

## **GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: An Analysis of Rohana Kudus of Thought and Its Relevance to The Quran Surah At-Taubah Verse 71**

**Freddy Hermansyah Lbs\***

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[freddyhermansyah314@gmail.com](mailto:freddyhermansyah314@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding Author

**Arip Rachman Ritonga**

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[rachman0641@gmail.com](mailto:rachman0641@gmail.com)

**Ismi Salsabilah**

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

[hailalaaa@gmail.com](mailto:hailalaaa@gmail.com)

**Huswatul Hasanah**

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[huswatul.hasanah17@gmail.com](mailto:huswatul.hasanah17@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the relevance of Rohana Kudus' thoughts on women's education in the perspective of Islamic teachings, focusing on the interpretation of the Qur'an surah At-Taubah verse 7. Rohana Kudus is known as a pioneering female figure of the press and education in Indonesia who has a progressive view of the importance of women's role in social life, especially through education. This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method, relying on primary and secondary sources such as biographies, scientific articles, historical documents, and the study of Qur'an interpretation. The analysis is carried out through a phenomenological approach to uncover the deepest meaning of Rohana Kudus thought in the context of Islamic values that uphold science, gender equality, and the glory of



women. The results of the study show that the idea of Rohana Kudus is in line with Islamic principles, where education is seen as a fundamental right for all humanity, including women. She emphasized women's emancipation through knowledge access. This view affirms that Islam is not a religion that restricts women, but rather encourages their active participation in nation-building. This finding confirms the importance of reviving the spirit of struggle of women figures like Rohana Kudus in the context of today's women's education.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality In Islam; Women's Education; Rohana Kudus; Qur'anic Exegesis; Indonesia

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji relevansi pemikiran Rohana Kudus tentang pendidikan perempuan dalam perspektif ajaran Islam, dengan fokus pada tafsir Al-Qur'an surah At-Taubah ayat 7. Rohana Kudus dikenal sebagai tokoh perempuan pelopor pers dan pendidikan di Indonesia yang memiliki pandangan progresif tentang pentingnya peran perempuan dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat, khususnya melalui pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode penelitian kepustakaan, dengan mengandalkan sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder seperti biografi, artikel ilmiah, dokumen sejarah, dan kajian tafsir Al-Qur'an. Analisis dilakukan melalui pendekatan fenomenologi untuk mengungkap makna terdalam pemikiran Rohana Kudus dalam konteks nilai-nilai Islam yang menjunjung tinggi ilmu pengetahuan, kesetaraan gender, dan kemuliaan perempuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gagasan Rohana Kudus sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip Islam, di mana pendidikan dipandang sebagai hak dasar bagi seluruh umat manusia, termasuk perempuan. Ia mendorong perempuan untuk bangkit dari keterbelakangan melalui akses terhadap ilmu pengetahuan. Pandangan ini menegaskan bahwa Islam bukanlah agama yang mengekang kaum perempuan, tetapi justru mendorong partisipasi aktif mereka dalam pembangunan bangsa. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya menghidupkan kembali semangat perjuangan tokoh perempuan seperti Rohana Kudus dalam konteks pendidikan perempuan saat ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Islam; Pendidikan Perempuan; Rohana Kudus; Tafsir Al-Qur'an; Indonesia

### **Introduction**

Indonesian independence emerged from persistent youth-led movements. They formed the backbone of the independence movement, instilling the spirit of unity and nationalism in every

inch of the country.<sup>1</sup> With unwavering determination, they affirmed that independence is a Non-negotiable right. Their courage summed up the fighting spirit of the entire nation, becoming a historical milestone on the journey to Indonesian independence. Historical records show the freedom fighters stretched their lives in upholding noble ideals for the homeland. Some of their services are immortalized in history, but not a few are buried without a sign of respect, disappearing with the wave of resistance. They, who were so loyal to the homeland, became an unforgettable part of history, not only in the memories, but also in the soul of the nation. Such as Cut Nyak Dhien who is one of the famous Indonesian national heroes from Aceh, an Indonesian national hero who is famous for his role in the war against Dutch colonialism in Aceh. After her husband, Teuku Umar, was killed in battle in 1899, Cut Nyak Dhien took over the leadership of the army and continued the struggle with a guerrilla war strategy. He led the army with hit-and-run tactics and resistance in the forests of Aceh, which proved effective against the more organized and well-armed Dutch army. His courage and determination made Cut Nyak Dhien a symbol of resistance for the people of Aceh and other freedom fighters throughout the archipelago.

In addition, Maria Walanda Maramis is a figure from Minahasa, North Sulawesi, who fights for women's education and rights. She founded the Mother's Romance to Her Descendants (PIKAT) in 1917 with the aim of educating women to become better and more educated mothers. These heroines not only fought in physical battles against the invaders, but also fought for the rights of education, gender equality, and women's empowerment. They are an inspiration for the young generation of Indonesia to continue the struggle in various fields <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Toni Nasution, "Perkembangan Sosial Masyarakat pada Masa Penjajahan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Indonesia* 1, No. 1 (2023). 19–32.

