



**WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA:**  
A STUDY OF A STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN ACEH PROVINCE

**Safrul Mulik**

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## FOREWORDS

This book originates from the writer's dissertation. It investigates the issue of women and leadership in Higher Education in Indonesia. It specifically focuses on those women working at the State Islamic University in Aceh province. It examines the state of gender relations in Indonesia and in Aceh province in particular, through an investigation of the conditions of women and their status in both private and public domain, including the Higher Education sector. In the context of Aceh province, the writer also discusses the implementation of Islamic Law, its influence on gender relations, and how it affects and shapes the socio-cultural values of the Acehnese people.

To assist in exploring the issue, the cultural, social and historical context of women's place in Acehnese society and in the Acehnese higher education sector is discussed. How organisational culture influence women's involvement in higher education and what challenges and hindrances do they face in taking up leadership roles in Islamic higher education in Aceh are also scrutinized. As the only region in Indonesia implementing Islamic Law, the writer also aim at analysing the influence of Islamic Law on women's opportunity to assume leadership roles in Islamic higher education in Aceh. Finally, the writer looks at strategies that can be used to facilitate the process of empowering women's participation and promoting women to management roles in state universities in Aceh.

Findings in this study revealed that, in general terms, gender relations in Indonesia were patriarchal in nature.

Despite gender equality/mainstreaming efforts carried out by the government and considerable improvement in the level of education and trainings that women enjoy today, overall, only a small number of women manage to assume senior leadership roles.

Besides the practices of patriarchal culture, and religious values, gender state ideology formulated using a traditional essentialist approach used by the New Order regime to promote its national development agenda, has been considered as one of major factors contributing to gender inequality.

Like other regions in Indonesia, gender relations in Aceh are also patriarchal. The passing of Law No. 18 of 2001 has granted Aceh government to implement Islamic Law. This study confirmed that formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh has strengthened patriarchal gender relations in Aceh. An assessment of the role of *ulama* and that of several institutions established to oversee and implement Islamic Law provide insights into the current development of gender relations in Aceh.

Adelaide, Australia

July 2012

Author,

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. Context and Background

Aceh became the centre of worldwide attention on the morning of the 26 of December, 2004 when the biggest natural disaster in recent history hit killing hundreds of thousands of people. A report from the United Nations (UN) showed that approximately one year after the tsunami, the Indonesian government estimated there were 129,775 deaths, 38,786 missing, and 504,518 tsunami-displaced persons in Aceh Province (United Nations, 2005). Undoubtedly, the tsunami has profoundly impacted and changed all aspects of life in Aceh. Significant public infrastructure and human resources –the backbone of Acehnese governance- were destroyed, and the province was left paralysed. Since then, Aceh has undergone massive redevelopment.

One of the most important sectors affected by the December 2004 tsunami in Aceh was that of education. Besides the damaged infrastructure, the loss of human lives working in the sector has radically destabilized it. While considerable attention was given to stakeholders at primary, secondary, and senior secondary levels, activities at university level did not resume until nearly six months after the disaster. At the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ar-Raniry, for example, administrative and instructional activities completely stopped following the disaster. A number of lecturers, administrative staff and students became victims, while most of the survivors had to deal with the terrible ordeal.

Undoubtedly, the loss of human resource within the

universityandtheimpactithadonitsday-to-daymanagement were profound. Teaching and learning processes were placed on hold as infrastructure and facilities were badly damaged. In addition, lecturers and administrative staff were also psychologically exhausted and drained by personal tragedy as many of them experienced the loss of family members or colleagues. It was not until mid-2005 that the government, international non-government organisations (NGOs), aid organisations, as well as donor countries began to scrutinize the tertiary sector and provided assistance through a number of programs aimed at resurrecting the life of universities in Aceh.

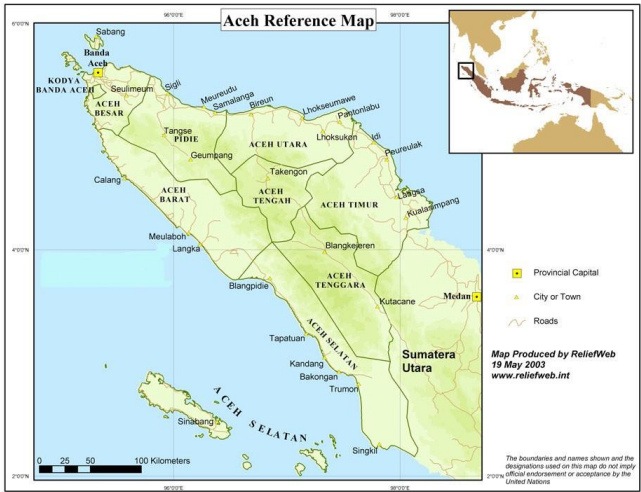
Within this national development framework, in the context of a debilitated Acehnese society, and in the spirit of achieving fairness and equality for all, the involvement of women in all aspects of society is thus crucial. Moreover, exposure to more effective and efficient ways of running organisations, brought about by the presence of numerous international organisations in Aceh, would provide an outstanding opportunity for local government and other institutions. These entities would be able to learn and adopt several of the strategies to manage organisations in difficult and demanding situations. Given this context of massive destruction, the desolation of the higher education sector, the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a principal national development strategy, and the ongoing inequality in opportunity, access, and achievements between Indonesian men and women, it is critical to investigate and explore the issue of gender and leadership in the Acehnese higher education sector.

## II. Demographic Information

Aceh is one of 33 provinces, located in the northernmost part of the archipelago of about 17,000 islands that constitute Indonesia. It covers an area of 5,677,081 hectares, with a population of 4,494,410 million, comprising 2,249,000 males and 2,245,4 females (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). Muslims constitute about 98.5 per cent of the total population while the rest is comprised of Christians (1.3 per cent), Hindus (0.01 per cent), Buddhists (0.17 per cent), and others (0.01 per cent). With 98.5 per cent of the population being Muslim, Islam plays a central role in Aceh. There are several ethnic groups in Aceh: the Acehnese, comprising the largest group who live on the coastal areas to the hinterland; the Gayo; the Aneuk Jame; the Singkel; the Kluet; the Pulau, and the Tamiang.

There are 23 regencies/municipalities, 284 sub-districts, and 6,450 villages in Aceh. The 2011 statistical data shows that there were 4,597,300 people living in Aceh, of which 2,300,400 were male and 2,296,900 were female. Most of the population lives in rural areas (71.88 per cent), while the rest (28.12 per cent) lives in urban areas. ). Aceh's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2011 is 72.16, ranked 17 out of 33 provinces in Indonesia (Statistic, 2011). Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, has the highest HDI at 79.97. The HDI, a combined statistic of life expectancy, education, and income tables, is often used to examine the progress of growth in a country.

Figure 1. Map of Aceh province



Source: <http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/apnet/images/content/field-trips/acehmaplge.jpg>

### The Education Sector

In relation to the education sector, Aceh, like other provinces in Indonesia implements an education system, based on Law Number 2/1989 of the National Education System. This Law was later replaced by Law Number 20/2003, which stipulates that a national education system should ensure equal opportunity, improvement of quality, and relevance and efficiency in management to meet various challenges in the wake of local, national and global changes. Besides providing the basis for, and the principles of, national education, the Law also stipulates the streams, levels, and types of education in Indonesia. There are three

levels of schooling: basic, secondary, and higher education. These are grouped into three streams: formal, non-formal and informal education. Articles 17 and 18 explain the forms of basic and secondary education, while article 20 outlines the five forms of tertiary education institution: academies, polytechnics, specialist colleges (*sekolah tinggi*), institutes, and universities.

Figure 2. Structure of the National Education System in Indonesia.

Age 19 above	Higher Education	Islamic S3 Program	S3 Program	Specialist 2 Program		
		Islamic S2 Program	S2 Program	Specialist 1 Program		
		Islamic S1 Program	S1 Program	D4 Program	D3 Program	D2 Program
Age 16 -18	Middle Education	Islamic Senior Secondary School	General Senior Secondary School			Senior Vocational Secondary School
Age 13 - 15	Basic Education	Islamic Junior Secondary School	Junior Secondary School			
Age 7 - 12	Basic Education	Islamic Primary School	General Primary School			
Age 5 - 6	Pre-School	Islamic Pre-School	Kindergarten			

Adopted from: Ministry of National Education, 2004

From the above figure, it is clear that the national education system is divided into two main streams -the Islamic and secular streams. All levels of the Islamic education stream are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), while the secular education stream is under the administration of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). With regard to the basic education sector, Aceh,

like many other provinces in Indonesia, has experienced a considerable improvement as a result of significant progress in the area of infrastructure and in the quality of basic and secondary education in Aceh.

Table 1. Percentage of education participation rate in Aceh in 2003-2011

Year	Age Group			
	7 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 24
2003	98,05	92,89	72,25	17,12
2004	98,67	94,99	73,31	18,68
2005	Tsunami	Tsunami	Tsunami	Tsunami
2006	98,88	93,83	72,43	20,95
2007	98,95	94,06	72,79	23,60
2008	99,03	94,15	72,73	23,13
2009	99,07	94,31	72,74	22,82
2010	99,19	94,99	73,53	24,11
2011	99,03	94,07	72,41	24,78

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Aceh, 2013. Retrieved from <http://aceh.bps.go.id/?r=data/dinamis&id=6&id2=17#>

The above table indicates that the rate of education participation in Aceh is reasonably high, especially at the primary to senior secondary level, between the ages of 7



and 18. At the higher education level, however, despite the increasing trend over the years, the participation rate is considerably lower than that of the primary and senior secondary levels. One of the reasons for the low participation rate at the higher education level is caused by the low socio-economic status of the majority of Acehnese households. Nevertheless, the participation rate at every level of education does increase over the years.

Since the 2004 tsunami disaster, positive progress can be seen in many areas in Aceh. This is due, in part, to the influx of international NGOs and donor countries involved in the recovery and reconstruction efforts carried out in the province. With regard to women's role, this has broadened people's perspective on the important contributions made by women during this period of rehabilitation and construction. The ability of women, both from local and international backgrounds, working in the tsunami aftermath indicated that they were able to play an important role and contribute to the rehabilitation during a considerably difficult and challenging situation. The difficulties negotiated by these women also demonstrated their capacity to survive and excel in demanding circumstances. In the context of Aceh, the December 2004 tsunami has, in many respects, paved the way for Acehnese women to gain more recognition for their ability and capacity to participate in socio-economic activities.

The part that Acehnese women played as household managers of economic activities that sustained their families in what is described as a war zone aftermath has been nothing short of remarkable. In an odd and unique way, the 2004 tsunami has had a considerable impact on how women

are perceived by the Acehnese and how they contribute to society in general. This, in many ways, is an encouraging sign in the efforts to promote gender equality in Aceh. However, it does not detract from the fact that, in Aceh, the gender equality issue has always been divisive.

Owing to this fact, the writer aims at investigating the issues of gender and management in state Islamic Higher Education, particularly at the State Institute for Islamic Studies Ar-Raniry (IAIN Ar-Raniry), Banda Aceh, Indonesia. It considers the situation of female academics in their attempt to pursue managerial positions at the university, explores factors impacting their efforts to take up these positions, and examines how the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh influences women's position, both at the university and in the community. In this sense this study is interested in questions of gender equality and access to leadership roles for women within Acehnese State Islamic Universities.

Additionally, factors that may influence women's involvement in higher education management, their professional development and their opportunity to assume senior leadership positions are also scrutinized. It will review the current situation and practices in relation to organisational culture at the university, will develop a comprehensive insight into the elements that shape women's professional development and their involvement in the management of higher education in Indonesia. Therefore, to analyse competing powers in relation to gender and leadership issues at IAIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia, it is important to examine how organisational culture influence women's involvement in Islamic higher education

and look at challenges and hindrances that women face in taking up leadership roles in Islamic higher education in Aceh. In the context of Aceh, it is equally important to investigate how the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh affect women's involvement in taking up leadership roles in Islamic higher education, and what strategy can be used to facilitate the process of empowering women and promoting their participation in management roles in state universities in Aceh.

To investigate the above questions, qualitative research was used. 15 respondents consisting of 9 female and 6 male respondents were involved in this study. All respondents are lecturers and they were chosen based on their positions at the institute as well as their expertise in the area of investigation. Social construction theory was employed as a tool to analyse gender relations in the higher education sector in Aceh. The use of this theory provided the greatest change in the way gender relations were constructed as these particular relations were produced by human interaction and social organisations. Through the adoption of a gender relations approach to understanding this issue, it becomes apparent that there are a number of factors influencing women's participation in university management and leadership. These influences can sometimes be contradictory, while others support the general tenor of gender mainstreaming. Hence, this study starts with a historical review of women's role and position in Aceh and the social, cultural and religious values of Acehnese society. From this point, the study extends to consider the structural and cultural context of gender and the management of higher education.



