as women are burdened upon the matters of taking care of the house and the family as stated by Conner (2014) that culturally, men were still seen as the breadwinners and women as the

caretakers. This is evidenced by a number of quotations in the novel that hints such struggle:

"dan jika aku pergi ke kantor, bajuku wangi dan rapi tidak seperti lek Sumi yang seharian didapur, badannya bau dan bajunya kedodoran. jika aku ke kantor, semua orang melihatku dengan hormat, tidak menutup hidung dekat lek Sumi, karena bau bawang dan terasi. Dan di akhir bulan aku menerima gaji" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 15)

"And if I go to the office, my shirt is fragrant and neat unlike Lek Sumi all day in the kitchen, his body smells and her clothes are oversized. If I go to the office, everyone looks at me with respect, does not cover their nose if I pass as they cover their nose near Lek Sumi, because of the smell of onions and shrimp paste. And at the end of the month the account receives a salary." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 15)

In this case, the idea of dependency toward men is opposed by Anisa. In particular in the economic field, Anisa is eager to be able to work and has her own income which equals to her financial independence. As a result, she is no longer dependent on men. Furthermore, Anisa states that if she goes to the office, her clothes are neat and tidy unlike Lek Sumi who is all day in the kitchen, her body smells and her clothes are oversized. If Anisa goes to the office, everyone looks at her respectfully and does not cover their nose. Especially when they close their nose near Lek Sumi because of the smell of onions and shrimp paste.

Hence, this indicates the woman's tendency to be at home to be in charge of taking care of the family as stated by (Gorman & Fritzsche, 2002) that "good mother" must stay home with her young children and has no opportunity to work along with choosing the job desired by them. Needless to say, Anisa's disapproval against the idea indicates her concern on how women are restricted toward their financial condition. It has been a tradition that man is in full authority of the money while women served as their loyal followers which is likely to be opposed by Anisa as a woman. Furthermore, it is an obvious illustration of

how working in the office and wearing neat and tidy clothes offers the prestigious sense within the society as the gesture mentioned by Anisa. People are in awe and respectful toward the office workers. In contrast, the gesture of covering the nose upon Lek Sumi indicates a great deal of inconvenience toward the person due to the smell of onion and shrimp paste. Additionally, wearing oversized clothes indicates the indecency of deciding the choice of clothing compared to the neat and tidy clothes worn by the office workers.

The Struggle against Gender Biased Activities

Another form of struggle has challenged Anisa throughout her life. The problem of gender-biased activities are thought to be merely carried out by men or women in a different manner of treatment. The main character's struggle against gender biased activities are illustrated in the following quotations:

"Ya, mengapa, Pak? Saya tidak bisa? Kak Rizal juga belajar menunggang kuda." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, hal. 7)

"Yes, why, Pak? I cannot? Kak Rizal also learned to ride horses." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 7)

"jika aku naik kuda, semua orang akan mendongak ke arahku jika bicara denganku. Aku juga bisa memimpin pasukan perang seperti Aisyah atau Putri Budur, sehingga para laki-laki perkasa menjadi tunduk di belakangku" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 15)

If I ride a horse, everyone will look up at me if they talk to me. I can also lead war armies such as Aisyah or Putri Budur, so that powerful men indeed become submissive behind me" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 15)

Gender-biased activities of riding a horse is illustrated through the quotation. In this context, Anisa conveys her reason of riding a horse and the output she will likely achieve from riding a horse. Her desire to ride a horse is unstoppable that causes her father's outrage as women are thought to stay indoors. The idea of staying outdoor and implementing such activity is thought to be

wrong during the era as it is meant solely for man. For this reason, Anisa then questions the eligibility for riding a horse upon woman which is much contradictory toward man. Men are able to do what they wish while women cannot. Firmly, Anisa believes that she has the same right to do so and voices her opinion upon this matter. However, a temporary stigmatized status misclassified the identity of a certain individuals (Becker, 1963). In this sense, her parents who are in charge of nursing their children show a great deal of anger and disapproval toward their child, Anisa. Thus, this indicates that riding a horse is not acceptable and violating the social norms of being a woman at that time. Hence, it can be seen that the illustration of such limitation toward gender-biased activities is implemented in the novel as riding a horse is not a common thing to be carried out by woman during the era.

On the other hand, Anisa indicates the euphoria sense of being able to ride a horse along with the possible respond from the society toward her action. People will be likely to look upwards upon her in the middle of performing such conversation. This idea much fascinates her to ride horses. Additionally, her strong willingness to ride a horse is also much inspired by Aisyah or Princess Budur who is able to lead a war army. People who are under the control of a leader are subservient of the leader. In fact, the mighty men will become obedient upon her. Regarding to this case, Anisa's awareness to conquer power among men is visible through the quotation. She notices the power among men has been widely implemented throughout her life and it's the appropriate time for her to raise such awareness of possessing the same power as man as in riding a horse.

