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Women's Empowerment Through Da'wah *Bil Hal*: Strategies Towards Sustainable Development in the Modern Era

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Abstract

This research aims to examine more deeply the role of da'wah *bil hal* in achieving the goal of women's empowerment towards sustainable development. Da'wah *bil hal* is da'wah accompanied by morals and concrete actions, one of which is through women's empowerment. Women's empowerment can be carried out from social, economic, inclusive education, and environmental aspects. Women's empowerment is in line with the fifth goal of the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), namely gender equality. The promotion of women working in the public sector is based on family economic interests, independence, understanding of socio-economic challenges, and improving social status. Through library *research* and case analysis methods, this research reveals the potential of da'wah *bil hal* in changing women's mindsets, increasing participation in sustainable development, and encouraging the creation of a fairer, more prosperous society without discrimination. Based on the data obtained by researchers, through women's empowerment, they can improve the quality of women's lives by applying da'wah *bil hal* which has the principles of equality and justice which is a solution to overcome problems and can be sustainable.

Keywords: Da'wah, Empowerment, SDGs, Women

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment through da'wah *bil hal* is a relevant issue to be studied in the context of sustainable development in the modern era like today. In an increasingly dynamic and complex global order, the role of women has become central and has received wide attention. However, there are still various challenges faced by women, such as discrimination,

verbal and non-verbal violence against women, limited access to social, educational, economic, and environmental networks, so there is a need for women's empowerment. Through sustainable women's empowerment, we can carry out a women's *support movement* so that they can be independent, not dependent on anyone, and rise from adversity. Women's empowerment through da'wah *bil hal* is not only important to improve the quality of life of women, but with da'wah *bil hal* which has the principles of equality and justice can be a solution to overcome these problems.

Islam as a religion of da'wah has provided alternative solutions for problem solving, especially in society. Da'wah in Arabic is *da'a-yad'u-da'watan* which means to invite, call, and call. Da'wah is an effort to realize the teachings of Islam by inviting, calling, and influencing others on a better path that is sourced from the Qur'an and hadith. The success of da'wah is driven by the many aspects of da'wah that can directly or indirectly affect an activity that is interrelated between da'wah strategies, *maddah* (da'wah materials), preachers, *mad'u* (da'wah targets), *wasilah* (da'wah media), and the impact of da'wah (Baidowi & Salehudin, 2021).

The target of da'wah is the community. Da'wah is said to be successful if factors such as the environment, education, society, and economy succeed in influencing. Da'wah is divided into three, namely, oral da'wah (*da'wah bil oran*), written da'wah (*da'wah bil kitab*), and action da'wah (*da'wah bil hal*) (Purbajati, 2021). *Da'wah bil oran* is da'wah that is carried out by conveying directly through words. *Da'wah bil kitab* is da'wah through writing, either in the form of books, articles, or through writing on social media. Meanwhile, *da'wah bil hal* is da'wah accompanied by morals and real actions in the economic, political, educational, social, and environmental fields. One of the *da'wah bil things* that will be discussed is through empowerment.

Empowerment is an effort by the community, whether there is support from outside parties in restoring their lives which are sourced from their resources (Nur, 2019). Every human being has different privileges and shortcomings between other humans and has become a decree of Allah SWT. The existence of differences makes life more colorful, because it can make every human being understand each other and help fellow humans. Especially in Indonesia, which has a variety of religions, cultures, ethnicities, customs, and ceremonies.