# GENDER RELATIONS IN INDONESIA

## I. Introduction

As the issue of women and leadership is closely related to gender relations, it is important to look at gender theory, especially in the context of developing Muslim countries like Indonesia. In the context of Indonesia, it is equally important to analyse factors that lead to the concept of state gender ideology which has a considerable impacts on how gender relations is perceived by society. As such, this chapter addresses gender politics. Just how state gender ideology was integrated into national development programs and the ramifications this has had upon gender relations in Indonesia are discussed. A discussion of the perception of the majority of Indonesian Muslims towards feminism and gender equality is also presented to give a comprehensive look at the resistance towards feminism.

This chapter also discusses the state of gender relation in Aceh. Historical account of Islamic influence in Aceh, political contestation between Aceh and central government, and how it leads to the formalization of Islamic Law form the discussion. This historical background is important as it gives an insight on how religious values play a role in shaping Acehnese perception on gender. It shows how religious values influence people's world view on division of labour and its implication towards work family relation.

## II. Gender Theory: A Brief Overview

When the word gender is mentioned, many people immediately relate it to the biological difference between males and females (sex). In everyday life, gender is usually taken for granted, in that we instantly recognize a person either as a man or women (Connell, 2002, p. 3). Much of people's behaviour revolves around this distinction. While sex is used to identify physiological difference, gender has an entirely different meaning. Just as sex is a theoretical way of describing human physiological difference, gender relates to the theory of men and women's cultural difference. Different ideas about gender have varying levels of support, or currency, in a society.

The word gender has several definitions. According to Connell, in its most common usage, the term 'gender' means "the cultural difference of women from men, based on the biological division between women and men" (Connell, 2002, p. 8). Holmes develops a technical understanding of gender explaining that "gender discusses both women and men and how they fit in the society, as well as describes the ideas and practices that constitute feminity and masculinity" (2009, p. 18). It is also suggested by Connell that "gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes" (2002, p. 10).

According to Holmes, "the concept of gender gained popularity among sociologists in the 1970s" (2007, p. 18). Historically, sociology has been preoccupied with class relations, that is, the ways in which social groups are stratified through economic relations. Gender theory

however, “developed by feminist scholars, highlights the way gender creates relations of inequality between men and women”(Anne Witz, 1992, p. 5). Indeed, “classical sociologists rarely challenged the status quo of gender relations” (Holmes, 2007, p. 3). Holmes suggests that “the work of Weber, for example, viewed ‘sex roles’ as naturally determined and women’s dependent social position as fundamentally determined by males’ physical and intellectual dominance” (2007, p. 3).

Functionalist sociology adopts a sex-role perspective on gender. Functionalism in sociology argues that the existence of sex role differences helps to promote social stability (Holmes, 2007). The argument is that women and men complement each other in various tasks in everyday life. Gender role is therefore the collection of connected ways of acting that are expected of women and men in certain circumstances (Holmes, 2007). Ely and Meyerson (2000, p. 105) state that: “Sex-role socialization produces individual differences in attitudes and behaviours between men and women, which have rendered women less skilled than men to compete in the world of business”. According to Connell (1995), when a society perceives sex as biologically determined, then room for change in relation to gender equality is not likely to happen. Sex-role theory relies upon biologically foundational notions of sex, upon which culturally produced ideas of gender are created. Sex-role understandings of sex and gender are a dominant way of understanding sex and gender across the world.

Psychology relies heavily upon liberal individualist and socially naïve ideas about social life: sex role theory is the

principal way of understanding gender in this discipline. For example, Chrisler argues that:

social learning theory has often been used to explain the development of gender roles and gender-typed references. The theory posits that children learn about gender by watching how other behave (i.e., by observational learning or modeling), that children are rewarded by others when they behave according to gendered expectations, and that children are punished by others when they do not (i.e., reinforcement contingencies are applied) (2004, p. 86).

More recently, sociological works on gender take a different approach. Gender is seen as a socially constructed phenomenon. Social constructionism acknowledges that men and women are actively involved in constructing their own gendered identities. Ely and Meyerson regard gender as:

a complex social process enacted across a range of organisational phenomena, from formal policies and practices to informal patterns of everyday interaction, which appear to be gender-neutral on their face, yet reflect and maintain a gendered order in which men and various forms of masculinity predominate (2000, p. 590).

Gender relations situate gender roles in terms of behaviours that are expected of men and women in institutional situations (such as family, work, public, recreational, and other settings), based on their gender. Gender roles are upheld by ideologies (systems of beliefs) that justify the appropriateness of these behaviours (Calasanti, 2006). Primary categories of a person's perception, including the sex category, function as cultural frames for coordinating



behaviour by associating category membership with widely shared cultural beliefs about how people in one category are likely to behave compared to those in a contrasting category. These cultural beliefs are shared stereotypes (Ridgeway, 2009). Ridgeway elaborates: "Status beliefs are also shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups such as those based on gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation" (2001, p. 637). Basow explains that stereotypes are strongly held overgeneralizations about people in a designated social category which tend to be universally shared within a given society and are learned as part of growing up in that society (1986). In a similar tone, Ridgeway and Correll claim that "stereotypes are cultural knowledge which act as the rule for coordinating public behaviour on the basis of gender" (2004, p. 511).

Another dominant way of understanding sex and gender is through biologically essentialist notions of sex and gender (Holmes, 2007). Sex and gender are conflated, seen as the same phenomenon, and are either viewed as heavenly ordained in which men or women have been assigned certain types of work, or biologically determined, where men and women's roles in society are determined by their physiological capacity. Religious and patriarchal movements often use these ideas of sex and gender as they inhibit progressive change and maintain men's dominance, which is seen to be the natural order. Ridgeway suggests that "people depend on social relations with others to attain most of what they want and need in life, and undoubtedly, one must be able to find ways to coordinate his/her behaviours with that of other's in order to get a valued goal" (2009, p. 147). According to

Calasanti, as a concept:

gender relations emphasizes that gender serves as a social organizing principle and that men and women gain identities and power in relation to one another. Because they result from social interaction, gender relations are dynamic. What is considered masculine and feminine varies by culture, by time, and across groups within cultures” (2006, p. 593).

She also highlights that:

gender relations are systematic, embedded in patterns of behaviour such that they are taken for granted as simply the way things (i.e., families, jobs) work or the way things are. Because men’s privileges are intimately tied to women’s disadvantages, the situation of one group cannot be understood without at least implicit reference to the position of the other (2006, p. 593).

In other words, it could be said that existing gender relations norms are often taken for granted. This is also true in the case of Indonesia. Nugroho suggested that “gender is behavioural differences between men and women that are socially and culturally constructed through a long process” (2006, p. 32). In Indonesia, the process shaping gender norms in society are also moulded by the government’s vested interests. The government has, through its gender politics, in the effort to implement national development priorities, managed to find ways to utilize long standing patriarchal gender norms in society to serve its purpose.

### **III. Gender Issues in Indonesia: Western Propaganda?**

To the majority of Indonesian people, both women and men, gender relations are thought of as natural consequences of being male or female. Men and women have their own gender norms (Kara, 2004). Understandably, gender relations are not seen as socially constructed phenomena. Although this view on gender relation does not represent the whole population, nevertheless, it is an overwhelming view held by Indonesian. In the case of Indonesia, the term gender or gender relation is often misunderstood. It often thought of as negative term to explain women's challenge towards men's privileges and access to and control over power and resources. Not surprisingly, to majority of Indonesian people, gender equality agenda, which is a concept of having equal rights and opportunities between men and women in all aspect of life, is thought of as part of feminism movement to challenge existing gender norms, local cultures, and religious values. Gender equality is thought of as part of the feminist movement that has its origins in the West. It is seen as a western concept that must be carefully scrutinized (Sadli, 2002). While the concept of gender equality has positives impacts on the development of society in general, "the increase in the influence of Western institutions, values, beliefs, and ideologies, argued by many have generally worked to undermine traditional values, beliefs, and political institutions, was the consequence of colonization" (Moten, 2005, p. 233). According to Blackburn, western ideas which came into Indonesia through the colonial system brought by the Dutch have continued to be influential in introducing modern ideas (2008).

For many third world developing countries, such as Indonesia, development and modernity are often seen as the impact of colonization - of the West's supremacy. One of the western ideas that is often embedded in the development process is the issue of gender equality which, in Indonesia, has always been a divisive one. Sadli, one of the most well-known women's right advocates in Indonesia, asserts that there has always been a suspicious attitude towards the idea of gender equality and feminism from both women and men scholars in Indonesia since the early 1990s (2002). When it comes to gender equality, especially in the context of Indonesia, it is almost always synonymous with feminism, which has a negative connotation for the majority of Indonesians. Sadli points out that:

the term 'feminism' and even 'gender' are still questioned by the majority of Indonesians. They are considered by many to be non-indigenous concepts that are irrelevant to Indonesian values. Certain assumptions remain common: feminism is a Western or northern concept; it is anti-men; it perceives men to be the source of gender inequity; it promotes the acceptance of lesbianism and so forth (2002, pp. 80-81).

Understandably, in what is considered a considerably strong patriarchal society, even until now, "feminism in Indonesia is still regarded as a representation of a Western challenge to traditional Indonesian values, which is expressed both inside and outside university"(Sadli & Porter, 1999, p. 447). For that reason, women's organisations and activists in Indonesia will not identify themselves as feminists or use the

word 'feminism' because of its connotations and history. On this note, Doorn-Harder asserts that:

Many Indonesians and women of the older generation are not comfortable being called feminists- it calls up images of western supremacy, individualism, and selfishness. They believe that western feminism leads to immoral behaviour such as free sex, that it wants to subdue men to give women power, and that it causes breakdown of the nuclear family, which eventually leads to a total corrosion of society” (2006, pp. 36-37).

The above illustration is a generally accepted connotation of feminism among Indonesians since the early years of the 1990s. This is why, according to Sadli, despite “the long and impressive history of the Indonesian women’s movement in enhancing women’s role and status, it is hardly ever associated with feminism or feminists, either by the women themselves or by the public in general” (2002, p. 87). Using this term in advocating gender equality issues in Indonesia almost always results in sinister attitudes and responses. This is not to say that women’s right activists and feminists do not exist in Indonesia. There are numerous women’s organizations working to improve women’s roles and status in Indonesia. However, in carrying out their work to improve the gender equality agenda, these activists and organizations do not use the term feminist for the reasons mentioned.

One of the explanations for the negative perception towards feminism is the fact that the majority of Indonesians do not have a comprehensive understanding of feminist movements. This is because Indonesia is exposed to certain

types of feminist movements such as liberal and lesbian feminism that are against Indonesian values. Another reason for the resistance towards gender equality issues can then be contributed to the early propaganda of the liberal feminist movement and ideology. One of the features of the early feminist movement is that “feminism, in many parts of the world, has developed as a reaction to traditional structures and sources of authority, including those related to religion” (Kirmani & Phillips, 2011, p. 87).

Certainly in the case of Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, where patriarchal cultures and religious values have been ingrained in daily life, the idea of gender equality has not only been seen as challenging men’s privileges, but also questioning the religious interpretation of men and women’s role. In most contemporary Muslim societies such as Indonesia, “adopting feminism is regarded as betraying their religious, political and nationalist identities” (Othman, 2006, p. 339). In the case of Indonesia, feminism, which, to most people means promoting gender equality and women empowerment in all aspect of life, has in many ways threatened and challenged cultural and religious values in the society. As such it has been fiercely rejected by the majority of the people, both men and women.

Patriarchal culture, which is considered the driving force behind men’s superiority over women in both public and private domains as well as in religious beliefs, has been the long standing notion of gender relation in Indonesia. It has also provided religious legitimacy regarding the status and roles of women and men by emphasizing the value of women’s obedience to their spouse. Kirmani

and Philips, commenting on the contention between religious traditions and the gender movement in the Muslim world, assert that:

'feminism' has been viewed as being hostile towards religion by both feminists and non-feminists. This is due to the fact that women's movements have often questioned religious traditions, beliefs and institutions as part of their struggles for gender equality. Women's movements frequently challenge religious precepts and traditional structures of authority that they see as undermining gender equality and thus face opposition by religious groups (2011, p. 89).

Religious traditions and traditional social structures within society have been regarded as factors that preserve the patriarchal gender order, giving men more opportunities and greater access to resources. As a result, any movement aiming at changing these rigid gender orders would face considerable resistance. Not surprisingly, in the context of Indonesia, people still consider any gender equality agenda as a threat to cultural and religious values. Despite this attitude, unlike other part of Muslim worlds in East Asia and Middle East, Islam in Indonesia is known for its moderateness. According to Wright and Tellei (1993, p. 26):

Islam, as practiced by many Indonesians, is tempered by vestiges of Hinduism and animism, which have had a moderating effect on attitudes towards women's presence in the public sphere. Fundamentalism has not had the impact it has had in other parts of the world, and the government, interested in maintaining this status quo, attempts to balance Islam with the other religions that are

also part of Indonesian culture.