The Struggle against Women's Stereotypes

Stereotype is the negative labelling of women formed by the society. Stereotypes point out dissimilarity between groups, and are particularly inaccurate (consisting of unlikely, extreme types) when groups are similar (Bordalo, Coffman, Gennaioli & Shleifer, 2015). In this novel, women are

stereotyped as brainless. In detail, the struggle of Anisa in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* to fight the stereotype is illustrated as follows:

"ow..ow..oww jadi begitu. Apa Ibu belum mengatakan padamu kalau naik kuda hanya pantas dipelajari Kakakmu Wildan. Kau tahu, mengapa?... Kau ini sudah besar masih bodoh juga, hehh!!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 7)

"Ow..ow..oww so. Didn't I tell you that riding a horse is only worth for your brother Wildan. ... You've grown up but still stupid, heh!!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 7)

"Kalau gendher sih aku tahu, kalau digoreng jadi kerupuk asin, ha ha.." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.173)

"I know gendher, if it is fried, it will be salty crackers, ha ha.." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.173)

"Dasar otak udang! Selalu saja ketinggalan zaman," (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.173)

"Pinhead! I Always outdated," (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.173)

"Memangnya apa feminism itu. Apa gender itu ... Sok tau aja, Zal, Rizal." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 173)

"What is feminism. What is gender? ... You are a wiseacre, Zal, Rizal." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 173)

Labelling a negative stigma toward women has been a prevalent phenomenon within the society. Stigma itself describes such attitudes that are prejudiced toward people with a negative treatment of a certain characteristics as in hazardous, unwanted, or worthless (Major and O'Brien 2005; Thornicroft et al. 2007). Such action then is conducted by Anisa's father and brother in the novel. The first quotation above states the disapproval of Anisa's father toward her hobby of riding a horse. The disapproval consists a number of negative opinions against her action of doing so. According to him, riding a horse is inappropriate and can be solely carried out by his brother, Wildan as he is a man. He associates Anisa's behavior upon this matter to be brainless.

This implicitly shows her father's harsh verbal response addressed upon Anisa's behavior. In this sense, the term "brainless" implies an undesirable action taken by women. Conversely, the harsh opinion of her father does not match to the reality to the extent of how inappropriate riding a horse is. As there is no crime conducted by doing so. Thus, the harsh opinion is not necessary and merit enough to be conveyed toward Anisa.

On the other hand, Anisa and his brother is in an intense debate regarding gender and feminism. Rizal states that gender is a kind of cracker then mocks her with a negative term of "pinhead" which has a meaning of stupid. Anisa then questions his understanding against feminism, gender and patriarchy that yields in silence from Rizal. In this case, Rizal as Anisa's brother, teases his sister by stating her a stupid girl while giving a nonsense explanation of the term gender beforehand. The problem occurs as Anisa has not yet explained her understanding regarding the terms mentioned above yet she is mocked. This indicates that woman, regardless of voicing their opinions or not is labelled to be stupid by man. This is also asserted by Domingo et al (2015) that women may not be heard when they voice their demands. Nevertheless, the negative stigma of that women are stupid is opposed by Anisa by defending herself rather than being silent. The defense takes place as she questions Rizal the definitions of the terms mentioned above along with stating him as a wiseacre who solely acts to know everything which in fact, knows nothing.

The Struggle for Equality in Domestic Affairs

As struggling for gender equality has become Anisa's interest in life, she then illustrates her various struggles of equality in domestic affairs toward women in the novel *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*. The forms of struggles are two in number which are the struggle against sexual violence and the fight for the gender equality in household chores. Such phenomena are illustrated below:

"Pak guru bilang kewajiban seorang perempuan itu banyak sekali, ada mencuci, memasak, menyetrika, mengepel, menyapu, menyuapi, menyusui, memandikan dan banyak lagi. Tidak seperti laki-laki, Bu, kewajibannya Cuma satu, pergi ke kantor" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, hal. 14)

The duties of a woman are numerous, there are washing, cooking, ironing, mopping, sweeping, breastfeeding, feeding, bathing her child, and more. Unlike men, Mom, just one, going to the office. (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, hal. 14)

"Aku hendak berteriak tapi, tapi kalah cepat dengan telapak tangannya yang membungkam mulutku. "Kau memperkosa ku, Samsudin! Kau telah memperkosaku!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 97)