<sup>2</sup> Khairul Tri. Anjani, "Maria Walanda Maramis Sang Pelita Pendidikan Perempuan di Minahasa (1917-1924)," *Candrasangkala: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sejarah* 5, No. 2 (2019). 40–47.

Their presence carves a deep meaning of sacrifice and determination in achieving Indonesian independence.<sup>3</sup> In the belly of Mother Earth, they are remembered as heroes who fought with all their souls and bodies, until they finally found peace in the midst of the roar of the struggle for independence.<sup>4</sup> The struggle for Indonesian independence is not only a stage for men, but also a field of struggle for women who play an important role in undergoing this independence journey.<sup>5</sup> With courage and tireless determination, they contributed all efforts and sacrifices in liberating the country. History records that the role of women in the struggle for independence is no less great than that of men. They are involved in various aspects of the struggle, from providing logistics, voicing aspirations, to going directly to the battlefield. Their presence is proof that the spirit of patriotism and love for the homeland does not know gender.<sup>6</sup> With their dedication and fighting spirit, women became a strong pillar in maintaining and achieving Indonesia's independence.

The woman who was involved in the struggle for Indonesian independence was Rohana Kudus, a woman from the west of the island of Sumatra, precisely in Koto Gadang, West Sumatra. With her courage, Kudus made an important contribution in pioneering the path to independence. Although his background was not from the center of political power, his spirit to fight colonialism never went out. As a woman, she showed that the struggle for independence was not limited to gender or region. Rohana Kudus

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<sup>3</sup> and Andy Suryadi Limah, Hutri, Cahyo Budi Utomo, "Poster dan Upaya Mempertahankan Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Yogyakarta Tahun 1945-1949," *Journal of Indonesian History* 7, No. 1 (2018). 35–44.

<sup>4</sup> Arya Ajisaka, *Mengenai Pahlawan Indonesia*, Revisi (Jawa Barat: Kawan Pustaka, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Nur Alfiyani Wirahmat, Hardiman, "Eksistensi Politik Perempuan Pasca Kemerdekaan Indonesia," *SPECTRUM: Journal of Gender and Children Studies* 2, No. 2022 (2M). 114–31.

<sup>6</sup> Wulan Sondarika, "Peranan Wanita dalam Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Indonesia Masa Pendudukan Jepang," *Historia: Jurnal Pembelajaran Sejarah dan Sejarah UM Metro* 5, No. 2 (2017). 207–17.

is an inspiration to many people, strengthening the belief that every individual has an important role in achieving independence and building the nation.<sup>7</sup>

An ordinary woman, without the opportunity to sit in school, is able to stimulate the spirit of learning among Indonesian women. Through her perseverance and enthusiasm, she pioneered the path to change that transformed the position of women into respect, as well as fought for the equal right to education for men.<sup>8</sup> Despite her lack of formal educational background, her courage to challenge the status quo opened the door for thousands of other women to follow in her footsteps. With her example and dedication, she carved out a new history for Indonesian women, proving that education is a universal right that should be accessible to all individuals regardless of gender or social background.

This is proven by the presence of *Soenting Melajoe* (SM) which is the first women's newspaper published in Minangkabau (West Sumatra). This newspaper was published in Padang City from 1912 to 1921. The presence of SM was initiated by Rohana Kudus, a Minangkabau female figure from Koto Gadang, Bukit tinggi. All of SM's managers were women, which made this newspaper an important forum to fight for women's rights and education at that time.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, Rohana Kudus is also active in the field of education. She established schools and courses for women, where she taught practical skills, such as sewing, weaving, and cooking, in addition to providing general education. Her efforts aim to increase women's economic and intellectual independence. It is proven by the establishment of the Amai Setia Craft School

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<sup>7</sup> Ema Pratama Agustiniingsih, "Pergerakan Perempuan di Minangkabau: Kiprah Rohana Kudus dalam Nasionalisme Tahun 1912-1972," *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora* 3, No. 2 (2019). 260–75.

<sup>8</sup> Nadiatun Hasanah, "Pemikiran M. Rasyid Ridha dan Rohana Kudus tentang Pendidikan Perempuan," *An Najah (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Sosial Keagamaan)* 3, No. 1 (2024). 1–8.

<sup>9</sup> Danil M Chaniago, "Perempuan bergerak Surat Kabar Soenting Melajoe 1912-1921," *Kafaab: Journal of Gender Studies* 4, No. 1 (2014). 80–99.

(ASCS) in Koto Gadang, West Sumatra in 1911. The school aims to teach women a variety of skills such as sewing, weaving, and cooking, in addition to general education. The school became one of the educational centers for women in the area, helping them to be more economically and intellectually independent.<sup>10</sup>

Rohana Kudus' statement highlighting the importance of education for women is in line with the true purpose of Islam in providing education to all individuals regardless of gender. In Islam, education is considered the basis of all progress and justice, where science is considered the right of every Muslim, both male and female. Islam emphasizes that with science, women can develop their full potential, not only as individuals but also as members of society who actively contribute to the social development and well-being of humanity.<sup>11</sup>

Within the framework of Islamic education theory or concept, efforts to provide a good education to women are considered an integral part of Islamic teachings that promote equality, justice, and welfare for all individuals. The education provided to women is not only a moral calling, but also an implementation of Islamic principles that emphasize the importance of equality in access to education and the development of individual potential.