Apart from religious interpretation and socio-cultural values, the fact that the gender movement faces considerable resistance in Indonesia is partly caused by the lack of understanding of the end goals of this movement, especially when the term feminism comes into play. The majority of people would immediately relate it to the effort to break and diminish existing socio-cultural and religious values by bringing progressive and modern values, contradicting hundreds of year old socio-cultural values that have been intertwined in day-to-day gender norms. Not surprisingly, many women themselves who have not grasped the full notion of the gender movement have rejected the notion of feminism in Indonesia (Nathan & Kamali, 2006). One of the reasons for the resistance towards the gender movement is the notion of gender relations in Indonesia being different than those of the West. Wazir, in analyzing gender construction in Southeast Asian countries, reiterates that the:

premise of unequal power generating gender hierarchies is not necessarily relevant in non-Western civilizations in Southeast Asia, which derive a theory of knowledge from concepts and values of bilateralism: the need to maintain social relationships through rules of complementarity and similarity rather than hierarchy and opposition, and the need to reduce imbalances in power through mutual responsibility and cooperation rather than oppression and force (1995, p. 16).

In a similar vein, Devasahayam, examining power relations between men and women in Southeast Asian



countries, asserts that there is a degree of flexibility within society concerning gender relations in these countries “that are of significance in shaping and directing social behaviour” (2009, p. 3). This is perhaps why the Western concept of feminism does not concur with the social reality of a contemporary Muslim society like Indonesia’s. From the above quotation, it could be concluded that the general perception of gender relations in Southeast Asian countries emphasizes the essentialist approach, which is translated into the principle of harmony where men and women are supposed to complement each other. This, often, reflects in the practices of patriarchy within social structures such as the households and the work place for example.

Conversely, the negative perception towards feminism in many developing countries, including Indonesia, is a direct result of the West’s cultural invasion and is seen as threatening to local culture and religious values. In part, this negative attitude, as mentioned earlier, can be attributed to a lack of understanding of the various feminist movements. It is important to note that feminism movements, despite some incompatibility with the construction of gender relations in Southeast Asian countries including Indonesia, have proven to have a positive influence on the effort to improve women’s roles and status. This can be seen in the changing attitudes of people in Indonesia towards gender relations, which is partly caused by an increasing awareness of gender equality efforts propagated by feminists and women’s right activists.

In Indonesia, although the concept of feminism had not been formally labeled and recognized in the early post-independence, it is not entirely new. The involvement of the women’s movement in the struggle for independence, as

well as progressive ideas of Kartini on the status of women found in her letters, for example, can be argued as evidence of early gender equality discourse in Indonesia. At the time she passed away, on 17 September 1904 (Arbaningsih, 2005, p. 1), Kartini's ideas about improving the conditions of women were considered controversial. She wrote about the need to change the gender division of labour and ideologies of womanhood, and the need to educate women.

During Sukarno's era (1945-1965) the term feminism was not known. The concept of feminism itself came to Indonesia in the late 1980s, while Suharto was in power (1966-1998). This period was also known as the New Order regime. During the New Order regime, "feminism was regarded as Western phenomenon and as such, it was dismissed along with liberalism and other 'ism' as subversive and irrelevant to Indonesian culture, making it difficult for people to embrace the term" (Blackburn, 2004, p. 14). In a similar manner, Marching contends that

during the New Order period, considered to have been an era of repression, clear separation between Indonesian and foreign identities was emphasized, and one of the duties of Indonesians was to strain foreign culture, to exclude what was not suitable for the country (2007, p. 25).

Nevertheless, the government worked on gender equality efforts to improve women's status. During the New Order regime, women's involvement in the Indonesian development process was accommodated by the government. Their involvement and contributions, however, were tailored to accommodate the government's interests. Many women's

organisation established during the New Order period had been infiltrated with state gender ideology, putting “national interest” at the fore front of their goals. Women organizations such as *Darma Wanita* and *Darma Pertiwi* are some of government-sponsored organisations established to answer women’s issues and to help them take part in the national development process. Numerous national development programs were also put in place to accommodate women’s involvement in nation building efforts, which at the same time answered the demand from women for a greater role in the social domain.

Understandably, under the New Order regime, any deviation from what is expected of women and men in the name of national interest would be seen as a threat. Feminism is definitely one of them. It is not compatible with Indonesian culture and it questions religious values held by the majority of Indonesian people. And for Indonesia, which had been colonized by the Dutch for three and a half centuries, portraying feminism as Western propaganda and using cultural and religious sentiments would be the best means to defer any ideas on gender equality. This mainstream opinion of feminism has been one of the factors influencing the way Indonesia perceives gender relations. In a society where practices of patriarchal culture and religious values have enormous impacts on people’s way of life, any initiative that questions established norms would be challenged. As a result, in Indonesia, gender inequality persists.

Discourses on gender equality have always been one of the most intriguing issues. It is intriguing because the question of how women can play a more substantial role both in

domestic and public domains within a patriarchy society like Indonesia is usually divisive. Again, the resistance towards the gender equality agenda in Indonesia is partly caused by the lack of understanding of the cause, and the fact that most Indonesians consider the gender equality agenda as the being related to the goals of feminism. What makes this worse is that the government has accentuated mainstream opinion on how Indonesians perceive gender relations through its gender ideology. The following section discusses gender politics in Indonesia and how these shape people's perception on gender relations.

#### **IV. Gender Politics in Indonesia**

As in many other developing countries, the governments' vested interests in improving and advancing the state of the economy are formulated in state policies. In the context of Indonesia, one of the immediate problems that had to be addressed to improve the country's economy in the early 1970s, was the rate of population. As a matter of fact, following the 1967 World Population Declaration which recognized the importance of population in improving people's welfare, the New Order government, through Presidential Decree Number 8, 1970, established the BKKBN (Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional, National Family Planning Coordination Agency) in 1970 to control the rate of population and improve family welfare throughout the country. In doing so, the BKKBN formulated the Keluarga Berencana (National Family Planning) program. According to many women's right activist and feminists, this national program, despite its intention to improve women's health, has restricted the roles

and status of women in society to the domestic domain. This governance on gender, also referred to as gender politics, has been an important and divisive issue in Indonesia.

The importance of gender politics in national development is evident when the government set out the modelling of women's role and duties in the GBHN (Broad Guidelines on State Policy). This is what many refer to as state gender ideology. According to Nugroho, "state gender ideology refers to the assumption about gender on which the state acts and the way it attempts to influence the construction of gender in society" (2008, p. 9). Under the New Order regime which came to power in 1965, state gender ideology, which has its roots in essentialism and bases its argument on the premise that individuals, male and female, have ideal natures which define their characteristics, became hegemony, a strong dominant feature.

Formulating its policy around strong patriarchal values, the character of state gender ideology in Indonesia is designed to both limit the role and rights of women while at the same time contribute to national development initiatives. The government was able to do this by creating community-based initiatives designed to support family welfare. This included initiatives such as Keluarga Berencana (Family Planning), PosYandu (Integrated Health Post) and PKK (Family Welfare Movement), while also simultaneously supporting the greater purpose of improving the country's economy.

The study conducted by Suryakusuma(1987) and Robinson (2009) indicates that in its effort to carry out national development programs the New Order government

formulated specific roles for women, as wives who supported their husbands and as mothers who took care of the next generation, restricting women from equal opportunity and from getting involved in the public domain. In other words, state gender ideology in Indonesia was created to serve the national interest at the expense of women's capacity to develop. With regard to women in Indonesia, Ford and Parker (2008, p. 9) assert that:

The utterly non-feminist Indonesian state has long acknowledged that women have both productive and reproductive roles to play, as suggested by the term '*peranganda*', or double role, adopted by the New Order government to prescribe women's proper function in society.

State gender ideology undoubtedly has its roots in patriarchal values. It was invented by the New Order regime which utilized existing gender norms and religious values to facilitate national development efforts through its exploitation of those norms. The government, opposing the idea of western feminism, created and institutionalized an Indonesian concept of gender norms for Indonesian women. This was a concept created to also serve the patriarchal nature of Indonesian society and the government's interests. State gender ideology was therefore aimed at mobilizing men and women to support national development programs in an attempt to improve the country's economic and political situation. As mentioned earlier, a number of national development programs were formulated that served these purposes, such as the National Family Planning

(Keluarga Berencana - KB), Family Welfare Movement (PKK), and the Community Health Service (Pos Pelayanan Terpadu - PosYandu) programs, three of the largest social structures in Indonesia which have significantly influenced Indonesian women. All these programs were designed to improve women's welfare, and regulate women's reproductive role to control the population, which is a significant factor in improving the country's economy. In other words, gender politics in the form of state policies and development agenda are geared towards meeting the government's agenda and this has been the key feature of the 32 year old New Order regime.

With the support of the state-sponsored Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) established on 26 July 1975 in Jakarta, the government was able to effectively disseminate the advantages that family planning program has had on family and society. Despite cultural and religious criticism in the early phase of its implementation and with the MUI's blessing, the family planning program in Indonesia has been very successful. The fact that it has reduced the levels of maternal and child mortality has convinced young women to use contraceptives. The family planning program also promotes gender equality and reduces poverty. With the ability to control and manage the number of family members, it is likely that families will be able to invest in their children's education, training and employment. This will definitely give family members a better chance of finding employment and contributing to household income.

While state gender ideology was not evident in the period immediately after independence and during the New Order

regime, “a restrictive and fairly consistent gender ideology was adopted into governmental system” (Nugroho, 2008, p. 9). As economic recovery was one of the most important priorities in the national development framework, Suharto was keen to include women in his national development scheme. Under the New Order government, “*pembangunan*” (development) was a ‘dominating keyword’ within its economic policy, with implications of reconstruction and modernization, social engineering and the utilization of state power for order and stability” (van Langenberg, 1986, p. 19). As part of this campaign, one of the measures that the New Order regime utilized in its effort to create social stability and to improve the country’s economy, was to ensure that “women played a role in development plans and reducing birth-rate” (Blackburn, 2004, p. 25).

Through a number of national programs and legal products, the New Order regime has enabled women to take part in national development efforts. According to Robinson, “Suharto’s New Order exercised gendered power through policies such as family planning and state control of women’s organisations in a familial model that registered male authority” (2009, p. 68). The main characteristic of Suharto’s New Order gender ideology can be partly analysed in Article 31 of Law no. 1 year 1974, which states that women’s status is as housewife and mother, and men’s status is as head of the family (Blackburn, 2004; Hadiz & Eddyono, 2005). As previously argued, this gender politics is based on an essentialist approach to gender. The government’s attempt to formalize women’s role within the national development agenda, based on women’s biological and reproductive



arena, indicates the government's essentialist approach. "In a manner typical of authoritarian regimes, the New Order promoted a normative vision of women's primary role as wife and mother, taking her place in a family in which the husband wielded patriarchal authority" (Robinson, 2009, p. 5). Undoubtedly, the essentialist understanding to gender relations, as reflected in a number of state policies, has dominated gender politics in Indonesia, especially during Suharto's presidency. What this means is that:

women's social participation and political voice has been severely restricted through state-sponsored practices organized around a dominant trope of woman as wife and mother and the notion of women's social roles being based on their biological nature, expressed through the concept of *kodratwanita* (Robinson, 2009, p. 10).

*Kodratwanita* is a term used by the New Order regime to refer to women's destiny, God's given role, as mother and wife. According to Suryakusuma(1987), this was the main characteristic of Suharto's New Order gender ideology which put emphasis on men's superiority in social and family life. The systematic efforts from the state to institutionalize state gender ideology for the cause of national development have undoubtedly resulted in gendered institutions in Indonesia. It has been acknowledged by women activists and women's organisations that the institutionalization of gender biased policies and laws has resulted in marginalization, exploitation, subordination as well as the privatization of violence on women. The education sector is no different, and despite efforts that have been made to resolve the issue of

gender biased policies, little has changed. Blackburn (2004, p. 53) argues that:

gendered content of educational policy was not subject to critical scrutiny, partly because of the priority given to making schooling more accessible for girls, partly because of the New Order Government's well-known suppression of criticism and partly because of the gender bias built into the education system reflects conservative values endemic in Indonesian society.

Hafid and Eddyono explain that institutionalization of gender biased values has resulted in women's marginalization in the economy and politics, subordination, and violence privatization towards women (2005). In the field of education, talking about the gender biased curriculum and how it preserves values of patriarchal culture, Hidayati argues that:

the inequalities can mainly be found in the most of student's curriculum in early education to college that builds student's conceptions of that men roles are much more primarily significant than women, and of that public field is men's while domestic field is women's (2009, p. 159).

She even goes further by stating that "the internalization of patriarchal culture is not something done unintentionally but it is structurally planned by the authority" (Hidayati, 2009, p. 160). Her judgment on the institutionalization of state gender ideology during the New Order regime was not unfounded. To help achieve successful national development

programs, Suharto was keen to formulate and utilize women's potential in national interests, while at the same time creating social, economic, and political stability. The term *Pembangunan* (development) has been a major feature of the New Order government, and it was at the forefront of the national priority.

While women's organisations have been included in national development efforts, often this measure resulted in more restrictions for women's organisation, which are the features of women's movements in Indonesia (Blackburn, 2004, 2010). The New Order regime, has systematically institutionalized state gender ideology through the notion of *ibuisism* which "involved the propagation by the state of the nuclear family norm in which women conform to the Western middle-class housewife role and selflessly served their husbands, family, and the state" (Blackburn, 2004, p. 25). Suryakusuma coined the term "state of *ibuisism*" to explain the authoritarian approach used by the New Order regime and the way it integrate women's role in development process (1987).