"I was about to scream, but lost quickly due to the palm of his hand that silenced my mouth." "You raped me, Samsudin! You raped me!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.97)

The first quotation explains women's innumerable duties or responsibilities in household chores, including washing, cooking, ironing, mopping, sweeping, feeding, breastfeeding, bathing their children, and others. Unlike men, only one, going to the office. Hence, in terms of washing, cooking and educating the child are husband's responsibility as well. For this reason, much associated in terms of having sex, both husband and wife have the right to feel pleasure in the relationship of husband and wife. In line with the explanation given, thus Anisa believes that it's not solely the wife's duty, but also the obligation of the husband to take chores in domestic affairs along with her wife. In conclusion, the amount of energy and time should be equally exerted in terms of dividing the chores in domestic affairs. On the other hand, the second quotation states the struggle encountered by Anisa during the sexual activity. In this context, Anisa's attempt of screaming for help is being stopped by Samsudin using his palm. Her scream is not strong enough due to the palm of Samsudin's hand that silences her mouth. This indicates Samsudin's inhuman behavior and strong nature. As a result, she is incapable of rescuing herself from her

husband's urge of sexual activity. This action thus is considered to be a rape as Samsudin does not ask permission or conversing beforehand upon the matter of sexual activity with Anisa. This further indicates Samsudin's arrogance is merely based to satisfy his own satisfactions without concerning his partner's feeling and condition upon the matter. In conclusion, Samsudin is inhuman upon his partner.

Struggle for Education

Sundaram, Sekar & Suburaj (2014) state that education is the key factor for women empowerment, prosperity, development and welfare as education plays an important role in enriching one's insight. Several struggles show Anisa's attempt in pursuing her education:

Maka, sekalipun sudah hampir dua minggu aku absen dari panggilan guru, kupaksakan diri ini untuk kembali ke sekolah Tsanawiyah. Dengan penuh keyakinan bahwa segalanya akan berubah ketika lautan ilmu itu telah berkumpul di sin, dalam otakku, (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 113)

So, even though I was almost absent from the teacher's two weeks, I forced myself to return to the Tsanawiyah school. With full confidence that everything will change when the sea of knowledge has gathered here, in my brain, (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 113)

"Sejak aku terlahir ke dunia ... aku selalu digadang dan diharapkan agar kelak dapat menggantikan posisi Bapak. Tetapi, dalam benakku, harapan itu tak pernah muncul sebagai cita-cita. Sepertinya, aku lebih suka untuk bersekolah dan mencari ilmu yang lebih luas dari kompleks pondok kami, juga lebih tinggi dari ilmu yang diperoleh para santri yang paling tua sekalipun." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 51-52)

"Since I was born into the world, ... I have always been told and I hoped that someday I can replace father's position. However, in my mind, that hope never appeared as an ideal. Seemingly, I prefer to go to school and seek broader knowledge from our cottage complex, also higher than the knowledge obtained by the oldest students as well." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 51-52)

"Aku tak peduli dengan semua itu karena kesibukaku adalah sekolah dan hobiku membaca." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 117)

"I do not care about all that because my busy life is school and my hobby is reading." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 117)

"Pada suatu sore ketika Samsudin tak ada di rumah, kami membicarakan mengenai banyak hal mengenai hubungan dan pertalian pernikahan kami yang problematis. Mbak Kalsum begitu antusias membahasnya sehingga aku harus menyiapkan buku untuk mencari dan menunjukkan dalil-dalilnya. Akupun merasa semakin kebutuhanku akan ilmu semakin tinggi." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 126)

"One evening, Samsudin was not at home, we talked about many things about our relationship and marriage problems that were problematic. Mbak Kalsum was so eager to discuss it that I had to prepare a book to find and define her arguments. I'm aware of my need for knowledge has increased." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 126)

Anisa believes that, education is a way to reach gender equality. She tries to realize it for herself and other women as well. The quotations are categorized into two parts. First is Anisa's optimism toward pursuing education and second, is her action of spreading her knowledge upon other women. The first quotation states Anisa's absence for two weeks from school. However, she manages and forces herself to return as she believes of changing everything through the mastering of knowledge. This indicates her strong willingness and a strong sense of optimism to pursue her decision of studying apart from the fact that she is already married to Samsudin. Her responsibility in domestic affairs may increase due to the marriage but that does not tear her responsibility to study apart. She believes that marriage is not a reason to stop her studying as it enriches people's mind with insight. Particularly, for women. Thus, women need to master knowledge to uphold their own existence and show to the world that women are capable of doing so.