In practice, these principles can be implemented in the education system by ensuring that women have the same access as men to quality education. This includes the provision of adequate educational facilities and infrastructure, an inclusive and relevant curriculum, and qualified educators who are sensitive to the needs of women. In addition, Islamic education also emphasizes the importance of forming good character and morality, so education

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<sup>10</sup> Lufita Sari, "Eksistensi Yayasan Kerajinan Amai Setia dalam Pemberdayaan Perempuan di Nagari Koto Gadang," *Journal of Civic Education* 5, No. 1 (2022). 116–21.

<sup>11</sup> Soraya Oktarina Et Al., "Rohana Kuddus : Gender dan Gerakan," November 2011 (2021). 59–74.

for women must also pay attention to aspects of the formation of a noble personality.

By applying this view in educational practice, we can ensure that women have an equal opportunity to develop their potential and contribute significantly to the development of the nation and the well-being of humanity, in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings that promote equality, justice, and well-being for all individuals.

This research is related to Silfia Hanani's Research on "Rohana Kudus and Women's Education" which makes an important contribution in understanding the role of education in realizing equality, justice, and women's welfare within the framework of Islamic teachings. Hanani highlighted the importance of equal access to education for women and the formation of good character, in accordance with Islamic values that promote equality and justice. This research provides in-depth insights into the urgency of women's education in bringing about positive social change, as well as providing views that can be implemented in educational practices to achieve the goal of equality and justice in society.<sup>12</sup>

Sulistiawati's research on "Rohana Kudus' Track Record of Struggle: Relevance, Liberal Feminism, and Islam" discusses the role of Rohana Kudus in the context of the struggle for gender equality in Minangkabau society which is still influenced by the patriarchal system. Rohana Kudus, as a Muslim feminist figure, persistently fought for women's access to education and addressed gender injustice through the establishment of schools, journalistic activities, and crafts. Despite living in an environment filled with patriarchal norms, Rohana is not afraid to speak out for freedom and equality for women.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Silfia Hanani, "Rohana Kudus dan pendidikan perempuan," *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama dan Jender* 10, No. 1 (2011). 37–47.

<sup>13</sup> sulistiawati, "Rekam Jejak Perjuangan Rohana Kudus : Relevansi , Feminisme Liberal dan Islam Memandangnya," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 5, No. 1 (2021). 153–76.

Previous research by Ema Pratama Agustianingsih, Nurfarida Deliani, and Silfia Hanani has outlined the role of Rohana Kudus in fighting for gender equality through education and journalistic activism. However, Sulistiawati's research adds a new dimension by reviewing the relevance of the Rohana Kudus movement in the context of current feminism, Islamic views on gender equality, and the impact of Rohana's struggle on feminist movements in Indonesia.

In addition, Asep Saepullah explained that the feminist movement can use gender theory as a tool for critical analysis of various forms of inequality and discrimination experienced by women in various aspects of social, cultural, economic, and religious life. Gender theory serves not only to identify the existence of inequality, but also to uncover the social structures that systemically perpetuate subordination to women<sup>14</sup>.

The above research is closely related to the theme being discussed, but it focuses more on the relevance of the figure's thoughts to the content of verses in the Qur'an. Rohana Kudus' statement emphasizing the importance of education for women is in line with the teachings contained in the Qur'an, especially Surah At-Taubah verse 71.

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

“Believers, men and women, some of them are helpers for others. They enjoin (do) makruf and prevent (doing) disobedience, enforce prayer, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be blessed by Allah. Indeed, Allah is Mighty and Wise.”

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<sup>14</sup> Asep Saepullah, “Feminitas dan Dekonstruksi Perempuan dalam Islam: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd,” *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, No. 1 (2020). 59–84.



This verse emphasizes that men and women have the same position in terms of education and doing good to others. In Islam, both genders are balanced with equal rights to acquire knowledge and develop as individuals who are devoted to God and contribute to society. The concept of kindness and helping among fellow human beings, which is emphasized in the verse, emphasizes the importance of cooperation and solidarity among all individuals, regardless of gender. Thus, the teachings of the Qur'an provide a solid foundation for gender equality and the importance of education for women, which is in line with the vision of the Rohana Kudus and the universal principles of Islam.

This research aims to explore the relevance of Rohana Kudus' statement about the importance of education for women with Islamic teachings. Rohana Kudus' statement emphasizing the importance of education for women is in line with the principles of equality and justice in Islam. This encourages researchers to further explore how Islamic teachings can provide a strong moral and spiritual foundation in supporting women's empowerment through education. This research also aims to identify effective strategies and policies in improving access and quality of education for women, both at the local and global levels. Thus, the compatibility between Rohana Kudus' views and Islamic values is an important starting point for a more in-depth and applicable study in order to improve the welfare and empowerment of women through education.

By deepening our understanding of the role of Rohana Kudus, we can further explore how feminism, both in liberal and Islamic contexts, describes and views the struggle for gender equality. This is important in championing women's empowerment and creating a more just and equal society for all individuals.