The concept of *kodrat*, or natural destiny for men and women, projecting men as primary income earners- and women as child-rearers and housewives, is used by the government to propagate its development agenda (Blackburn, 2004). Wives of civil servants in Indonesia, for example, will automatically be members of *Dharma Wanita*, Women's Duty, a government-sponsored organisation, which was established to mobilize women to support the work of their husbands. Through this organisation, established in 1974, the government managed to control civil servants with

women as its medium (Hadiz & Eddyono, 2005). Buchori and Soenarto go even further in analysing the strategic role of *Dharma Wanita* during Suharto's era. They argue that the wives of civil servants played a significant role in advancing their husband's career in that their active involvement in government sponsored women's organisation, such as *Dharma Wanita*, was actually one aspect of the civil servants' performance evaluation, contributing to their career development (2000). Even though women's involvement was recognized in the national development process, according to Robinson, at the same time:

the regime placed limits on the possibilities for women's social participation and political agency through state sponsored practices organized around a dominant trope of women as wife and mother and the notion of women's social roles being based on their biological nature (2009, p. 10).

Looking at existing social structures, there is no doubt that the New Order's concept of women's empowerment and involvement in national development efforts were designed around existing patriarchal values.

As mentioned earlier, the New Order's state gender ideology was considered a huge success as it contributed to highly successful national programs such as Family Planning, PKK (Family Welfare Guidance) and PosYandu (Coordinated Health Service). PosYandu is a national program aimed at improving the health of women and children through locally organized health services at village level. This program was extremely successful in keeping down the rate of birth which

was needed to boost economy recovery, and in doing so relied on women to run its services. To be able to successfully improve the country's economy and development programs, the government had a vested interest in controlling the population. Commenting on the success of the PKK, Robinson asserts that

one of the most important functions of PKK was mobilizing women to participate in maternal and child health programmes, in particular encouraging them to pay regular visits to integrated health-service stations for mothers and children (pos pelayanan terpadu, or posyandu). It has won many accolades, in particular from UNICEF, which saw this as a model to be emulated in other poor countries (2009, p. 75).

Blackburn, observing the New Order's efforts in strengthening its gender ideology, affirms that the, "PKK (Family Welfare Guidance) program, managed under the Minister of Internal Affairs, was the means by which the state mobilized ordinary women behind its development efforts, obliging them to carry out tasks in a voluntary capacity" (Blackburn, 2004, pp. 25-26). This illustration shows the extent of the state-developed mechanisms in securing and determining the direction of national development. Another state-sponsored program aiming at controlling the birth rate is the National Family Planning program, which emphasizes the importance and benefits of having a small family with two children regardless of their sex. This has been the principal element of the New Order's success story.

Those studying gender relations in Indonesia agree that

the state gender ideology, reflected in numerous government policies and laws, came at the expense of women's position in society (Blackburn, 2004; Hadiz & Eddyono, 2005; Noerdin, Ramdan, Yuningsih, & Aripurnami, 2005). However, at the same time, as has been the case of the National Family Planning program, state gender ideology has been extremely instrumental in keeping the number of population down, improving school participation rates and health services, as well as strengthening the country's economy. What is striking about the way the New Order regime managed to mainstream its gender ideology in both public and private institutions was, perhaps, the subtleness of its implementation at the grass roots level. It could be argued that the New Order regime's success in getting its gender ideology in place was largely due to its ability to use existing socio-cultural structures and values to its advantage. For example, the regime was able to tap into the patriarchal nature of religious sentiments and values which often contribute to gender stereotypes, preserving the essentialist approach to gender relations where women are associated with nurturing the future generation and supporting their husbands' career progression. Emphases on the significance of adhering to religious authority, and the importance of obedience and harmonious relations within family have been utilized as guidance to ensure compliance when the implementation phase took place. It could even be said that the New Order's gender ideology which was created in conformity with the existing patriarchal culture in society, has in fact strengthened gender relations values held by most Indonesians. This was largely due to the success of its national initiatives.

Apart from the above example, another reason may also be that the government was able to promulgate and exploit the sense of nationalism in improving the country's economy. In other words, by participating in the family planning program, for example, women are contributing to the success of the national development initiative and, in doing so they are also improving their family's welfare and, hence, quality of life. To the majority of Indonesian women, despite the restriction of women's role and status, the government's initiatives are seen as appealing solutions for women (i.e. improving their health and welfare) and their families. This was perhaps one of the reasons why most people would concur with the idea and would not recognize and realize the severity it may cause to women's development. On the contrary, to most Indonesians apart from a few women's right advocates, state gender ideology was seen as a means of liberating women by giving them the responsibilities to support their spouses and to help bring up the country's next generation. It is not an exaggeration to say that the influence of state gender ideology in Indonesia has been phenomenal. It has had a strong impact as it was formulated by integrating existing patriarchal values that have been held by people for many years.

## **V. Gender Relations in Aceh**

When talking about gender relations in Aceh, one cannot but look at the early history of socio-cultural assimilation when Islam first appeared in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This is because Islam as a religion is considered as one of the most important aspects influencing the Acehnese's world view, including that

of gender relations. Robinson asserts that “the Acehnese, living on the nether tip of Sumatra, have long had a sense of themselves as a strongly Islamic people, and were the first in the archipelago to be converted” (2009, p. 24). Hundreds of years of socio-cultural assimilation transforming Aceh, to what was then known as the biggest Islamic Kingdom in the archipelago, has shown that Islam has shaped the identity of the Acehnese. The Acehnese’s strong identification with Islam is reflected in the fact that it became “an important power in the Malacca Straits in the sixteenth century, and became a center of Islamic learning and trade in the archipelago” (Tinker, 2004, p. 247).

Historical accounts of the status of women in Aceh and gender relations in its society before the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been well documented. During the heyday of the Aceh Islamic kingdom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, women had a considerably high status in society: “Various accounts suggest that throughout the pre-colonial history of Aceh, women had high social status, in both public and private spaces. Aceh’s cultural tradition places women in respected positions in the family structure and in the public domain” (Afrianty, 2010, p. 119). Siegel’s anthropological work on women in Aceh indicates that women have a unique privilege in their households in that they have the authority to express their opinion and take part in decision-making process (2000). In a similar vein, Rahim asserts that:

Southeast Asia’s long tradition of relatively egalitarian gender relations markedly differentiates the region from the Arab world. In contrast to the generally subordinate status of Arab women particularly in pre-Islamic times,



Southeast Asian women have traditionally enjoyed relatively high social status and access to public space (2002, p. 77).

The fact that the Aceh Islamic kingdom was ruled by a Queen, Sultana Taj al-'Alam al-Din Shah (1641-1675), the daughter of Sultan Iskandar Muda, followed by three female rulers (Sri Sultan Nur al-'alam Nakiyat al-Din Shah, from 1675 to 1678; Sultana Inayat Shah Zakiyat al-Din Shah from 1678 to 1688; and Sultana Kamalat Shah from 1688-1699) (Razavi & Miller, 1995, pp. 41-42) indicates that the state of gender relation norms in Acehese society at the time was tolerant.

Acehnese women's high status in society during this period can also be observed in the *Hadith Maja* (local wisdom) stating that *HukombakSyiah Kuala, QanunbakPutroePhang*. *HukombakSyiah Kuala* means that executive matters during the Islamic kingdom of Aceh were in the hands of Syiah Kuala (the Sultan), and *QanunbakPutroePhang* means that legal matters were in the hands of *PutroPhang*, the wife of the Sultan. This shows that woman has a great deal of authority in social affairs during this period. Acehese matrifocal practices constitute more evidence of women's identity and power in the province. Siegel's research on kinship systems in Aceh gives additional insight into power relations in Acehese families. There is even an idiomatic expression for wife, *njangporumoh*, the one who owns the house. Siegel's account of matrifocal practice in Aceh in the 1960s shows that women's authority and decision-making power in their household stems from their owning of the house

Women acquire a house, or at least a portion of one, at the time of their marriage. The house is a gift from the woman's parents. From marriage until the birth of the first child, or sometimes for a period of three to four years depending on prior arrangements, a bride does not legally own the house. It still belongs to her parents, and during this period she is fully supported by them (Siegel, 2000, pp. 51-52).

In a similar vein, Grant and Tancred argue that

From traditional aristocratic kingdoms to post-independent, post-social revolution Aceh, we continue to find powerful women who played important roles in the nationalist struggle...At the village level, we find that women occupy an equally powerful position: for example, the Acehnese word for 'wife' is not 'house-wife' but '*porumoh*'...meaning 'owner of the house'(Grant & Tancred, 1992, p. 59).

The above quotations clearly show the dynamics of gender relations in the 1950s-1960's when women had a considerably high social status as the result of matrifocal practices in Acehnese society. Unlike those practices of patriarchal culture that occurs in today's contemporary Acehnese society, moderate and progressive gender relation norms also existed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Aceh Islamic kingdom. The appointment of these four *Sultanate*, for example, was in many ways against the principle of the patriarchal and religious values held by the majority of the Acehnese today. This is in fact a very interesting phenomenon because at the time these four *Sultanate* were in power, Aceh was referred

to as the *Verandah of Mecca*, referring to its position as a centre for Islamic teaching in the region. Obviously, in a predominantly male dominated culture, to have women as the rulers did not reflect cultural values that existed in the Indonesian archipelago. Undoubtedly, the appointment of female rulers of the Islamic Kingdom of Aceh would not have been possible if religious leaders did not give their blessing. Whatever the reasons might be for this situation, it was evident that women were regarded highly during that period.

This succession of female rulers in the Aceh Islamic kingdom only came to an end when a fatwa was issued by the 'Sheriff of Mecca' in Saudi Arabia, which stated that a woman could not become a sultan or a leader, as that would be "un-Islamic" (Razavi & Miller, 1995, p. 42). Since then, this legal opinion of Islamic jurists has been used by traditional *ulama* to justify men's superiority in both private and public domains in Aceh. However, this fatwa did not prevent Acehnese women from fighting against the Dutch in 1873. Acehnese women such as Pocut Baren, Cut Nyak Dien, and Cut Mutia once led the people in the battle against Dutch colonialism. These women have since been inducted as national heroes. All the historical evidence shows that in its early days, Aceh was a tolerant society when it came to gender issues.

Gender relations in Aceh are unique as they are shaped by a number of factors. Besides strong Islamic identity, another factor that shapes gender relations in Aceh is its disastrous centre-periphery relation with the central government. According to Moten (2005, p. 1), "its history of having been an independent sultanate until the Dutch invasion in 1873, and a strong Acehnese regional, ethnic, and arguably

national identity” contributes to Aceh’s ill-fated centre-periphery relations with the central government. Likewise, Schulze argues that “while an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia since its inception, Aceh has set itself apart from the rest of the country by its strict adherence to Islam” (2004, p. 1).

Well known for its strong Islamic society, Acehnese people, led by *ulama* were in the thick of the struggle against Dutch colonialism. For the Acehnese, this struggle against the Dutch was fuelled by the intention to preserve Islam and live by its principles. “The national revolution was, therefore, seen by [the] *ulama* as an opportunity to restore the validity of Islamic law in the region” (Syamsuddin, 1985, p. 111). It does not come as a surprise that

the Acehnese *ulama*, since the early years of the Indonesian republic, have played a major role in mobilizing the expression of Islamic identity to pursue special concessions from the central government of Indonesia, that is, to formalize the implementation of *Shari’ain* Aceh (Salim, 2008, p. 143).

While the contribution of the Acehnese people to preventing the permanent occupation of the Dutch has been a significant factor in Indonesian independence, it was Aceh’s distinctive socio-cultural and political features that make its position a complex one in the framework of Indonesian nationalism. Its struggle to retain its unique identity has led to political contestation between Aceh and the central government since the early years of independence. The conflict was triggered by “the dissatisfaction among the

Acehnese *ulama*, given the dissolution of the province of Aceh by the central government in 1950” (Miller, 2004, p. 335; Salim, 2008, p. 114) leading to the proclamation of Aceh separation from Indonesia on 21 September 1953. While this revolt came to an end in 1959 with the central government agreeing to confer special status (*daerah istimewa*) to Aceh, giving it autonomy in matters of religion, customary law (*adat*), and education, it later became the seed of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) which was led by Hasan Tiro who waged a political and armed struggle in the 1970s.

The political contestation between Aceh and the central government was later accentuated by the imbalance of revenue of rich natural sources found in North Aceh in the 1970s. Much of the revenue from Aceh’s rich natural resources has not been allocated appropriately to satisfy the demand of the Acehnese people. This can be seen in the feeling of distrust towards the central government in Jakarta voiced by the people and local politicians. While the discovery of natural resources has had its impact on the Aceh conflict, there are other aspects that played an important part.

The introduction of the ‘Military Operation Area’ to crush the revolt, for example, has also been considered one of the factors escalating the conflict. This military operation resulted in severe violation of human rights. “In other words: much of the blame for the escalation of conflict in Aceh has been attributed to Jakarta’s conduct of security operations in Aceh and its inability to rectify the problem” (Shoon, 2009, p. 2). All these incidents later lead to the institutionalization of Islamic Law in Aceh, which was considered as one of the strategies to end years of political and armed struggle in Aceh.