Women are an element of society that is waited for their contribution in terms of development and must be empowered. The meaning of power itself can refer to the word strength or the ability to be independent and independent from shackles, but there are still

women who are downtrodden (Nurlatifah et al., 2020). In the structure of society, there will be differences in each group. The female group is considered weak both in terms of social, cultural, political, legal, educational, and economic aspects, when compared to the male group. The position of women in society can still easily become victims of trade in the black market, not paying attention to special conditions in laws and regulations, and not getting the same opportunities as men as professionals or occupying strategic positions. Islam upholds equality by positioning women as equal beings before Allah SWT. This is stated in the Qur'an which reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13)

Allah SWT has given his people power over him who is equipped with common sense and conscience as a human being. The community is said to be weak and helpless if the community does not have power over the assets that should belong to them. Several recent studies show that women's work honorarium is lower than men's, approximately 70% of men. Women's access to credit is approximately 11% compared to men. The concept of gender equality in society prioritizes the distinction of positions between men and women which has an impact on the division of labor (Kaslam et al., 2023).

In various development initiatives, gender equality is the main goal and focus. The fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to commit to achieving gender equality, empowering women, and girls in all sectors of society and eradicating all types of discrimination faced (Sudirman & Susilawaty, 2022). *The Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) are a series of goals set by the United Nations (UN) to obtain a better and more sustainable life. The SDGs serve as a reference for development at the international and national levels. There are 17 goals, 169 SDGs targets with 16 goals and 91 targets related to gender equality, women's human rights, and girls (Munasaroh, 2022). So, efforts that can minimize these incidents are carried out by empowerment. The purpose of empowerment, based on Law

Number 20 of 2008 concerning the principles and objectives of empowerment, is to overcome poverty by improving the community's economy, increasing people's income and welfare, and creating more jobs for the community (Hijratullah, 2021).

The government has a very important role in empowerment. Currently, the government and NGOs (*Non-Governmental Organizations*) have implemented various efforts to eradicate gender discrimination and inequality in women. However, these efforts are not always successful because there are still many social and cultural aspects that limit women's positions and rights (Oktavia & Abdullah, 2023). Every part of society, both men and women, should be empowered to obtain a welfare. Women, as part of society that must be empowered, can still participate in various sectors (Nurlatifah et al., 2020).

Women's empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building to increase participation, power, and control of greater transformation actions and decision-making (Riadi, 2021). In general, women's motivation to work in the public sector is based on family economic interests, independence, understanding of socio-economic challenges, and improving social status. Women's empowerment is determined for every woman to become an independent person, not dependent on family or other people in her life (Ardiani et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research is the most important part of the field of science and is a systematic way to produce understanding related to a topic. This study uses a qualitative method of the library research model, which is to collect information related to *literature reviews* that are literature (Ridwan et al., 2021). Literature review is a systematic and critical way to collect, evaluate, and integrate literature related to research topics. The systematic approach involves the development of research protocols, thorough literature searches, evaluation of literature quality, and integrated analysis of results.

The *library research* method is carried out by collecting data, problem formulation, literature review, data analysis, and drawing conclusions to determine the completeness of the research results. Library research is carried out to understand previous research to be continued or criticized which will later affect researchers (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). *Library research* includes qualitative research models. Qualitative research is research that prioritizes concentrating on methods and meanings that are not tested appropriately with descriptive data to explain an activity in depth using words. The source of data for this research was

obtained from literature studies on previous scientific papers related to the research topic, such as journal articles, internet articles, and relevant sources related to the researcher's writing.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Need for Women's Empowerment

The position of women who are often weakened in society can occur because of their injustice in public policy-making deliberations. The absence of women in public places causes a tendency to forget social problems that are only felt by women, such as the difficulties faced by women who play the role of heads of the family, either because they are widows, experience domestic violence, are neglected by their husbands, or because they do not have productive family members. Thus, women have an important role in involvement in formulating policies that are responsive to the needs and challenges faced. Through increasing women's participation, it can ensure that public policies are more inclusive and responsive to the entire community without taking sides with one group.

Women's empowerment is also a problem for women working in the tourism sector. Sustainable development goal (SDGs) number five on gender equality is correlated with the issue of women's empowerment in sustainable tourism development. Gender equality and sustainable tourism can complement each other with the aim of creating a more equitable and sustainable world. Sustainable tourism is the development of tourism that comprehensively considers the current social, economic, and ecological impacts to future sustainability, while still paying attention to the needs of environmentally friendly industries and local community participants (Khadijah, 2022).