It is much in line with Anisa's statement from the second quotation as she has never wanted to replace her father's position. Instead, she prefers to go to school and seeks broader knowledge from the cottage complex, even higher than the knowledge obtained by the oldest students there. Much akin to the previous quotation, Anisa's optimism for education is shown clearly when she is having such problem in her marriage life. She declares her priority is to go to schools and her hobby is reading. She has no time to think about her marriage problem with Samsudin as education matters the most for her.

In contrast with the quotations above, Anisa illustrates her action of spreading the knowledge she achieves with Mbak Kulsum. They discuss the relationship and marriage problems in their life. Mbak Kalsum is so eager to discuss the problems as Anisa has prepared a book to find and define her arguments. Regarding to this case, Anisa is then fully aware of her need of seeking much broader knowledge in the future.

Struggle for Objection to Unfair Treatments

Anisa as a woman who is capable of upholding gender-equality, objects to all unfair treatments to women as shown below:

"Dan ketika ia hendak menyemburkan asap itu ke daerah paling sensitif, aku berdiri tepat di mukanya, berkacak pinggang dan menuding mukanya di depan hidungnya." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 95)

"And when he was about to spit out the smoke into the most sensitive areas, I stood right in his face, ruffled his waist and pointed his face in front of his nose." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 95)

"Baik! Baik! Dengar Samsudin! Pertama, yang ingin kukatakan adalah bahwa kau ini laki-laki sakit. Penyakitmu telah membawamu untuk menikahiku. Tetapi pernikahan tidak bisa didasarkan oleh satu penyakit. Sebab itu aku ingin mengkhulukmu. Kau dengar sekarang?" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 114)

"Well! Well! Listen Samsudin! First, what I want to say is that you are a sick man. Your illness has brought you to marry me. But marriage cannot be based on one disease. That's why I want to juggle you. Do you hear now?" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 114)

"Hari telah beranjak siang dan aku merasa semakin banyak memiliki teman untuk secara bersama membicarakan masalah kami kaum perempuan yang dulunya, menurut perkiraanku hanyalah aku yang mengalami dan rasakan. Dadaku terasa lebih lapang dan bayangan itu, bayangan kelam dari hari-hari hitam, sedikit demi sedikit memudar oleh hilangnya rasa takut dan sakit yang telah dioperasi di forum-forum kami yang cukup bernila." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 240)

"The day is getting late and I feel that there are more and more friends to collectively discuss our problems of women which I used to think was only experienced and felt by myself. My chest feels broader and that shadow, the dark shadow of the bad days, gradually fades away from the loss of fear and pain that has been operated on in our forums which is quite moral." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 240)

There are two types of objections showed in the quotations. Namely, physical and verbal objection. Physical objection is shown during Anisa's attempt of objecting the indecent treatment conducted by Samsudin. Samsudin is about to spit out the smoke into the most sensitive areas of Anisa's. Thus, she manages to stand right in his face, ruffles his waist and points his face in front of his nose. Anisa shows a great deal of audacity in this context. On the other hand, Anisa's verbal objection takes place when he forces Anisa to conduct such sexual activity. She mocks Samsudin as being such an illness and his illness has brought him to marry her which disadvantages Anisa's life. Correspondingly, Anisa's attempt of voicing her opinions is carried out by sharing the discussion of the women's problems which she used to think was solely experienced and felt by herself with a number of friends. Hence, by doing so, Anisa manages to relieve her worries of her bad experiences and gradually losses the fear and pain that she has been dealing with. In conclusion, those actions are Anisa's of defending herself upon such unfair treatment and spreading such

empowerment of taking brave actions upon unfair treatment. Much In line with Sundaram, Sekar, Subburaj's statement of women's empowerment as a process through which women come to recognize their inherent worth, their "power within" (Kabeer, 1994). Hence, women's worth is necessary to be upheld.

Struggle for Gender equality Awareness

Struggle against gender equality awareness is the struggle upon spreading such knowledge or perception of a situation or fact towards others regarding gender equality. The following quotation illustrates such case:

"Di ranah domestik, perempuan juga memiliki hak untuk menolak, menerima, atau memulai hubungan intim dengan suami mereka. Seorang istri juga memiliki hak dan kebebasan untuk menolak dan menerima". (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 139)

"In the domestic sphere, women also have the right to refuse, accept, or initiate in intimacy with their husbands. A wife also has the right and freedom to refuse and accept." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 139)

"Itulah masalahnya, Mbak. Dari kitab yang pernah kupelajari, menolak ajakan suami adalah kutukan. Aku belum tau dengan jelas alasan dan dalil-dalil yang menguatkan pernyataan itu, juga kesahihan hadisnya." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 138)