This political struggle has had significant impacts on women. Years of political unrest and struggle have marginalized Acehnese women to no more than the domestic realm. They were not able to participate and be involved in the public domain due to fragile security.

Another factor that has an influence in shaping gender relations in Aceh today is the December 2004 tsunami which killed hundreds of thousands of people. This natural disaster prompted the biggest humanitarian effort in recent history. The aftermath of the tsunami has somehow affected the way gender relations are perceived. In this case, the influx of international organisations working on the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in Aceh and bringing a gender sensitive approach in their development programs has created awareness of the importance of gender equality amongst government officials. This can be seen in the inclusion of women in the village planning process, and in income generation programs designed to empower women to help their families. It has also influenced people's perception towards women's ability to cope with pressure. The fact that there were many female humanitarian workers getting involved in the rehabilitation process has broadened people's perception towards women's potential in what is regarded as a male dominated area.

Having said that, despite the changing attitudes towards women's roles and their community contribution post-tsunami, gender relations in Aceh remains a patriarchal issue. This can be seen overall in Aceh where incidents demeaning and marginalizing women often take place. A more comprehensive discussion on this issue is presented

in Chapter Four. The following section will discuss the institutionalization of Islamic law in Aceh which is important in order to examine the historical background of the formalization of Islamic law in Aceh and how it came into existence. It is also critical in examining its influence on the world view of Acehnese society.

## **VI. Institutionalization of Islamic Law in Aceh**

The institutionalization of Islamic law in Aceh is closely related to its distinct history of Islam and, as mentioned earlier, political distrust of the central government. Under Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency, the effort to reconcile the political unrest led to the issuance of Law No 44/1999 granting special autonomy to Aceh, confirming Aceh's special status. This was seen as a stepping-stone in building trust. It was also considered as a "confirmation of the *ulama's* position in the political structure of local government" (Salim, 2008, p. 152). What it means is that the Acehnese *ulama* are given both social and political recognition, giving them strategic roles in influencing Aceh's development direction. Under Megawati's government, Law Number 44/1999 was later substituted by Law 18 of 2001, formally known as the *Nanggroë Aceh Darussalam* (NAD) Law. This Law was considered "as the cornerstone of Megawati's government's political strategy to ward off separatism in Aceh" (Sadli & Porter, 1999, p. 340).

The decision to institutionalize Islamic Law was taken to win over the *ulama* and the Acehnese people who had a strong sense of Islamic culture. However, some elements of society, both in Jakarta and in Aceh were sceptical that this political measure proposed by the government would

address the problem. Arguments that Law 18/2001 was, “seen a political commodity for political and religious elites in Jakarta and Banda Aceh” (Jauhola, 2010, p. 37) was not unfounded. According to Miller,

whilst Acehese *ulama* from the *Darul Islam* era would have welcomed the formal imposition of *Syari'ah*, the political organisation and expectations of Acehese society had undergone a major transformation since the 1950s. Aceh remained a deeply religious and almost homogeneously Muslim province, but many Acehese were unenthusiastic about the advent of *Syari'ah* in the post-authoritarian order because they did not believe Jakarta would apply the law to respond to their key demand for justice regarding human rights violations. ... GAM's founding father, Hasan di Tiro, dismissed Jakarta's plans to introduce Islamic Law as 'irrelevant' because 'the struggle of the Acehese people never had anything to do with *Syari'ah*' (1999, p. 343).

The above illustration clearly suggests that the measures taken by the central government to end years of conflict in Aceh has had mixed reactions. Nevertheless, this political maneuver has been the most important aspect in the peace process between the central government and Aceh. It is clear that while the intention of passing this Law was to end the conflict, the decision to grant Aceh the right to implement Islamic Law was made by taking into accounts the historical precedent of *Shari'a* in Aceh and its centrality to Acehese identity and culture. As mentioned earlier, Islam has been the way of life of the Acehese and as such it influences the way people live, including how people perceive one's place



in society. Therefore, the formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh has also influenced the way gender relations are shaped there. In the context of Aceh, as in other Muslim countries, the interpretation of the *Qur'an* has significant impacts on women's role and status as it often prescribes how men and women fit in within a society.

Amina Wadud (1999), a well-known Muslim feminist asserts that there are three categories in relation to the *Qur'anic* interpretation of woman; traditional, reactive, and holistic. The difference between the three is in the methodology used. The first category of *Qur'anic* interpretation looks at the *Qur'an* with "little or no effort made to recognize themes and to discuss relationship of the *Qur'an* to itself, thematically ... A methodology for linking similar *Qur'anic* ideas, syntactical structures, principles, or themes together is almost non-existent" (Wadud, 1999, p. 2). This approach to *Qur'anic* interpretation leads to literal interpretation of the *Qur'an*, leaving no room for discussion. As such, one's roles are determined by one's sex. In many ways, this interpretation of the *Qur'an* in line with principles of the biological essentialism theory of gender, rationalizes gender polarization and male dominance by treating them as the natural consequences of the inherent biological sex differences (Bem, 1993).

The second category comes into existence as reactions to "severe handicaps for woman as individual and as a member of society which have been attributed to the Text" (Wadud, 1999, p. 2). Those behind this category of *Qur'anic* interpretation consider the deprived condition of women in Muslim societies as driving forces to put forward their version of interpretation. This kind of *Qur'anic* interpretation is not

without its shortcomings. According to Wadud,

although they are often concerned with valid issues, the absence of comprehensive analysis of the Qur'an sometimes causes them to vindicate the position of women on grounds entirely incongruous with the Qur'anic position on woman. This kind of Qur'anic interpretation, which come from feminist ideals and rationales, have failed to draw a distinction between the interpretation and the Text (1999, p. 2).

This type of interpretation has been one of the reasons why the feminist approach in gender related issues has been rejected in Muslim world. Challenges posed by feminists to long standing notions of gender roles and the way they influence the dynamics of society are mainly dealt with resistance and rejection. In this case, religion is seen as an obstacle to the gender agenda. Both of the above *Qur'anic* interpretations have failed to provide comprehensive solutions to challenges faced by women. Unfortunately, these interpretations of the *Qur'an* have been the main feature in most Muslim countries which have influenced the way Muslims view and consider gender relations, including in Indonesia.

The last category of *Qur'anic* interpretation is a holistic interpretation which "considers the whole method of *Qur'anic* exegesis with regard to various modern social, moral, economic, and political concerns – including the issue of woman-" (Wadud, 1999, p. 3). To justify its conclusion, this kind of *Qur'anic* interpretation uses the hermeneutical model which analyses three aspects of the Text: 1) The context in

which the text was written (in the case of the Quran, in which it was revealed); 2) The grammatical composition of the text (how it says what it says); and 3) The whole Text, its worldview (Wadud, 1999, p. 3). This kind of *Qur'anic* interpretation looks at the Text in its entirety and therefore provides a more comprehensive analysis of the *Qur'an* and its interpretations. As such, it provides room for change as it takes into account the social and cultural aspects within the society.

When discussing gender relations, women and their status and roles from an Islamic perspective, one cannot but refer to one of the *surah* of the *Qur'an*, An-Nisa', which literally means women. The translation of *surah* An-Nisa' (4), verse 34, is as follows: "Men are leaders for women, because God has made them (men) excel over others (women), and because they (men) spend from their (own) means". According to Syafiq Hasyim, "the substance of An-Nisa' pertains to various topics related to male-female relations, as human beings, spouses at home, as well as social, cultural and political life" (2006, p. 26). Ironically, the interpretation of the *Qur'an*, especially verse 34 of An-Nisa' has been considered the root of the problem leading to the discrimination, segregation, and subordination of women (Hasyim, 2006).

Understandably, literal interpretation of the *Qur'an* has marginalized and restricted women from getting involved in and making a contribution to society. It also creates gender roles which is one of the characteristics of patriarchal cultures. The same can be said about gender relations in Aceh. While Islamic values have been an integral part of Acehnese society for hundreds of years, it is not until Islamic Law was institutionalized that the Aceh government could impose it on

Muslims in Aceh. Implementation of the Islamic Law in Aceh is regulated through *qanun*, regional regulation. A number of government institutions were established to implement and oversee the execution of Islamic Law in Aceh, such as The Office of Islamic Shari'a (established through Provincial Regulation (PERDA) No. 33/2001), *WilayatulHisbah*, a form of morality police, (established through *Qanun* No. 5/2000 and Gubernatorial Decree No. 01/2004), and Shari'a Court (established through *Qanun* No. 10/2002).

*Qanun* is a term used to refer to regional regulations implemented in Aceh province. Article 125, point 3 of Law 11/2006 of the Aceh Government, specifies that provisions on the implementation of Islamic law shall be regulated by *Qanun*. The process of formulating *Qanun* is similar to that of other regulations in other Indonesian provinces. It is proposed by the government to the DPRA. In the context of Aceh province, however, there is one great difference in the process of passing the *Qanun*. Unlike other provinces in Indonesia, in Aceh, *ulama* play a significant role in the process of passing the *Qanun*. As Aceh is the only province in Indonesia that legally implements Islamic Law, *ulama* have a central role in provincial, political and social spheres, as set out in Law No. 11/2006 of the Aceh Government. In principle, Islamic Law in Aceh is a product of Acehnese *ulama*'s interpretation of the *Qur'an*. The way they understand and interpret the *Qur'an* has significant influence on the *qanun*. The following table shows the number of *Qanun* that have been issued in Aceh province since the formalization of Islamic Law. The following table shows *Qanun*s which relate to the rules of Islamic Law.

Table 2. *Qanun on Shari'a rules*

No. and Year Issued	Subject matters of <i>Qanun</i>
Qanun 11/2002	Incorporation of some aspects of theology ( <i>akidah</i> ), rituals ( <i>ibadah</i> ) and activities that glorify Islam ( <i>syiar Islam</i> ) into the <i>qanun</i>
Qanun 12/2003	[Prohibition of] liquor ( <i>khamar</i> )
Qanun 13/2003	[Prohibition of] gambling ( <i>maisir</i> )
Qanun 14/2003	[Prohibition of] close proximity between unmarried or unrelated couples ( <i>khalwat</i> )
Qanun 7/2004	Administration of <i>zakat</i> (alms)

Source: Salim, 2008, p. 158.

The above *qanun* are concerned with the *Shari'a* rules. The fact that *qanun* is derived from Islamic teachings shows that religious values have been significant factors that shape people's perception in Aceh, including the way they perceive gender relations. This is reflected in the arrangement of social structures, including in households. Gender division of labour, for example, is one of the consequences of gendered culture that is a common feature in a patriarchal society like Aceh. The following section will discuss the gender division of labour and its ramification on women.

## **VII. Gender Division of Labour and Work-Family Conflict (WFC)**

One of the areas of gender relations that has had a considerable influence on women's role and status is the division of labour between men and women. The gender division of labour is essentially the classification of work into two categories based on sex, or gender. It is basically an essentialist approach to assign work based on the biological differences between men and women. Generally, women's reproductive arena is used to justify their nurturer and child rearing roles and natural inferiority that, in turn, restricts their social involvement. In many cultures around the world, this biological difference and division of work that comes with it is seen as natural and then finds its way into social inequality.

Due to the dearth of literature on the gender division of labour in the context of Indonesia, literatures within the context of developed countries are mainly referred to. Nevertheless, the character of gender division of labour in developing countries like Indonesia shares some similarities with those of developed countries. In Indonesia's case, however, it is also accentuated by state gender ideology and religious values.

As mentioned above, the origin of the caring and domestic work usually carried out by women is biologically based on gender roles. Most women at least, at some point in their lives, are usually confined to giving birth, taking care of and bearing young children, especially during the early years of infancy. This situation is not limited to under-developed and developing countries; even those working in developed countries also face the same dilemma. This is why the division

of labour based on gender is considered one of the factors leading to Work Family Conflict (WFC), which in turn affects women's opportunity to advance their career.

When discussing the gender division of labour and work-family conflict, it is important to look at one of the most important social structures in society, the household, and what cultural norms are usually attached to it in a developing country like Indonesia. The household is an important establishment where the majority of decision is decided. As such it has a considerable influence on one's world view. On this note, Badran asserts that "like institutions, household play a fundamental role in shaping gender relations from early in life and in transmitting these from one generation to the next" (2002, p. 14). Understandably, the underlying cultural assumption about men's and women's potential and what are expected of them begin in households. Children learn how to be accepted and rejected through their parents.

In the context of Indonesia and Aceh, power relations within typical households are usually gendered, with men as providers of the family and women as nurturers of children. What this means is that the gender division of labour within typical households in Indonesia shares an essentialist approach to gender, based on one's gender. Kara argues that, "there is a clear cut division with regard to women's roles within a family in Indonesia. Women are assigned to domestic domain where they mostly serve as care takers, while men are the economic providers and decision makers" (2004, p. 32). It is plausible to say that Indonesian views with regard to gender relations are still very much influenced by traditional patriarchal values, in that women are subordinate

to men. In the case of Indonesia, the government has also been influential in preserving practices of gendered cultural values in society. This can be seen in the gender politics in Indonesia. It could be said that state gender ideology for example is designed around gender stereotypes, assigning women to the domestic sphere and men to public one.