This research is qualitative research whose data is obtained by conducting literature research (*Library Research*). According to Sutrisno Hadi (1990), Abdul Rahman Sholeh (2005), Sugiyono (2012), Mardalis (1999), Sarwono (2006), Nazir (1988) revealed that

it is called literature research because the data and materials needed to complete research come from literature in the form of books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, journals, documents, and magazines.<sup>15</sup> Joseph Komider (1995) stated that broadly speaking, reading sources in literature research can be divided into two groups, namely: general reference sources that usually contain theories and concepts in general, namely libraries in the form of textbooks, encyclopedias, monographs, and the like, and there are also special reference sources in the form of journals, research bulletins and theses.<sup>16</sup>

This study uses the Phenomenology, Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz explained the meaning of Phenomenology That is, research that seeks to conclude, analyze, and make interpretations about the phenomenon being analyzed.<sup>17,18</sup> The data collection used in this study consists of three stages, namely *Reading Techniques*: read the written data related to the research. *Recording techniques*; Record and underline important parts contained in the data source. *Data grouping*: The data that has been recorded is then grouped based on the purpose of the research conducted.

The data analysis used in this study is descriptive analysis, which is an analysis that can provide a description or description or situation as clearly as possible about an object, whether in the form of values, human culture, values, works of art, ethnic groups, events, objects, or culture.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. Mustofa, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research)* (Padang: Get Press Indonesia, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> nursapia Harahap, "Penelitian Kepustakaan," *Iqra': Jurnal Perpustakaan dan Informasi* 8, No. 1 (2014). 68–73.

<sup>17</sup> Joubert B. Maramis Steeva Yeaty Lidya Tumangkeng, "Kajian Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Literature Review," *Jurnal Pembangunan EkoNomi dan Kenangan Daerah* 23, No. 1 (2022). 17.

<sup>18</sup> Helaluddin, "Mengenal Lebih Dekat dengan Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Sebuah Penelitian Kualitatif [Getting Closer to the Phenomenological Approach: A Qualitative Research]," *Jurnal Research Gate* 2, No. (1) (2018). 1–15.

<sup>19</sup> heru Juabdin Sada, "Manusia dalam Perspektif Agama Islam," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, No. 1 (2016). 129.

## Result and Discussion

### Biography of Rohana Kudus

Rohana Kudus is a female figure who was born and raised in the Land of Minangkabau, precisely in Koto Gadang. This place is not only known for its stunning natural beauty, but also for the uniqueness of the classic European villages found there. Its location at the North foot of Mount Singgalang makes it surrounded by a mesmerizing natural panorama, with Sianok Canyon as one of its iconic sights. With its position overlooking the city of Bukit tinggi, Koto Gadang is not only a physical place, but also a symbol of the rich culture and history of the Minangkabau. And it is from this place that Rohana Kudus takes her inspiration and dedication in contributing to the development of Minangkabau society and culture.<sup>20</sup>

Rohana Kudus was born on December 20, 1884 in Koto Gadang, Agam Regency, West Sumatra. His father, Moehammad Rasjad Maharadja Soetan, was a prosecutor who worked in Alahan Panjang, while his mother was named Kiam. From her family background, Rohana Kudus grew up in an environment that has given her a strong foundation to pursue her education and career in the future. The support and influence of his parents may have played an important role in shaping Rohana Kudus' character and aspirations in contributing to Minangkabau society and culture.<sup>21</sup>

Rohana Kudus' father, in addition to working as a prosecutor, also has a career as a journalist, adding a dimension of diversity in his family environment. On the other hand, her mother was an ordinary woman, reflecting the lives of the majority of women at that time. In 1908, Rohana Kudus married Abdul Abbas Pamuncak Sultan, a young man who was famous for his social spirit and active in political parties. Their marriage took place when

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<sup>20</sup> Dona Afriyani Helfi, Helfi, "Antara Bundo Kanduang 'Feminim' dan Realitis di Minangkabau," *AGENDA: Jurnal Analisis Gender dan Agama* 2, No. 1 (2020). 36–42.

<sup>21</sup> Perempuan D I Minangkabau dan IAIN Bukittinggi, "Ruhana Kuddus Pelopor Gerakan Entrepreneur" 19, No. 1 (2020). 1–14.

Rohana Kudus was 24 years old, beginning a new chapter in her life full of challenges and a commitment to contribute to greater social and political change.<sup>22</sup>

Rohana Kudus's childhood was filled with experiences in Alahan Panjang, the place where she spent most of her childhood. In fact, when she was six years old, Rohana Kudus was adopted by a prosecutor in Alahan Panjang. In that environment, he received not only formal education, but also religious education and skills from the prosecutor's wife. This experience may have formed the moral foundation and practical knowledge that later became the foundation for his life's journey, helping to shape him into a strong individual dedicated to the values he believed in.<sup>23</sup>

When Rohana Kudus was still a child, there was No school that became a place for education for the people in Alahan Panjang, so the educational situation there was very backward and backward. However, thanks to the education provided by her adoptive mother, Rohana Kudus was able to overcome these challenges. Despite not having access to formal education like most children of her time, Rohana Kudus learned to read and pursue knowledge diligently. The support and guidance of her adoptive mother gave her the opportunity to thrive and overcome the limitations of her environment. Her success in acquiring knowledge despite difficult conditions shows the perseverance and persistence of the Rohana Kudus in facing obstacles and finding ways to move forward even in unfavorable situations.