"That's the problem, Ma'am. From the book I've learned, rejecting the invitation of a husband is a curse. I do not know clearly the reasons and the arguments that reinforce the statement, also the strangeness of the hadith." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 138)

It is much contrary to the popular belief that man has to initiate and make several decisions in any circumstances. In line with the statement above, Gerber (1991) states that man is usually the more powerful, violent person. The first quotation above states the wife's right to refuse, accept, or initiate in intimacy with their husbands. A wife also has the right and freedom to refuse and accept the right and

freedom to refuse and accept such action. Through this quotation, it supports women's decision of responding towards the invitation from their husbands and vice versa. Hence, wife and husband both possess the same control over one another as no party is inferior over one another. However the second quotation states that rejecting the invitation of a husband is a curse. In this case, Anisa is not certain upon the reasons and the arguments that reinforce the statement. Therefore, it temporarily limits Anisa's capacity to accept or reject such sex invitation from her husband in which urges Anisa to seek the clarity of the Hadith first. Apart from that, it is well understood that woman and man has the same power and control over one another.

Correspondingly, another form of gender equality awareness is illustrated in this novel:

"kupikir suami bisa mencari cara yang baik untuk mengkondisikan sang istri agar siap. Dan jika memang istri sedang sakit, misalnya, adalah tidak manusiawi untuk memaksanya terus" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 238)

"I think the husband can find a good way to ensure the condition his wife is ready. And if indeed the wife is sick, for example, it is inhuman to force her to continue" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 238)

"Jadi pertimbangannya manusia atau tidak manusi, Mbak" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. p. 237)"

"So the consideration is human or not human, Ma'am" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. P. 237)

Anisa's colleague shares her insights regarding the phenomenon of a husband's invitation to have sex with his wife. She states that husband needs to find a good way beforehand to ensure the condition of his wife is ready to do so or not. For example, if indeed the wife is sick, the husband should not force her to do so. The idea is then reinforced with such consideration based on its humanity aspect which is human or inhuman behavior. Thus, both parties should

be treated in a human behavior. Hence, this indicates that men cannot take actions merely based on his satisfaction as it is vital to ensure the well-being of both parties as humanity lies above all. Therefore, by considering this, women are thus capable to control their choices of accepting or rejecting such action as much stated by O'Neil and Domingo that such power of decision-making is the ability to influence decisions that affect one's life (O'Neil and Domingo, 2005) Hence, such decision carried out by such party does have such affect in one's life.

Struggle for Expressing her Love

Expressing love is considered to be a nerve-wrecking moment for a number of people particularly for women. As for Anisa, she illustrates her struggle for expressing her love to Khudori through these quotations:

"Bahwa aku mencintaimu. Ahibbak, Lek. I love you so much (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 213)"

"That I love you. Ahibbak, Lek. I love you so much (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 213)"

Anisa illustrated her courage of stating her love toward Khudori unlike the common phenomenon within the society in which men is in charge of expressing their love toward their significant other. In contrast, Anisa's action indicates love-expressing is not solely carried out by man but also woman. Thus, women are capable to possess the same power of expressing their love toward their significant other. Hence, Anisa's action is the concrete illustration that women are powerful and have the same right as man to decide their own life choices.

Struggle for Expressing Samsudin's Torture upon Anisa

Torture is defined as such an inhuman behavior of hurting other people. As Samsudin is portrayed as an evil character that tortures Anisa, thus, it can clearly be seen as follows:

"Sejak malam pertama sampai sekarang, tak bosan-bosanya, ia menyakitiku, menjambak rambutku, menendang dan menempeleng, memaksa dan memaki serta melecehkan sebagai perempuan dan seorang istri." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 162)

"From the first night until now, he never feels bored, to injure me, grab my hair, kick and hold me, along with curse and abuse me as a woman and became a wife." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 162)

The quotation states the confession carried out by Anisa towards her parents regarding her struggle upon Samsudin's torture. The torture conducted by Samsudin are injuring, grabbing her hair, kicking and holding her since the first night until at the moment she speaks up. The repetitive action conducted by Samsudin shows a bad behavior he possess that has no attempt in changing for the better. Her confession then indicates as an attempt of seeking help towards her parents and expecting for a better change of her life. She cannot no longer stand his behavior and decides to speak out in attempt of rescuing herself. Thus, her audacity to express Samsudin's torture upon her results in the divorce among them.