This is not to say that this is the only type of gender relations within households in Indonesia. There are other types of households in some parts of Indonesia, such as the matrilineal kinship type where women have a superior position than men, as recorded in the work of Siegel (2000). On the issue of gender division of labour, the work of Okin outlines that women have far more obligations to household duties than do men. This can be seen in the amount of tasks of daily caretaking activities, such as food production and preparation, child care, house work, and so on (1989). For working mothers, this situation leads to a dilemma, almost always resulting in work family conflict. Harvey and Shaw assert that “the issues raised by the double burden of ‘work’ and ‘care’ which falls upon the great majority of women is highly problematic. Caring work is generally recognized to be a gendered activity” (1998, p. 44).

There are two dominant views in relation to the issue of work-family conflict: depletion and enrichment views. Byron suggests that the dominant view of the two, depletion, views work and family as two different conflicting entities, each requiring dedicated time and energy (2005). Time and effort required by female managers outside their houses result in limited time to attend their family life. It is understandable that women find it difficult to balance domestic



responsibilities as mother and wife, as well as professional workloads simultaneously. This dilemma will be even more complicated when the socio-cultural dimension is taken into account. Care-work relation in a patriarchal society, such as in Aceh, often creates friction within families. Depending on the relationship between spouses, having a successful career may lead to issues and even conflicts within a family.

The enrichment perspective on work-conflict relation, on the other hand, suggests that engagement in one role can facilitate engagement in another role (Greenhaus & Foley, 2007). The support from spouse and the roles women play in their personal lives provide them with resources that assist them in their professional career. Commenting on the impacts of personal and family lives on women's ability to perform, Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, and King argue that the factors such as psychological benefits, emotional advice and support, enhanced multitasking, broadened personal interests, opportunities to enrich interpersonal skills, and leadership practice in family settings will be influential in the women's work place (2002).

The move towards changing attitudes with respect to women in the work place has been argued to have considerable impact on the way people view family life, and the power relations within a family. Women are now taking part in and contributing to helping their family's income. With this comes a newly found bargaining social and financial power in what was once a patriarchal type of power relations. Undoubtedly, there has been a noticeable shift in people's thinking concerning traditional family roles, and in their values which have become more moderate. This is apparent

where women are involved in and contribute to the public domain, especially when professional purposes are involved.

Acker and Armenti (2004) concur that the tension between work and family can be attributed to the gendered division of household labour. Another factor contributing to this issue is the cultural assumptions of the roles of women and men, and their rights and obligations within the family which can be found in Western societies and also influence the tension in the care-work relation (Acker & Armenti, 2004). The same is true in the context of a developing country like Indonesia. According to Murniati, "Eastern and Southeast Asian societies strongly embrace cultural values that prescribe the role of a woman in her society, family, and marriage" (2012, p. 4). This situation usually leads to a stalling of women's careers. Not surprisingly, the complexity involved in balancing family responsibilities and work has been one of the most significant aspects that prevent working women from moving up the ladder of leadership (Luke, 1997).

In a similar vein, Tichenor suggests that it is more difficult for women to advance their professional life because of existing norms within the modern Western family which hold women accountable for domestic work (2005). The amount of time and effort spent at home has been argued as one of contributing factors that may hinder women's endeavour to pursue their careers. According to Blair-Loy, when confronted with rearing and parenting issues, women are more likely to change their professional priorities and often put their careers on hold (2001).

During field work, respondents of this study often referred to the term 'double burden' to illustrate women's situation

in undertaking their professional career and domestic tasks. In the context of Aceh, besides gender politics and state gender ideology formulated by the New Order government, the influence of religious values often emphasizes and reinforces the gender division of labour. As such, Acehnese women are often confined and limited to feminised work around households, while men have the privileges to access resources outside households as they are politically, socially, and economically superior to women.

However, in the wake of improved access to higher education, changing perceptions about women's potential, as well as increasing numbers of women achieving their higher education degree, the number of women entering the work force has also increased. As a result, the dynamics of gender relations within traditional patriarchal households are also changing. This brings about the issue of WFC, as more and more women work outside their houses, especially in urban areas. This is also true in Aceh. More and more Acehnese women who traditionally stayed at home supporting their spouses, rearing children, and managing households have now begun to pursue their professional life and contributed to improve their financial state. It is when working couples are not able to negotiate and compromise their priorities within the private and public domains that WFC becomes an issue.



## **GENDER EQUALITY/ MAINSTREAMING AGENDA IN INDONESIA**

### **I. Introduction**

This chapter begins with a discussion of international efforts on gender issues. Gender issues have been part of the development issues that play a significant role in national development in countries around the world, including in Indonesia. The Indonesian government must endorse the international initiative to work on this issue. In doing so, the Indonesian government needs to weigh up its national development priorities and formulate gender equality policies and strategies that are suitable for the Indonesian context. As such, this chapter discusses gender equality/mainstreaming efforts by the Indonesian government since its independence in 1945. It is important to examine the government's agenda in addressing gender inequality as it plays a significant role in the dynamics of gender relations in Indonesia, especially since the issue of gender equality is a complex one in Indonesia.

This chapter also looks at the state of women and leadership in Indonesia. It talks about the involvement of women in management in the public domain. The issue of women and leadership in Indonesia has been one of the most intriguing ones, including women in the HE sector. It is intriguing

because discussion surrounding this issue has always been influenced by practices of patriarchal cultures and religious interpretations. Not surprisingly, and as in many other countries, gender imbalance in the public domain has been a long standing issue in public sector in Indonesia, especially among senior university academics. Unfortunately there has been limited research on the area of women and leadership in the context of Indonesia,

To get an insight into women's involvement and roles in public domain, a number of statistical data are presented to describe current phenomena on the issue of women and leadership. By doing this, the researcher intends to provide an illustration of women's achievement in the public domain. Discussion on challenges that women have to face to arrive at leadership role is also presented.

## **II. International Agenda on Gender Issues**

The attention to gender mainstreaming has been driven, at least in part, by frustration with the fact that efforts on behalf of women have tended to be located in separate institutional units, cut adrift from seats of power (Bacchi, 2010, p. 21). In many developing countries, as gender mainstreaming is a recently new phenomenon, often governments' efforts are not well executed, lack coordination, are poorly funded and often detached from typical developmental priorities such as building infrastructure. This factor, in addition to the recognition of the roles of women in development processes, has triggered initiatives to look at the status of women and to put in place necessary measures aimed at empowering them.

International focus on gender equality has a long history.

It started as a response to improve the world's economic, political, and social situation. The fact that the condition and status of women and children in third world developing countries have been marginalized in the development process has provoked the international community to gather at the first world conference on women held in 1975 in Mexico. The conference, taking into account the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, states that

discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare of the family and of society, prevents their participation, on equal terms with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity (The United Nations, 1975, p. 2).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Article 1 of the Convention defines discrimination against women as:

any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (UNICEF, 2004, p. 5).

The first World Conference on Women produced the Declaration on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, and the declaration of the United Nations' Decade for Women. The second World Conference on Women, which took place in Copenhagen in 1980, laid out a framework of Program of Action for the second half of the decade, 1980-1985, promoting the

attainment of three objectives of equality, development, and peace, with special emphasis on the subtheme – namely, employment, health and education – as significant components of development, taking into account that human resources cannot achieve their full potential without integrated socio-economic development (The United Nations, 1980, p. 5).

The conference defines equality “as meaning not only legal equality, the elimination of de jure discrimination, but also equalities of rights, responsibilities and opportunities for the participation of women in development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents (The United Nations, 1980, p. 4). The third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi in 1985. This conference, considering both the Plan of Action and Program of Action, created Forward-Looking Strategies to further cement international efforts in disseminating gender issues within the United Nations member countries, while at the same time reviewed the past 10 years experiences on the issue of women and development. It recognizes that

the effective participation of women in development and in strengthening of peace, as well as the promotion of the equality of women and men, require concerted



multi-dimensional strategies and measures that should be people oriented. Such strategies and measures will require continual upgrading and the productive utilization of human resource with a view to promoting equality and producing sustained endogenous development of societies and groups of individuals (The United Nations, 1985, pp. 8-9).

The need for women's perspective and involvement in development was seen as an integral part of the successful and sustainable development process. The fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, adopted a "Platform for Action" (PfA), in which the United Nations and its signatory states were responsible for mainstreaming gender issues in the policy process, especially after the UN adopted gender mainstreaming as the approach to be used in all policies and programs in the UN system in 1997 (Moser, 2005, p. 576). The Platform for Action, as stated in the Mission Statement of the Declaration:

is an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development

and peace. A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people-centred sustainable development (The United Nations, 1995, p. 6).

Furthermore, paragraph 13 of the declaration states that “women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (The United Nations, 1995, p. 2). As a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the international community acknowledged the need to promote gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality in all stages of policy making (Bacchi, 2010; Hankivsky, 2008). As such, gender mainstreaming has been used as a policy approach to improve gender equality.

During the Decade for Women, the recognition that “women represented an ‘untapped’ force in economic growth, and galvanised by accelerating claims around the world for a fairer deal for women” (Chant & Gutmann, 2000, p. 6) triggered the formulation of Women in Development (WID) as a development approach. This approach to development was prompted by the fact that development, “instead of improving women’s rights and status, appeared to be contributing to a deterioration of women position” (Razavy & Miller, 1995, p.2). To improve the situation, the approach was formulated by integrating women’s productive labour. This is known as the Women in Development approach (WID), and the following table shows the main components of it.

Table 3. Main WID policy approaches.

Approach	Target Group	Time Period	Brief Characterisation
Equity approach	Women	1975-85	First WID approach. Main goal is to accomplish women's equality with men in development, through changing legal and institutional frameworks that subordinate women
Anti-poverty approach	Low income women/ female heads of household	1970 onwards	Second WID approach. Premised on the idea that women's disadvantage stems from poverty, rather than gender subordination, the main aim is to raise women's economic status through income-generating programmes.
Efficiency approach	Low-income women	1980s onwards	Third WID approach. Main goal is to harness women's efforts to make development more efficient and to alleviate poverty in the wake of neo-liberal economic structuring.

Sources : Levy (1999); Moser (1993) (Chant & Gutmann, 2000, p. 7)

In the early part of the gender equality initiative,

international development and monetary agencies such as UNDP and the World Bank adopted WID as their gender and development approach. According to Levy (1996, p. 1), “a focus on women as an analytical and operational category, the setting up of separate organisational structures for dealing with women, and the development of women specific policies and projects” are three main common factors in the WID policy approaches. The impact of this approach in the last three decades to gender equality has been limited, and its effectiveness has been questioned by development and gender experts (Chant & Gutmann, 2000).

As a gender mainstreaming strategy, WID has, according to many development and gender experts, failed to consider men’s role in the effort to achieve gender equality. They argue that for real change to take place in women’s lives, men will also need to change (Bacchi, 2010, p. 27). This is important because in the context of developing countries where patriarchal cultures are prevalent, gender mainstreaming efforts are often seen as threats towards the traditional authority structure held by men. With political power and resources controlled by men, it is plausible to conclude that men’s participation in any organisation, both in private and public sectors, will lead to a more sustainable development process where men and women work as partners. Chant asserts that the focus on women without men’s involvement will compromise gender equality efforts as

it does not allow men to challenge the dichotomous categorization and stereotypes that men are all bad and women are the victims, 2) has the potential to increase

hostility between men and women and jeopardizes the success of gender initiatives, 3) it is likely to increase women's workloads and responsibilities, and 4) the success of 'women-only' projects is constrained as men are a central part of gender relations (2000, pp. 9-11).

Three decades after the gender mainstreaming initiative was instituted as a gender equality strategy, it has become clear that the inclusion of men in gender policies has not been considered in gender and development policies (Moser, 2005). Evaluation of gender and development policies has pointed out the importance of men's inclusion in gender related programs. "It has become increasingly clear that a 'women-only' approach to gender planning is insufficient to overturn the patriarchal structures embedded in development institutions and to redress gender imbalances at the grassroots in any fundamental way" (Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 270). Gender analysis on current gender equality policies is needed to address the slow progress and the lack of men's involvement in gender equality efforts. The failure of WID initiatives to consider contribution of men in gender equality and development efforts has paved the way to GAD approach.

Unlike WID, "the GAD (or Gender and Development) approach to development policy and practice focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasizes the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations" (Reeves and Baden, 2000, p. 33). Unlike WID approach which "identified women's lack of access to resources as the key to their subordination without raising questions about the role of gender relations in restricting

women's access in the first place (and in subverting policy interventions, were they to direct resources to women)" (Razavi and Miller, 1995a, p. 12), "GAD challenges the WID focus on women in isolation, seeing women's 'real' problem as the imbalance of power between women and men" (Reeves and Baden, 2000, p. 33). This development approach focusses on gender relations as products of social interactions. To have a successful gender equality agenda, development approach must consider both men and women as equal stakeholders.

As part of its strategic systematic efforts to mainstream gender to its members, The United Nations, through the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as

the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated (The United Nations, 1997, p. 28).