In 1892, Rohana Kudus left Alahan Panjang to follow her father who moved to Simpang Tonang Talu, Pasaman. In this new place, Rohana Kudus still maintains her enthusiasm for learning even though the situation of the educational environment is still inadequate. Without access to formal school, Rohana Kudus continues to diligently read and study independently. His seriousness and independence in the pursuit of knowledge shows

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<sup>22</sup> Hanani, "Rohana Kudus dan pendidikan perempuan."

<sup>23</sup> Silfia Hanani, "Rohana kudus dan pendidikan perempuan," n.d.

his determination to continue to develop, even in the midst of the limitations of the educational environment he faces. This step is the beginning of Rohana Kudus' long journey in pursuing her ideals and contributing to the Minangkabau society and culture.<sup>24</sup>

In support of the habit of diligently reading Rohana Kudus, his father took an additional step by subscribing to the newspaper "Berita Kecil", a well-known publication of Medan at that time. This step was taken so that Rohana Kudus has more access to reading materials and learning materials. The newspaper subscription became a valuable addition for Rohana Kudus, expanding her horizons and enriching her knowledge in the midst of the limitations of the educational environment she faced. This act shows her father's dedication in providing support to Rohana Kudus to develop herself through literacy and learning, creating a strong foundation for her educational journey and future career.<sup>25</sup>

Rohana Kudus breathed her last on August 17, 1972, at the age of 87. The silence ended the long journey of a figure who had made great contributions in the field of Minangkabau education and culture. In his lifespan, he has become a symbol of the spirit of struggle and determination in overcoming various obstacles and limitations. His legacy is not only in the form of inspiring works, but also a trail of leadership that brings positive change to the Minangkabau people. Even though her journey has ended, Rohana Kudus will still be remembered as a figure who has left a precious legacy for future generations.

On September 9, 2019, Rohana Kudus was officially appointed as a hero without merit and honor by the President of Indonesia, Ir. H. Joko Widodo. This appointment was carried out based on the decision contained in the letter of the Minister of

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<sup>24</sup> Wawan Darmawan Jayudha, Irfan Agung, "Pendidikan Bagi Perempuan Indonesia: Perjuangan Raden Dewi Sartika dan Siti Rohana Kudus (1904-1928)," *FACTUM: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pendidikan Sejarah* 9, No. 2 (2020). 161–74.

<sup>25</sup> Chaniago, "Perempuan bergerak Surat Kabar Soenting Melajoe 1912-1921."

Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 23/MS/A/09/2019. This step is a recognition for her great services in the field of Minangkabau education and culture, as well as her persistent struggle in fighting for women's rights and social justice. With this appointment, Rohana Kudus is officially recognized as one of the figures who plays an important role in building and inspiring the Indonesian people. This act is not only a tribute to his work and dedication, but also as a reminder of the values and spirit he passed on to future generations.

### **The Concept of Rohana Kudus Thought**

Based on concern for the need for women to have the right to themselves, especially in the field of education which is affected by the patriarchal system, Rohana Kudus initiated revolutionary ideas that changed the position of women in Indonesia. Through her ideas, Rohana Kudus brought a significant change in society's view of women, fighting for their rights to get a decent education and equal to men. Her contribution is not only limited to theory, but also to concrete actions in fighting for gender equality in Indonesia. Thus, Rohana Kudus not only gives value to the position of women in Indonesia, but also provides a strong impetus for broader social change.<sup>26</sup>

The concept of thought offered by Rohana Kudus in the field of education is reflected in her expression which describes a deep understanding of social reality. He stated, "The turn of the times will never make women equal to men." This phrase sums up Rohana Kudus' view on gender equality, in which she acknowledges the natural differences between women and men but insists that this should not be an excuse to prevent women from getting their rights in the field of education <sup>27</sup>. In this

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<sup>26</sup> sulistiawati, "Rekam Jejak Perjuangan Rohana Kudus : Relevansi , Feminisme Liberal dan Islam Memandangnya."

<sup>27</sup> Rahmad Tri Hadi. Ermagusti, Ermagusti, Arrasyid Arrasyid, "Contribution of Rohana Kudus to Empowering Minangkabau Women

expression, there is the idea that although women and men have differences, their right to equal and decent education must be guaranteed. Thus, Rohana Kudus encourages to treat women fairly and provide equal opportunities in achieving their potential, especially through quality education. Women are still women with all their abilities and obligations. What must change is that women must receive education and good treatment. Women must be physically and spiritually healthy, have noble morals and ethics, and obey worship, all of which will only be fulfilled by having knowledge

Rohana Kudus firmly states that women are still women, with all their inherent abilities and obligations. For her, what must change is the treatment of women and their access to quality education. According to her, women must be given good treatment and the opportunity to get a proper education. Rohana Kudus believes that women must take care of physical and spiritual health, uphold noble morals and ethics, and be obedient in worship. All these things, according to him, can only be fulfilled through the mastery of science. Thus, Rohana Kudus emphasizes the importance of education for women as a foundation to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to society.<sup>28</sup>

From her expressions and concepts of thinking, Rohana Kudus offers a concept of gender equality that does not demand equal rights between women and men. She believes that although women have different roles and obligations than men, they should still be given fair treatment and equal rights in terms of education and good treatment. Rohana Kudus views that women must continue to be recognized as women with all their inherent abilities and obligations, but with the same opportunity to achieve quality education and appropriate rights. This approach illustrates the inclusive attitude of the Holy Rohana which fights for equal

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Through Voices and Works,” *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama dan Jender* 22, No. 1 (2023). 17–36.