Struggle for Advocating Women's Rights

Advocating women's rights gives a great impact toward women upon deciding their choices. Anisa, thus, has conducted such attempt in the novel:

"Kami bertiga tertawa dan beberapa teman mulai berdatangan satu-persatu dan ikut nimbrung dalam pembicaraan yang kian seru juga. Kami memperlebar forum dan begitulah yang sering terjadi. Dari pembicaraan yang informal menjadi forum yang lebih formal dan focus masalah tetap melanjutkan apa yang menjadi banyak sorotan dan kita minati bersama." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 238)

"The three of us laughed and some friends began to arrive one by one and joined in the conversation which was more exciting. We widen the forum and so it often happens. From informal talks to a more formal forum and focus on the problem, we continue to focus on what has

become our attention and what we are interested in together. "(Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 238)

As Anisa's thirst for education expands wider, she attends such forum in upholding women's right. She advocates gender equality for women regarding the freedom of choices and shares her personal story of gender inequality. The advocacy is carried out by the process of sharing such related problems and information that empowers each other. The people in the forum are open towards new insight that results in such a harmonious relationship. As a result, it eases their sharing session to be much efficient. Additionally, it is attended by a number of people, and gradually increased throughout the time. This indicates the massive interest of people to join in the forum. Hence, the attempt of advocating one another is much visible and widespread. Correspondingly, advocacy helps to generate and support access to the community in need of reducing their risk of violence in the future. (Bybee & Sullivan, 1999)

Ethical Issues

There are several ethical issues revealed in the novel. Namely, marital violence, domestic violence, subjugation of women and male domination.

Marital Violence

Marital violence refers to any coercive act or behavior conducted verbally or physically upon their spouse in a marriage. Samsuddin's inconsideration of the well-being of his wife to conduct such sexual activity is exclusively shown below:

Aku hendak berteriak tapi, tapi kalah cepat dengan telapak tangannya yang membungkam mulutku. "Kau memperkosaku, Samsudin! Kau telah memperkosaku!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p. 97)

"I was about to scream, but lost quickly due to the palm of his hand that silenced my mouth." "You raped me, Samsudin! You raped me!" (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, p.97)

In this context, Samsudin does not consider the condition and situation of his wife whether in agreement to do such sexual activity or not. He solely focuses to fulfill his own satisfaction. Samsudin even once silences Anisa's mouth by using his hand. Anisa's attempt of rescuing herself in the form of protesting is neglected by Samsudin. Ironically, the belief of coercing a wife to conduct sexual activity is then strengthened based on the teachings of Ustadz Ali in which states that every woman has to obey the man's order regardless of any situation and condition they are dealing with which means that women has no right to consider of any actions as man are in the full authority to decide such actions. This is much contradictory to the understanding of egalitarian interpretation that every human being has the right to decide such actions where woman and man stand the opportunity to reject and accept.

Furthermore, according to William, the idea of voluntarism is closely attached upon the Islamic Philosophy. Voluntarism itself stands a definition of God's divine order in which it cannot be easily broken by human being. It is thus justified by the fact that ethical system is defined by the almighty God. Be it, right or wrong. Accordingly, Abu Hurairah quoted Prophet Muhammad's statement as:

"If a husband invites his wife to his bed, but the wife does not serve him, then the husband sleeps in a state of anger at her, then the angels curse her until morning (dawn). This quotation is also mentioned by Ustadz Ali during his teaching in the boarding school.

The traditional based interpretation offers the understanding of women being cursed by the angels merely due to her reluctance of fulfilling man's desire of sex. It implicitly shows that man's urges are made to be obeyed by women, if not, punishment as in this context of being cursed is given to women. It thus offers no equality towards women as they are oppressed to fulfill man's desire when men are not. It further arises question as the verse does not apply for both gender. Men are not forced to conduct such

action and no punishment will also be given. Hence, this essence indicates their superiority. Furthermore, it is known as a human's tendency to refer to the Quran to seek such answers of any life's challenges. In fact, such questions and cases in life are infinite as Quran does not fully cover any emerging cases we face nowadays. It has become a clear issue that the more civilized the world is, the more unpredictable cases and problem occur in compatible of the status quo. By referring to this phenomenon, such reinterpretation of such hadith and verses is necessary to fit today's challenges as it is reinforced by Al-Ghazali on the matter of being thankful to Allah for giving a brain (*aql*) as well as good character and intelligence to attract heart and mind. This indicates man's capability to think and understand certain actions. It is therefore important to think critically about the evaluation of such acts in the moral aspects of human and inhuman behavior (Grunebaum, 1962). Much asserted by Fazlur Rahman, such interpretation involves the exercise of mind and spirit in order to obtain actual answers. Therefore, any random people are not capable to do so without a great amount of exercise.