From the above quotation, it is clear that gender mainstreaming is the process aimed at reducing the gaps in development opportunities between women and men by integrating their concerns in the decision-making process, and accommodating them in policy formulation and program implementation. Undoubtedly, gender mainstreaming initiatives must take into account competing factors that men and women experience in order to have plausible,

achievable and sustainable results, and a highly complex challenge for any government that still preserves patriarchal power relations within its authority structure.

According to Moser, there are four related stages that must be noted in the effort to mainstream gender: “The first is embracing the terminology of gender equality and gender mainstreaming; second is getting a gender mainstreaming policy in place; third is implementing gender mainstreaming in practice; and fourth is evaluating or auditing the practice of gender mainstreaming” (2005, pp. 576-577). In a similar vein, Mackay and Bilton assert that

political will, specific gender equality policy, statistics, comprehensive knowledge of gender relations, knowledge of the administration, necessary funds and human resources, and participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes are necessary prerequisite of facilitating conditions for gender mainstreaming” (2000, p. 1).

Achieving gender equality is contingent upon creating this requisite condition. It is clear that before anything else, the government has to have a strong political will in order to work on gender equality. This is perhaps the most important element that will determine the direction and implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts. It is important because without strong political will, achieving gender equality as a part of the development goals, which often contradicts traditional cultural and religious values in many underdeveloped and developing countries, will be severely limited. Lack of political will reflects in underutilization of resources

and knowledge, leading to poor program execution.

Strong political will on the part of the government will likely result in several goals: efforts to formulate specific gender equality policies; to allocate funds needed to finance gender related programs; and to facilitate the establishment of gender equity machinery within government institutions. All these will contribute to improving the number of women taking part in political and public life and in decision-making processes in the public arena.

Hankivsky argues that gender mainstreaming assumes that women and men are differentially affected by policies and its aim is to integrate such knowledge into all dimensions of decision-making (2005). Efforts towards achieving gender equality by putting gender mainstreaming policies and strategies in place will then need to consider power relations between men and women and how they translate in society. What this means is that gender mainstreaming requires that from inception all policies should be analysed for their gendered impact so that they can benefit men and women equally (Hankivsky, 2005). It is “a commitment to guarantee that every part of organisation assumes responsibility to ensure that policies impact evenly on women and men” (Bacchi, 2010, p. 20). Therefore, national development policies and strategies must take into account women’s needs and priorities while involving them in the development process.

This is why the international agenda on this matter initiated by the UN is very important in advancing ideas and putting pressure on its member states. To bring about gender equality, the UN system has put gender mainstreaming



agenda as its top priority as reflected in the MDGs. The terms gender equality and gender mainstreaming have become synonymous with development programs in member countries. As a result, gender equality is even regarded as one of the development indicators that determines whether gender mainstreaming policies and strategies have been successful or not. As such, there has been a wealth of evidence showing that both developed and developing countries have adopted and institutionalized gender mainstreaming as part of national development priorities.

In 1995, the UNDP introduced the concept of Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in order look at initiatives to narrow down the gender gap in the fundamental areas of development such as economy, society, education and politics (UNDP, 2009). GEM aims to assess gender inequality at a global scale and to work towards providing a platform in planning and analysing constructive solutions to improve the life status of women in relation to men (Ismail, Rasdi, & Jamal, 2011, p. 381). In analysing the progress of gender equality in a country, the UNDP uses four indicators; (1) the proportion of seats held by women in parliament;(2) the proportion of women administrators and managers;(3) the proportion of women professionals and technical workers; and (4) the ratio of women to men earned income (2009).

Indonesia, as a member state of the United Nations, has been working towards achieving gender equality. This is reflected in a number of laws and regulations enacted to bring about women's empowerment and gender equality. The following section describes the progress made in achieving gender equality in Indonesia since its independence. The

fact that gender equality is considered as one of successful development indicators makes it even more important to address how efforts towards achieving it have been executed by the Indonesian government. While challenges and the rate of success in the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in each country differ, nevertheless, tackling the issue of the gender gap has become a priority in the national development agenda.

### **III. Gender Equality Agenda in the Old Order Regime Period (1945-1965)**

The attention to women's rights, roles and responsibilities and how they fit in both private and public domains has gained considerable recognition in many developing countries, including in Indonesia. The efforts to improve women's status and roles in Indonesia began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Article 27 of the 1945 Constitution guarantees that women and men have the same rights and obligations within the family and society, and in development. With regard to gender equality efforts, there were a number of women and women's organisations advocating the improvement of the status of women.

Raden Ajeng Kartini was perhaps the most famous advocate of women's rights in Indonesia. Her feminist and nationalist views triggered by the poor condition and status of women in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia, have been documented in letters she wrote to her Dutch feminist friend, Estelle Zeehandelaar (Cote', 1995). The institution of family, gender division of labour, ideologies of womanhood, and education for women are some of the issues that she

advocated at the time. Her writings on issues of women's rights have, by many, been considered as breakthrough for women's status at the time when colonial and traditional patriarchy cultures were dominant. While she was not the first woman to be considered as women's rights advocate, her ability to put her ideas in written form has earned her a place in Indonesia's gender discourse, so much so that the government assigned the 21<sup>st</sup> of April as Kartini day.

Many have recognized and written about the significant roles Indonesian women played in the pre and post-independence periods with respect to political and social issues. During the colonial period, the women's movement gained momentum in response to wide-spread dissatisfaction as a result of oppression against women. Although the movement was initially focused on the struggles against Dutch colonialism, it also aimed at advocating women's access to education and improving their roles in society. This came out of growing disappointment towards practices of patriarchal culture. In addition, issues such as arranged marriage, equal rights in divorce, polygamy, women's right to access education, and women's role in society were also the main concerns for women activists in Indonesia.

During Sukarno's old order government, women's involvement in the nation's social, economic and political arena was evident from the existence of a number of women's organisations with different ideological aspirations (Marching, 2007). All these organisations were vital in bringing about the idea of more liberal women in the sense that women could play a significant role in the society. However, immediately after independence, "the focus of the

government was to stabilize political situation and to defend Indonesia's newly proclaimed independence, which deflected attention from women's issues" (Parawansa, 2002, p. 69). As a matter of fact, as far as gender issues were concerned, the government, under Sukarno's leadership, promulgated Government Regulation (GR) No. 19 in 1952 permitting polygamy, causing a setback in the fight for gender equality. This was obviously a major blow for women's organisation and activists who fought for improvement of the status and role of women in Indonesia.

Despite this setback, the Indonesian government took a significant step in responding to women's status and roles. The government's political will, as well as its commitment and response to improve women's status, can be seen in the Ratification of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 100 concerning equal payment for equal work, implemented through Law No.80/1958. Another important step during Sukarno's presidency was the ratification of the United Nations Convention on Political Rights for Women through Law No. 68/1958. Through Law No. 68/1958, the "Indonesian government has made an important effort in order to give women the right to vote and to be appointed to the legislature" (Parnohadininggrat, 2002, p. xxiii). The issuance of these Laws, following the Ratification of ILO convention No. 100 and the UN Convention on Political Rights for Women, gave impetus to women's involvement in the public arena. The fact that women could get involved in political arena and even appointed to legislature was a big step in the process of moving towards gender equality.

While legal frameworks (Law No. 68/1958 and Law No.

80/1958) had been established to enhance women's status and empowerment in both economic and political spheres, the government's top priority at the time was on highly fragile political stability. Understandably, gender issues did not get as much attention. This situation was reflected in the gender gap which existed in many sectors of the government's development priority. In the political arena, although women were now eligible to be appointed to the legislature, as stated in Law No. 80/1958, only 16 women were appointed as members of the House of Representative in the 1955 general election, constituting 5.88 per cent of the total number. This situation was certainly far from ideal if women were to influence and speed up the process of gender equality efforts. On the contrary, referring to the UNDP's indicator on gender equality, the lack of women in parliament showed the lack of progress in gender equality initiatives in Indonesia at the time. This can be seen in the existence of discrimination in the work place, in unequal pay, as well as in poor working conditions for women.

It was clear that the problem of political instability and the effort to prevent the return of colonial government were the government's highest priorities in the period immediately after independence. Understandably, with government's attention was on the country's fragile independence, other sectors of development, including gender issues, had not gained much attention. Despite the inclusion of women in the political sphere, overall, the status and role of women in Indonesia have not improved. Taking into account the part women's organisations played in the struggle for independence; this was considered a major setback for

women's involvement in nation building efforts in Indonesia.

Unlike Sukarno's Old Order Regime, during the New Order regime, the Indonesian government was able to incorporate women's role in national development programs. This was done by formulating gender state ideology in the national development agenda, as mentioned in earlier in Chapter Two. This strategy was adopted in order to answer the demand of the international community on gender equality, as well as to serve the national interests. The following section will provide a more comprehensive account of the gender equality agenda under Suharto's New Order regime.

#### **IV. Gender Equality Agenda in the New Order Period (1966-1998)**

Despite considerable challenges, the government's political will with regard to improving the status of women was unquestionable. Responding to the first International Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, the New Order government that came to power in the mid-1960s established the Ministry for Women's Role in 1978, which was first introduced as a junior ministry. According to Blackburn, "as far as gender mainstreaming is concerned, this was an important step taken by the New Order government" (2004, p. 26). The ministry has the mandate "to increase women's capacity to manage their *dual role* in the domestic and public spheres (Parawansa, 2002, p. 71). This innovation was the New Order government's response to international community commitment in improving and empowering the status of women and taking women's roles into account in the development process, as stated in the Declaration of

Mexico during the First World Conference on Women in 1975. To further provide the ministry with more authority in executing its mandate, in 1983, the Ministry was elevated to the Cabinet status.

While working on improving the country's economy, the Indonesian government has always acknowledged the importance of its involvement in the international setting, including its participation in international efforts to improve the status of women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against them. The ratification of the UN convention on Political Rights for Women through Law No. 68/1958, and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through Law No.7/1984, were two of the early significant measures taken by the government to respond to the international development agenda and to improve women's status in Indonesia. Achieving gender equality and empowering women are in fact one of the Millennium Development Goals set out by the United Nations. Indonesia, as a member state, has the obligation to work on achieving this goal by putting national gender mainstreaming strategies in place.

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through Law No.7/1984 was definitely intended to create a legal framework to achieve gender equality and equity within private and public domains. It is the mandate of this UN convention that member countries are required to change social behaviour and customs resulting in gender stereotypes discriminating people based on their sex. It is equally

important to work on coordinated gender equality strategies within government institutions to ensure that officials understand the importance of having gender sensitive policies in place which, in turn, will contribute to achieving gender equality. In the three decades under Suharto's New Order government, despite a number of shortcomings, gender equality efforts in Indonesia have arguably shown a promising trend in some areas, especially in the education sector. The numbers of students enrolled in all levels of education has increased significantly as indicated by the increased school participation rate for both boys and girls.

While working on improving economic development, the government started to investigate education as an important aspect of the national development framework. This can be seen in the first Five-Year Development Plan 1969-1973, which identified a number of problems in the education sector. Given the fact that Indonesia had just endured severe socio-political and economic situations, working on improving the lack of educational facilities, the numbers of qualified teachers, low school participation rate, and the high illiteracy rate as well as improving the efficiency of educational management was a huge task for the government. The vast demographic features of the country were also a considerable challenge in the effort to establish educational infrastructure throughout the country. Enormous resources needed to build educational infrastructure during the First Five Year Development Plan made it impossible for the government to cover the isolated part of the country.

The importance of education as one of the gender equality strategies is reflected in one of the Millennium Development



Goals championed by the United Nations which intend to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Recognizing the impact of education towards gender equality, Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of The United Nations, claims that, “one of the most powerful means by which women can improve their circumstances is through education” (2001, p. 7). In a similar tone, Mrs. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Singaporean Minister for Community Development, Youth, and Sports, states that “education represents the most sustainable solution to level the playing field between different groups in society” (2009, p. xv). According to Lubis, when it comes to improving women’s condition and status in society:

education has been shown to bring about a profound change in the power and prestige of women almost everywhere that it has proven influential; for education modifies the position of women, just as gender also effects the position of the educated” (2002, pp. 43-44).

In a similar vein, Subrahmanian asserts that:

Assessing progress towards gender equality, therefore, requires measuring meaningful progress towards the right to education, in turn assessing both quantitative and qualitative information on a wide range of phenomena that underpin the rights of men and women, to, within and through education” (2005, p. 397).

To improve the illiteracy rate as well as to increase the number of girls accessing education, the government abolished primary school fees in 1977. It also later introduced a compulsory primary education program in its fourth Five-

Year Development Plan in 1984-1988, giving every school age child the opportunity to take part in six year basic education. All the efforts undertaken by the Indonesian government to improve the education sector are instrumental in improving women's opportunity to pursue a higher level of education, which in turn helps improve gender equality. It is not surprising that the number of women entering senior secondary and tertiary education level in Indonesia has surpassed that of men, as indicated in the following table.