In the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), women used to express the problems they faced directly to the Prophet or through his wives, including problems related to Domestic Violence (KDRT). As explained in the following paragraph:

الَّذِينَ قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوِرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ
يُظْهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِمَّا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ أُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِلَّا آلَىٰ وَلَدْنَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَعَلِيمٌ غَفُورٌ ۚ

“Indeed, Allah has heard the words of the woman who filed a complaint against you about her husband, and complained to Allah. And Allah hears the question and answer between the two of you. Indeed, Allah is the Hearer and the Seeing. Those who take their wives among you, (consider their wives

as their mothers, in fact) are not their wives. Their mothers were nothing but women who gave birth to them. And indeed, they really say a word of disobedience and a lie. And indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Forgiving” (QS. Al-Mujlâ verses 1-2).

In the hadith of the Prophet, there are many stories about women in public spaces whose profession requires them to leave the house. If the profession and activities are carried out while maintaining modesty and staying away from things that cause slander among men, it can be tolerated. Like the first wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), Siti Khadijah who was a successful female trader and had many male employees including the Prophet and his uncle. Muslims have an attitude of helping each other in sharing knowledge and experience between men and women for mutual progress both in the household and in the country (Sitibadiah & Baihaqi, 2022).

Currently, many women have positions in the government such as the minister of foreign affairs, namely Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, the minister of women's empowerment and child protection, I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, the minister of social affairs, namely Tri Rismaharini, and the Governor of East Java, namely Khofifah Indar Parawansa. The Qur'an gives women the same right to cooperate with men and improve each other for the betterment of society as in the Qur'an which reads:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“And the believers, male and female, some of them (are) helpers to others. They tell (do) the ma'ruf, prevent the munkar, establish prayers, pay zakat and they obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be given mercy by Allah; Indeed, Allah is the Mighty and the Wise.” (QS At-taubah verse 71)

Economic Empowerment for Women

In the era before the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the mistreatment received by women was one of the results due to economic helplessness. However, as the times progress, not a few women work to provide for their families and even become the backbone of the family. The economic condition and relatively low level of education of the community require support and guidance to take advantage of the potential that exists in their environment. Women of productive age are one of the potentials that can be developed by providing skills and knowledge that can be used to support the economic development of the community, such as utilizing and managing the potential that exists in the surrounding environment, and building economic independence through MSMEs both online and offline (Yuniawati, 2021).

Women business owners, including women who want to live more financially independent, dare to face competition in the business world, are not dependent on anyone and are able to provide benefits to others (Manurung et al., 2023). Women's participation in the economy can increase overall economic growth, improve family welfare, and reduce poverty rates. Thus, economic empowerment is one of the efforts to achieve gender equality, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Women's economic empowerment is very relevant to several SDGs goals, including goal 1 related to poverty eradication, goal 5 related to gender equality, goal 8 related to decent work and economic growth, and goal 10 related to reducing inequality.

Women's Education Empowerment

Women and education in Islam are in a high position. Islam views the importance of education as *a means* of making social change. Education is one of the fields that can develop the quality of Human Resources. Islamic education prioritizes women's empowerment to play an active role in sustainable development and shows that women's participation is a need that must be recognized (Sugitanata et al., 2024). The purpose of Islamic education is to realize 'ubudiyah to Allah SWT in the life of society with all good and evil, difficult, and happy. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of education as a tool for social change to inform the importance of education for all circles of humanity and to seek knowledge can be worth worship. Education as a social change is shown in several ways (Rahmah, 2021). First, the command to read as in the Qur'an reads:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

“Read it with (say) the name of your God who created. He had created a human being from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Merciful. Who teaches (humans) by the intermediary of kalam. He teaches man what he does not know.” (QS. Al-Alaq (1-5)).