As explained above, the hadith given shows such inequality between men and women. In contrast, Yusuf al-Qardawi states several exceptions of the Hadith to refuse such invitation. For example, the wife encounters several obstacles as in physical obstacle of being sick or in pain of dealing with menstruation period and so on. Furthermore, the emergence of the wife's inability to satisfy a husband's desires might be caused by the belief that the sex activity itself is much unpleasant. The belief thus is considered to be a psychological obstacle encountered by the wife. In fact, this perception should be taken account into as the outcome of marriage is to seek love and feelings. In this case, the wife's refusal cannot be indicated as arrogance. It's possible that it lies such humane reasons, for example the wife is in a very ill condition, very decisive, or any other reasons. Hence, both parties should be considerate of one another. Much emphasized by Al-Ghazali,

achieving the goal of happiness in accordance with having such clear notion of the purpose of human life is a vital aspect for human being (Charles, 1983) As a result, it is believed that what is thought to be ethical in terms of Islamic tradition interpretation somehow is not ethical enough to be implemented in real life as an in-depth explanation should be implemented in compatible with the matters of modern era.

Domestic Violence

As marital violence harms the well-being of such oppressed party. As stated by Rossler, Nyberg, Flury (2010), domestic violence then is the threat or exercise of physical, psychological, and or emotional violence upon a person as shown below:

"Dan ketika ia hendak menyemburkan asap itu ke daerah paling sensitif, aku berdiri tepat di mukanya, berkacak pinggang dan menuding mukanya di depan hidungnya."(Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 95)

"And when he was about to spit out the smoke into the most sensitive areas, I stood right in his face, ruffled his waist and pointed his face in front of his nose." (Perempuan Berkalung Sorban, 95)

It is considered to be under the violence's form of that when Anisa is being spit by her husband due to the different opinions stated by both parties. Ironically, the social norm agrees on the idea that women are under the control of their husband that Gerber (1991) states that man is usually the more powerful, violent person. Meanwhile, by reflecting the verse stated below it is clear that such prior action is impermissible.

In fact, Islam does not recognize the term or definition of domestic violence specifically. However the occurrence of domestic violence is forbid by Islam. This is evidenced by a number of verses in the Qur'an and the hadith that command husbands to treat their wives with good relations. As God states:

And among the sign ..., and He made you with love and affection. Surely in that there really

are signs for people who think. (Surat Ar-Rum 30: 21).

The above verse explains the command to treat the wife well. Besides that the Prophet also emphasizes the notion of affection and protection. On account of Samsudin's behavior upon Anisa, Samsudin has shown no form of affection, protection along with compassion towards Anisa. The spiting act shows his disrespect towards Anisa. Furthermore, the attempt of conversing in fact should be done affectionately, by listening the speaker's talk and giving such necessary and polite respond. As it could build the sense of harmonious environment. Meanwhile both of the parties cannot let the temper down and speak up blatantly neglecting one's potential heartache, which is mainly conducted by Samsudin. Ironically, Samsudin also ignores the idea of transparency in communication. He does not inform Anisa about Kulsum's move to their house. He neglects the idea of informing and gaining allowance from his first wife as it could lead to heartache. However, it is a relief that Anisa does not pay much attention on the issue of polygamy along with the living together issue which might occur differently upon other individual.

Furthermore, as a husband of Anisa's, Samsudin's act of hitting has indicate his brutality over his sense of protecting. He indeed fails to offer the sense of secure around her which is in contrast from the form of protection. In conclusion, domestic violence cannot be taken upon anyone as it hurts and leaves a psychological and physical impacts toward the victim as in bruises and heartache. As it may lead to a depressed situation in which it is much contrary to the main function of a marriage as in achieving happiness. The above verse explains about the request to be treated by the wife well. Accordingly, the Prophet also addressed the notion of compassion and protection. Hence, both parties should be affectionate toward each other.

Subjugation of women

The idea of subjugating women has become the social norm within the society. The question lies whether it is ethical enough to be done in the modern era nowadays. As much asserted by Carli (1999), women possess lower level of status and power that men do and women are considered to be the second sex society. They are seen to be incapable of defending themselves in attempt of upholding gender equality and achieving freedom compared to man and are looked down with no respect. Much discussed by Ustadz Ali in the novel, women's existence seems to be inferior upon men. He states the quotation of that woman who gazes upon who is not their husband will be then nailed in the hereafter. The statement rises question as it tends to merely discuss on the perspective of women instead of both gender. As a response to this case, Anisa then questions Mr Ali upon the problem of that if men is in the position of neglecting the sexual activity due to having an affair with another women. Ironically, Mr Ali seems to be offended and rather alter the subject of the matter proposed by Anisa.