<sup>28</sup> Oktarina et al., “Rohana Kuddus : Gender Dan Gerakan.”

recognition and treatment for women, without ignoring the diversity of gender roles and responsibilities.

According to Rohana Kudus, true women are those who have strength and independence. To achieve this, she believes that women must have access to science and get education that is the foundation for living life. In addition, Rohana Kudus also directs her efforts at women's empowerment and helps them overcome the lag. This approach emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities and support for women to develop fully, both personally and professionally. By empowering women and providing access to education, Rohana Kudus strives to create an environment where women can reach their full potential, as well as play an active role in advancing themselves and society as a whole.

Rohana Kudus' thoughts on the importance of education for women clearly reflect the principles *Gender Equality Theory*, which affirms that biological differences between men and women should not be used as a basis for restricting access to basic rights. This theory is based on the premise that in social life, all individuals regardless of gender are entitled to equal opportunities to develop, contribute, and obtain fundamental rights such as education, health, and employment<sup>29</sup>.

In the context of Indonesia's history which is thick with patriarchal social structures, women are often placed in subordinate positions. Education, which should be a bridge for increasing individual capacity, is actually one of the areas that limits women's space for movement. Rohana Kudus is present as a female figure who resists the current of domination<sup>30</sup>. She not only voiced the importance of education for women, but also set a real example through the establishment of schools and her journalistic activities. His thinking is very progressive because he emphasizes that women have the same right to education as a means of self-

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<sup>29</sup> J. Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender* (London: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> D. Oktarina, H., Suryani, L., & Andini, "No Title," *Pemikiran Rohana Kudus sebagai Tokoh Perempuan dalam Perjuangan Pendidikan di Indonesia* 6, No. 1 (2021). 12–25.



empowerment, without having to imitate the role of men absolutely<sup>31</sup>.

Furthermore, Rohana Kudus understands that inequality of access to education does not only have an impact on individual women, but also on the quality of life of society as a whole. In the framework *Gender Equality Theory*, education is an important tool in dismantling gender-biased social constructions. Women's education not only gives birth to a smarter generation, but also plays an important role in shaping a more just and equal society<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the idea of the Rohana Kudus that women must be physically and spiritually healthy, moral, knowledgeable, and obedient to worship is a form of holistic approach that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions.

Rohana Kudus's thinking also reflects the understanding that gender equality in education does not demand identical equality in roles between men and women, but emphasizes fair and equal treatment on the basis of each person's potential and needs. This is in line with her idea that women are still women with all their abilities and obligations, but still have the right to equal opportunities in achieving education and a decent life<sup>33</sup>.

Thus, Rohana Kudus' struggle is a concrete form of the application of *Gender Equality Theory* in the local context of Indonesia. She not only became a pioneer of the women's education movement, but also built the intellectual and moral foundations to realize sustainable gender justice. Her thoughts remain relevant today in the face of modern challenges related to the gap in access to education, especially for women in remote areas and in socio-cultural contexts that are still patriarchal.

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<sup>31</sup> D. Sulistiawati, "Peran Rohana Kudus dalam Mendorong Kesadaran Gender Melalui Pendidikan," *Jurnal Kajian Perempuan dan Anak* 4, No. 1 (2021). 33–41.

<sup>32</sup> R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (California: Stanford University Press, 1987).

<sup>33</sup> A. Ermagusti, E., & Arrasyid, "Relevansi Pemikiran Rohana Kudus dalam Konteks Pendidikan dan Kesetaraan Gender di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sosial Humaniora* 8, No. 2 (2023). 45–56.

## **Women's Education in the View of the Quran Surah At-Taubah Verse 71**

When talking about women in the historical context, we often find narratives about how women are considered not to have a proper position in society, especially during the period of jahiliyah. In that era, women were often considered only as objects or property, without their rights recognized as independent and valued individuals. They are not given the opportunity to be educated or even have a voice in the public sphere. These limitations create troubling gender injustices and inequality, as well as limit the potential and contribution that women can make to society. The history of the Jahiliyah era is a reflection of the challenges that must be faced in fighting for women's rights, as well as providing impetus to create changes towards a more inclusive and just society for all individuals, regardless of gender<sup>34</sup>.