Second, Allah SWT commands his people to continue to study by deepening knowledge even in conditions of war. As in the words of Allah which reads:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً ۚ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

“It is not appropriate for the believers to go all (to the battlefield). Why not go from each of them some to deepen their knowledge of religion and to warn his people when they have returned to him, so that they may take care of him.” (QS. At-Taubah verse 122).

Women's empowerment in the field of education is a priority that must be prioritized, because until now there is a tendency in society to override the importance of women in getting a higher education. Education for women is very important because until now a mother is still the first school for the nation's generation. If a mother has abundant knowledge and experience, then a child will gain a lot of knowledge at an early age to be prepared to look to the future. Through quality education, women can increase their income with higher salaries and help families get out of poverty. Not only that, educated women tend to understand the importance of reproductive health, so that they can improve health for women.

Currently, the government has set compulsory education for 12 years for all Indonesian people, both men and women. The determination is based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 concerning the Law on the National Education System. There are three paths to carry out education according to article 11 paragraph 1, namely formal, informal, and non-formal education (Indy et al., 2019). The establishment of compulsory education for 12 years aims to educate the nation through education, which is also in accordance with the goals of sustainable development, goal 4, namely quality education and learning opportunities, and goal 5, which is to achieve gender equality.

Environmental Empowerment for Women

Basically, humans and nature are interconnected, women and men have the same rights and obligations in fulfilling common interests. Islam also requires humans, both men and women, to work together to protect and manage the environment (Shodiq & Anwar, 2021). Environmental management is a shared responsibility in accordance with Law No. 32 of 2009 related to Environmental Protection and Management (UUPPLH) which hands over broad control to local governments and involves the community in providing control over

environmental damage. The community, including women, has a role in environmental management as stated in article 70 concerning the role of the community (Putri, 2020).

Environmental problems are closely related to women's problems. In Indonesia, ecofeminism exists as a response to the marginalization of women in the development process and the increasing destruction of nature due to the impact of development not on the side of nature. Ecofeminism has added value because it does not only focus on the female aspect, but also the aspect of the natural environment (ecosystem) as a form of human interest (Widjanarko, 2019). Women have the potential to manage natural resources, where they also play a role and can improve environmental sustainability which can be started from home by raising awareness among children and families about energy saving, sustainable consumption, good waste management, and playing a role in the recycling movement that can support the success of environmental programs and sustainable development. The participation of women is also able to overcome environmental challenges that produce broader and sustainable positive impacts (Susiatiningsih, 2024).

In Indonesia, there have been many women's empowerment programs that focus on environmental issues, such as waste banks that involve the community, especially women as the main drivers. There are also groups of women farmers who play an important role in promoting sustainable agriculture and food security. An ecofeminism program that links environmental exploitation with the oppression of women. In addition, there is also the *Global Girls Creating Change program* which invites young women to be involved in research on the impact of the climate crisis and the development of innovative solutions. The existence of various women's empowerment programs is in line with the goals of the SDGs, namely goal 5 of gender equality, goal 13 of handling climate change, and goal 15 of maintaining terrestrial ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

In the context of sustainable development in the modern era, da'wah *bil hal* is not only limited to conveying religious messages, but also a powerful instrument to encourage significant social change, especially for women in economic, social, educational, and environmental aspects, so that every woman can have the strength to rise. Women's empowerment through da'wah *bil hal* is not only the responsibility of certain individuals or groups, but is a shared responsibility to create a fairer, more prosperous, and sustainable

society. The existence of empowerment can be an effort to minimize activities that weaken women that have been going on for a long time in various countries with various ways and forms of violence. With this research, it is hoped that it can provide recommendations for various parties, both the government, religious institutions, society, and women as agents of change to support sustainable women's empowerment. An important factor in the process of community development and empowerment to overcome problems in the community is the awareness and desire for change from the community by making the most of the existing potential, so that it can benefit the surrounding community.

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