In the article of the *Islamic Law*, Dr Rahman states that Muslims are in danger of turning toward a conception of religion. As when the application of Islam in individual life is constantly emphasized, with a lack of knowledge of Islam being understood, along with a lack of understanding of the systems of the Muslim society. Then, human beings tend to herald such religious affairs without any clear foundation. In this respect, it is needed to understand and seek the meaning of the Quran and hadith that are eligible to be used in the modern era as Quran and hadith somehow have offer no significant answers to such cases we experience nowadays. Furthermore, the bombardment of a number of certain hadith or verse has reached to its own popularity in attempt of subjugating women. An example of the hadith or verse is the understanding of Islam about polygamy is much stronger and much popular than the marriage policies for monogamy as well as the hadith stated by Ustadz Ali.

Additionally, the understanding of Islam about the permissibility of forced marriage is much stronger and much popular than to ask for permission from the women whom soon to be married. The phenomenon that can be seen in the novel thus is in favor of Anisa's parent's action on marrying her to Samsudin without asking the permission first which indicates the restriction of Anisa's freedom of speech. Hence women are allowed to gain their freedom of speech as much as men as reinforced by Nur Rofiah (2017) that men and women are in the same position on the face of the earth as servants of God and caliphs (Adz Dzariyat 51: 56, al-Ahzab 33: 72) This verse illustrates that none should subjugate each other as they both function the same.

Male Domination

Male domination occurred in most parts of everyday life nowadays as in the field of education, economy and politics and etc. It is believed that male has the power and significant role among the society. In this case, Anisa's father has a prominent role in determining her life. His father implicitly acts as a god who is needed to be obeyed. No one can defeat his superiority particularly in setting up a forced marriage between Anisa and Samsudin. Before organizing the marriage, Anisa is asked whether to accept or neglect the arranged husband decided his father. Anisa in this context, is silent. However much to the belief in traditional belief of Islam, a woman's silence is considered to be in an agreement.

Nevertheless, the question of silence as consent is discussed in the book of "An Islamic Human Rights Perspective on Early and Forced Marriages," which stresses the general rule of consent is to communicate through spoken language, writing or a sign (such as a node) interpreted as an agreement in that context. Ironically, most Muslim communities frequently take a woman's silence as their agreement to marriage.

This practice relates to a hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stressed the need for a woman's consent in addition to the consent of her guardian, but when he said the bride is too shy to give her explicit consent, he then stated that silence implies her consent. While this hadith itself is real, it is yet in a sense that happens in the past, in which some cultures refer silence as a form of agreement. Silent consent in most cultures is no longer a social norm, hence a woman's silence cannot be seen as her consent.

Nevertheless, in most cultures, the current social practice of such spoken word of 'yes ' or 'no' is now more in line with the need of women's clear consent from the Shari'ah. In addition, it is not permissible for the bride to agree to the marriage even in such conservative cultures, where the law refers silent as a form of agreement. Furthermore, forced marriage is considered to be a sexual violence (Eriksson, 2010)

Apart from the common belief that man is superior to woman Ausaf Ali (1996), it is claimed that all humans has been or are created equal. All men and women are equal before God, and on the last day of judgment all shall be held accountable before God. Nur Rofiah also states that men and women are created from material and through the same process (Al-Mu'minun 23: 12-16), Human value is not determined by gender, but by devotion Al-Hujurat 49: 13). Men and women who do good together will go to heaven and vice versa (Al-Nisa '4: 124), Men and women will return to God as themselves (Al-An'am 6: 94).

The verses see the similarities between the two gender and hint that human difference only lies in the action, whether good or bad, by not seeing his gender and thus it is a declaration of equality between men and women in tendency to perform such actions. Hence such practice of domination is not necessary to be implemented.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings highlight a number of struggles illustrated in the novel as in the struggle for financial independence for woman, the struggle against gender biased activities, the struggle against women's stereotypes, the struggle for equality in domestic affairs (the struggle against sexual violence, struggle for gender equality in household chores), struggle for education, struggle for objection of unfair treatments, struggle for gender equality awareness, struggle for expressing her love, struggle for expressing samsudin's torture upon Anisa and the struggle for advocating women's rights. The research above shows the dependency, audacity, patience of a women to encounter such problems in the patriarchal environment. The sense of

optimism carried out by Anisa is undeniable and unstoppable regardless of such mistreatment conducted upon her.

On the other hand, several findings upon the ethical issues are revealed in the process of the main character's struggle for gender equality as in, marital violence, domestic violence, subjugation of women and male domination. It enlightens the readers to unveil several egalitarian based interpretation upon ethical actions and interpretations in the novel in reference to the hadith, Qur'an, ethics and woman. As a result, it favourably offers an equal treatment upon all humankind.

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