During the time of jahiliyah, the presence of a daughter is often considered a shame that is embarrassing to the family. In fact, in more tragic cases, girls can be killed immediately after birth. This atrocious practice reflects how gender injustice and discrimination were rampant in society at the time<sup>35</sup>. However, a big change came with the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the bearer of the truth tract for all of Allah's creation on earth. The teachings of Islam that He brought brought revolution in the view of women. Islam affirms that women have the same dignity as men before Allah, and that they have rights that must be respected and protected. The presence of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH not only brought religious guidance, but also changed social mindsets and actions, paving the way for gender equality and protection of women's rights.

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<sup>34</sup> Moh Bahardin, "Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," *ASAS: Jurnal Hukum EkoNomi Syariah* 4, No. 1 (2012).

<sup>35</sup> Bagas Luay Ariziq, "Kedudukan dan Kondisi Wanita Sebelum dan Sesudah Datangnya Agama Islam," *Jurnal Keislaman* 5, No. 1 (2020). 1–12.

From their originally low position in the pra-*jahiliyah* society, women have undergone significant changes in the view of Islam. Before the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the bearer of the treatise, women were often considered inferior and even victims of discriminatory treatment, such as the killing of baby girls. However, with the advent of Islam, the view of women changed drastically. Islam teaches that women have the same dignity as men before Allah and deserve equal respect and treatment. Islamic teachings place women in honorable positions in society, recognizing their rights in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and leadership<sup>36</sup>. Thus, Islam not only brought a transformation in attitudes towards women, but also opened the door to gender equality and recognition of women's dignity in religious and societal perspectives.

Even in the Quran, women's names are enshrined in one of the surahs as tangible evidence of the nobility of women in Islam. This reflects the recognition of the important role of women in religious teachings. In addition, when viewed from an educational perspective, especially in the context of Islamic education, the close relationship between education and women becomes very clear. From the beginning of life, man received his first education from a mother. This shows that women not only have a central role in the family, but also in the delivery of religious values and teachings. As the first educators, women have a great influence in shaping the character, morality, and spirituality of future generations<sup>37</sup>. Thus, in Islam, women are recognized as the main actors in educating and fighting for religious values, affirming their noble position in society and in the eyes of God.

Undoubtedly, to be an effective mother in educating her children, women need the right education. Education for women who will become mothers must include various aspects, including

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<sup>36</sup> Nur Aisah Simamora, "Kelahiran Nabi Mengangkat Derajat Wanita: Komparasi Hak-Hak Wanita versi Jahiliyah, Islam, dan Gender," 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Agustin Hanapi, "Peran perempuan dalam islam," *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 1, No. 1 (2015). 15–28.

skills in managing the household, reproductive health, and the ability to educate and guide children. The importance of this education applies not only to men, but also to women. In fact, in Islam, Islam grants all individuals equal educational rights. Therefore, education must be provided equally between men and women. By providing equal education, both men and women can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute positively in society, including in the role of responsible parents in educating children.<sup>38</sup> Thus, an equitable education between men and women benefits not only the individual, but also the family, society, and the nation as a whole.

Surah At-Taubah verse 71, states that believers and believers, i.e., believing men and women, are protectors and defenders of each other. They give each other advice to do good and prevent evil, establish prayers, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is said that Allah will bless them, for indeed Allah is Mighty and Wise. This verse emphasizes that in Islam, both men and women have the same role and responsibility in carrying out religious teachings, as well as supporting and protecting each other in carrying out good and abandoning evil. It reflects the principle of equality and solidarity between men and women in Islam, which emphasizes the importance of cooperation and active involvement of both in the fight for goodness and justice<sup>39</sup>.

If seen from the meaning of the verse above, Islam teaches that the obligation to learn is not only limited to men, but also applies equally to women. The verse explains that both men and women have the same responsibility in doing good, including in seeking knowledge and teaching knowledge to others. The concept

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<sup>38</sup> Qurrotul Ainiyah, "Urgensi pendidikan perempuan dalam menghadapi masyarakat modern.," *Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal* 1, No. 2 (2017). 97–109.

<sup>39</sup> Saihu Saihu, "Pendidikan Sosial yang Terkandung dalam Surat At-Taubah Ayat 71-72," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, No. 1 (2020). 127–48.

of helping in doing good and preventing evil also does not distinguish between men and women. Thus, in Islam, both are expected to actively participate in practicing religious teachings, as well as support and protect each other in fighting for good and abandoning evil. This affirms the principle of equality between men and women in Islam, where both have an equal role in worshipping Allah and contributing to building a better society.

### **The Relevance of Rohana Kudus Thought to Surah At-Taubah Verse 71**

From these two presentations, there is a very strong relevance between Rohana Kudus' thought and the teachings of Islam in Surah At-Taubah verse 71 regarding women's equality and empowerment. Rohana Kudus, as a pioneer of education and women's rights in Indonesia, rejected the patriarchal system that had been limiting women's access to education and social recognition. She emphasized that women have equal rights to education and fair opportunities to contribute to society. This view not only reflects the socio-cultural context of Indonesia, but also has a deep conformity with Islamic principles as reflected in Surah At-Taubah verse 71, which states that believers and believers are protectors and supporters of each other, and both have moral and social obligations in carrying out *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*.

Theoretically, the struggle of the Rohana Kudus can be placed within the framework of Gender Equality Theory developed by experts such as Judith Lorber and Margarete R. Fakih. This theory emphasizes that despite the biological differences between men and women, socially both should be given equal rights especially in terms of access to essential resources such as education, health, and employment<sup>40</sup>. Lorber emphasized that gender is not only a biological issue but also a social construct that must be reformed in order to create justice

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<sup>40</sup> Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013).

and equality. In this context, Rohana Kudus has taken a critical position against patriarchal practices that prevent women from getting a proper education, by demanding that women be treated equally in obtaining knowledge. This approach shows that gender equality is not only a normative demand, but also an attempt to eliminate structural injustices that limit women's potential<sup>41</sup>.

In addition, Rohana Kudus' thinking is also very relevant to feminist theory in the Islamic perspective developed by figures such as Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas. This Islamic feminism seeks to reinterpret the texts of the Qur'an that have been interpreted patriarchally with a critical hermeneutic approach that places women as active subjects, not passive objects. Surah At-Taubah verse 71 explicitly affirms that believing men and women have equal status and responsibility as protectors and defenders of each other in practicing religion and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. It is a manifestation of Islamic teachings that promotes functional and moral equality between the sexes, which is reinforced by the thoughts of the Rohana Kudus in the context of women's education and empowerment. Thus, Islamic feminism not only raises gender equality theologically, but also frees women from social stereotypes that limit their space for movement<sup>42</sup>.

In terms of human development, Rohana Kudus' thinking is very much in line with the Capability Approach popularized by Amartya Sen. Capability Approach emphasizes that the freedom of individuals to live a meaningful life is highly dependent on their abilities, one of which is obtained through access to education. Education is not just an instrument of knowledge transfer, but a means to expand the freedom and choice of individuals in

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<sup>41</sup> Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender*.

<sup>42</sup> Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d.); Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

determining their life path<sup>43</sup>. Rohana Kudus believes that education is the main foundation for women to develop physical and spiritual abilities, become people with noble character, and contribute productively in society. This approach emphasizes that providing access to education to women is not only a matter of rights, but also about capacity building that allows women to become agents of change in society.

Thus, the relationship between Rohana Kudus' thought and Surah At-Taubah verse 71 is not only normative or theological, but also has practical and strategic implications in women's empowerment through education. These two sources affirm the principle of gender equality that must be actualized in the form of equal access to education and fair treatment, so that women can play an active and equal role in social, political, and religious life. This integration shows that the struggle for gender equality and women's education is not in conflict with religious values, but rather strengthened by them. This is an important foothold for the development of women's empowerment policies and programs based on the principles of social and spiritual justice.

To clarify the reader in understanding the relevance of Rohana Kudus Thought with Surah At-Taubah Verse 71, the researcher explains the discussion matrix as follows:

Aspects	Rohana Kudus Thoughts	Surah At-Taubah Verse 71	Similarities / Relevance
Gender Equality	Demand equal rights for women in education and social life.	Affirming that believing men and women are the	Both affirm gender equality and solidarity.

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<sup>43</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

		protectors of each other.	
<b>Women's Education</b>	Education is the key to women's empowerment and eliminating subordination.	Both men and women of faith have the same obligation in carrying out religious teachings.	Education and spiritual responsibility are equal.
<b>Women's Active Role</b>	Women must be active in society and contribute significantly.	Believers and believers advise each other and prevent evil together.	Women are not passive objects, but active subjects in social and religious life.
<b>Empowerment and Dignity</b>	Education enhances women's dignity and abilities.	Affirmation of shared responsibility in carrying out the goodness and obligations of religion.	Women's empowerment is part of a moral and social responsibility.
<b>Elimination of Discrimination</b>	Rejecting restrictions on rights based on gender, especially in education	Equality of responsibility and role between men and women of faith.	Reject discrimination and uphold gender justice



## Conclusion

The philosophy of Rohana Kudus and the teachings of Qur'an Surah At-Taubah verse 71 demonstrate fundamental convergence in affirming gender equality in education. Theologically, this verse underscores equal responsibilities for men and women in fulfilling Islamic tenets including the pursuit of knowledge aligning with Kudus' advocacy that positions education as an instrument for women's empowerment and a form of worship. Theoretical analysis reveals the consistency of Kudus' vision with three frameworks: Gender Equality Theory (equitable educational access), Islamic Feminist Theory (critical engagement with sacred texts), and the Capability Approach (education as expansion of social agency).

Contemporary relevance is evidenced by UNESCO (2024) data indicating significantly increased educational access for Muslim women globally, including Indonesia. To institutionalize Kudus' legacy, integrating gender equality principles grounded in Islamic teachings into religious curricula is imperative to deconstruct patriarchal biases from early education. Concurrently, teacher training in inclusive pedagogy and expansion of affirmative scholarships for women in 3T (Frontier, Outermost, Disadvantaged) regions must be prioritized. The efficacy of these policies hinges on tripartite collaboration among governments, Islamic civil society organizations, and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) to foster collective awareness that empowering women through education embodies the essence of Islamic teachings. Thus, synthesizing Kudus' thought with Qur'anic spirituality can actualize an Indonesian education system that is inclusive, equitable, and divinely aligned.

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