Table 4. Number of students at all levels of education between 1945 and 2006

School Level	1945	1968	1995	2001	2006
Primary	2.523.410	12.163.495	25.948.574	28.686.383	25.982.590
Junior Secondary	90.365	1.150.000	6.945.433	9.496.283	8.073.389
Senior Secondary	18.907	482.000	4.225.823	5.448.673	5.729.347
Tertiary	1.600	156.000	2.303.460	2.494.601	2.691.810

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia, 2007.

It was evident that “the rapid economic development during the New Order years gave rise to a cohort of better-educated young women” (Blackburn, 2004, p. 27). This achievement has been considered as a success indicator in national development priorities. On this note, Subrahmanian argues that

basic education is also recognized as providing the means to social development ends—such as improving health conditions and status, enhancing political awareness and participation, and reducing fertility levels through facilitating access to information and services. In addition to its instrumental value, the intrinsic value of education is also emphasized, particularly in terms of how it increases the agency and choice of individuals. This translates into their participation in securing better quality lives and prospects for themselves and for future generations, as well as the wider socio-political environment (2002, p. 1).

It is clear that the efforts of the New Order regime to improve the country's education sector have been one of the major successes in Indonesian development history. Indonesia is considered as one of the developing countries that has been successful in closing the gender gaps in education. Undoubtedly, the increase in the number of women going to university has positive implications on the number of women entering the workforce. As more and more women are getting the opportunity to pursue their university degree, the number of women entering the work force also increases. A new young generation of educated women now has the tools and knowledge to fight for their rights. As a result, "women came to believe that they could do anything a man could do, and started going into more technical and professional jobs than ever before" (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 19).

The New Order regime recognized the important role women bring to the development process. This was evident in many national programs carried out by the government. An initial attempt to include women in the development process can be seen in the 1973 Broad Guidelines on State Policy

(GBHN) emphasizing “women’s contribution to the nation within the family context of guiding young generation” (Oey-Gardiner, 2002, p. 103). Women’s role within the national development process is also mentioned in the 1978 GBHN. According to Dzuhayatin, the 1978 GBHN defines women’s duties as: 1) a loyal backstop to and supporter of her husband, 2) producer and educator of the future generation, 3) caretaker of the household, 4) additional economic provider for the family, 5) a member of Indonesian society” (2002, p. 169).

Although the inclusion of women in the GBHN could be considered as an attempt of the government to formally and legally include women within the national development framework, many women activists were critical of the government’s formula in relation to the roles set out for women in the 1978 GBHN. They argued that women’s roles defined in the GBHN were gender biased as they restricted women to secondary roles, as supporters of their spouses’ careers and nurturers of future generations. Suryakusuma argues that the formulation of women’s roles as wives within national development framework had been designed to serve the government’s interest and to contain women’s potential (1987). This is exactly the impact of gender state ideology implemented by Suharto’s New Order regime. Although women were included in the national development programs designed by the New Order regime, their involvement has been restricted to areas that are thought to be females’ area of interests. In this sense, the New Order regime approach to development shares principles of WID as mentioned in the earlier section of this chapter.

Suharto, in his attempt to improve economic development which was a major priority during his first term in office, saw the need to involve women in tackling rapid population growth which was considered as one of the contributing factors that could influence economic development at the time. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, to be able to control population growth, the New Order government introduced the National Family Planning program in the late 1960s. This program has been very successful, not only in controlling population growth, but also in alleviating poverty, and improving economic development of the country. As a matter of fact, three decades after its inception in 1968, due to its success, the New Order's Family Planning program "stood as model for developing world" (Hull & Adioetomo, 2002, p. 235). It was clear that the success of national development programs such as the Family Planning program and Family Guidance Movement (PKK) would not been possible without women's involvement and participation. Muhammad Sadli suggests that

many poverty alleviation programs have an important gender dimension, including social safety nets, health care projects, programs to reduce drop-out rate among primary school children or to provide milk to babies, small and rural credit programs, and activities aimed at the informal sectors of the economy (2002, p. 67).

Taking into account the contribution and support that women could provide towards national development programs, the New Order government in executing its programs, established government sponsored women's

organisations, such as *Dharma Wanita*. The establishment of this organisation, for example, was intended to include women in the development process by instigating women's role within national development framework.

The activities of *Dharma Wanita* were linked to the development in the early 1970s of the State sponsored Family Guidance Movement (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga - PKK) which, under the central control of the Minister of Internal Affairs, had branches at every level of society led by the wives of state officials (Blackburn, 2004, p. 25).

The role and status of women in Indonesia have systematically progressed under the New Order government. The fact that women were considered as one of the assets in the national development programs has helped pave ways for women to get involved in the public domain. The 1978 GBHN, for example, "took a broader view of women's responsibilities, recognizing the need for them to participate in all fields while still emphasizing their paramount role within the family" (Oey-Gardiner, 2002, p. 103). While women's role in the national development process was expanded in the 1983 and 1988 GBHN which recognized their potential in the economic and socio-political arena, women's primary role as the guardian of the next generation was still very much intact. It was not until 1993 when women's status was further elevated. In the 1993 GBHN, "women were declared as *mitrasejajar* (equal partner) in development, but remained constrained by male-imposed concepts of women's *kodrat*(nature), *harkat*(dignity) and *martabat*(status)" (Oey-

Gardiner, 2002, p. 103). The term gender itself was first used in the 1999 GBHN.

To some women's organisations and women activists, however, these measures have not been targeted to improve the status and roles of women, but rather to serve the government's national development interest at the expense of women. *Dharma Wanita*, for example, has been considered a medium through which the New Order government "organized and controlled the activities of civil servants' wives and ultimately those of civil servants, whose career are affected by the performance of their wives in *Dharma Wanita*" (Suryakusuma, 1987, p. 31). The roles formulated by the government through *Dharma Wanita* in fact restricted women from fulfilling their full potential.

As mentioned earlier, the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through Law No.7/1984 was another measure put in place by the government to further strengthen efforts to improve the status of women. A number of laws have been replaced or amended, which give women more opportunities to get involved in many aspects of life.

Following the ratification of the UN CEDAW, research conducted by The Convention Watch Working Group, established in 1994 by a number of scholars who were involved and interested in the advancement of women, found that an increasing number of Indonesian women were entering the formal workforce. Particular emphasis was placed on article 11 of the Women's Convention, which pertains to the rights of women workers (Sadli, 2002, p. 87). Article 11 of the Convention state that women workers has:

the right to equal employment opportunities and remuneration; the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and condition of service; prohibition of dismissal on grounds of pregnancy or childbirth; the right to protection of health and safety, including the safeguarding of reproductive functions; prohibition of discrimination on the basis of marital status; and the right to social security (Sadli, 2002, pp. 87-88).

To implement these principles in the workplace, the government has issued a number of labour laws and regulations aimed at putting the above principles in place, which are punishable by imprisonment or fines if violated (Sadli, 2002). “In 1995, the effort to improve women’s capacity was strengthened further through Decree No. 17/1995 issued by the Minister of Home Affairs instructing district and provincial governments to establish the Women in Development Management Teams” (Parawansa, 2002, p. 71). The objective in setting up the Women in Development Management Teams was in order to have a coordinated effort with respect to gender-related programs within government departments (Parawansa, 2002). The issuance of this decree was significant in relation to improving gender mainstreaming strategies. Issues that were previously handled by one department within government ministries could now be synergized and coordinated to achieve maximum results.

In 1997, the government, through the Ministry of Manpower, amended the Manpower Law No. 25/1997. This amendment was intended to “eliminate discrimination in work promotion and training; provide equal payment for equal work; ensure social security rights and rights to



occupational health and safety, non-discrimination on the ground of marital status or pregnancy, and menstruation and maternity leave” (Parnohadiningrat, 2002, p. xxv). All these measures were put in place as national gender mainstreaming strategies to promote the status of women and improve their contribution to the development process.

## **V. Gender Mainstreaming in the Period of Transition to Democracy (1998-onward)**

After the fall of the New Order regime in May 1998, considerable efforts were made by the government to socialize, institutionalize, and strengthen gender equality agenda in Indonesia. Habibie, who took over the presidency after the fall of Suharto, continued to work on gender equality strategies, building on previous strategies under the former regime. His term was followed by the appointment of Abdurrahman Wahid in October 1999.

According to Parawansa, the government’s political will to work on achieving gender equality was reflected in the 1999 National Broad Guidelines (GBHN) which stated that “empowering women is achieved by improving women’s role and status in national life through national policy implemented by institutions that struggle for actualization of gender equality and justice” (2002, pp. 72-73). The Ministry of Manpower, through Law No. 111/1999, as part of its law reform in dealing with gender inequality in work place, ratified the ILO Convention No. 100 regarding an equal wage system for male and female workers holding the same or equal jobs.

The government, in its effort to improve women’s

role and status, enacted Law No. 25/2000 regarding National Development Programs 2000-2004. This National Development Program, according to State Ministry for Women Empowerment (SMWP) “contains 19 gender-responsive development programs that are distributed into n developmental fields” (2006a, p. 1). This was later followed by the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 9, 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming which was clearly intended to provide integrated and coordinated efforts to tackle the problem of women’s under-representation in Indonesia’s social and political life. This Presidential Decree signals the adoption of the GAD approach in the gender equality agenda in Indonesia.

The establishment of the Ministry for Women’s Empowerment during the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid, was perhaps one of the most important steps in an attempt to integrate gender issues within the government’s national development programs. Presidential decree No. 9, 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development Programs provides guidelines and development strategies aimed at achieving gender equality by integrating and accommodating aspirations, needs, and gender issues in development planning (Ministry of Women Empowerment, Republic of Indonesia, 2002).

This presidential decree in a way was the response to the poor Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) and Gender-related Development Index (GDI) result which ranked Indonesia at number 94 out of 174 countries in 2007/2008 (UNDP, 2008, p. 328). The results of the GEM and GDI indicated the low status of women in society. They

showed that women have not had the same privileges as men in various aspects of life, and they will be less likely to get a proper education as parents, most of the time, will prioritize boys to go to school if they have to choose between the two.

To further promote and implement Gender Mainstreaming strategies within government departments, the issuance of Decree No 132/2003 by the Ministry of Home Affairs has also provided the legal framework and guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming efforts within regional development strategies (Empowerment, 2006b, p. 20). Besides providing a legal framework for local government to make necessary steps to mainstream gender within local government departments, the Decree has also provide platforms for cooperation between different government bodies, as well as provincial governments to intensify efforts to provide policy supports and monitor the implementation of gender strategies at both national and local levels.

With this Decree, the State Ministry of Women's Empowerment has a mandate to take a lead role in coordinating various government institutions to work on gender mainstreaming strategies. Government institutions have to take a gender mainstreaming approach in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development policies and programs. To further improve the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts, the National Plan of Action for the 2000 to 2004 was formulated identifying five key areas which need to be focused on. They are: "(1) improving women's quality of life, (2) raising awareness of justice and equity issues nationwide, (3) eliminating the violence against women, (4) protecting the human rights of women, and (5)

strengthening women's institutions" (Parawansa, 2002, pp. 73-74).

During this time, the government started to consider gender and power relations within social structures, in formulating national development programs. As mentioned earlier, this approach to development is also known as the GAD approach. While principles of GAD have been adopted by the government, in reality, unfortunately, little has changed in the way national development programs are executed. According to Reeves and Baden (2000, p. 33),

Although WID and GAD perspectives are theoretically distinct, in practice it is less clear, with a programme possibly involving elements of both. Whilst many development agencies are now committed to a gender approach, in practice, the primary institutional perspective remains as WID and associated 'antipoverty' and 'efficiency' policies. There is often a slippage between GAD policy rhetoric and a WID reality where 'gender' is mistakenly interpreted as 'women'.

The above quotation clearly indicates the mistakes that may occur in the execution of the GAD approach. And in the context of developing country like Indonesia where practices of patriarchal cultures are still widespread, this mistake may be one of the reasons that the gender equality strategy does not produce the intended results. Despite the issuance of Presidential decree No. 9, 2000 on gender mainstreaming, the gender mainstreaming strategy is still carried out in isolation of other national development programs, making it difficult to improve gender equality. This is a typical approach to gender equality carried out under the New Order regime.

Understandably, “although the gender discourse of the New Order has been shifted from center stage since the fall of Suharto, many of the assumptions about women and work that prevailed during that time remain strong” (Ford & Parker, 2008, p. 10).

Not surprisingly, in the case of Indonesia, the utilization of the GAD approach through gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality in society has had little impacts. While there are several contributing factors resulting in this situation, the integration of state gender ideology, which incorporates principle of patriarchal values, within national development programs seems to have somehow impeded the success of gender mainstreaming agenda within government institutions. This is not to say that Indonesian government has not been working to improve the role and status of women.

In 2005, the government established an independent team to evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming strategies. This evaluation was carried out in nine government ministries, three provinces, and three districts. The evaluation was intended to examine the impacts of political support from the Ministry towards policy implementation and decide whether gender related measures would be sustainable. Financial supports, facilities as well as human resource aspects, and how they contribute to the success of gender mainstreaming implementation were also part of this undertaking. This was an important step taken by the government to look at the result of gender mainstreaming programs in government departments and local authorities, which later could be used to develop better program

implementation.

In the 2006 National Development Work Plan, the government, taking into account the importance of instituting gender mainstreaming policies within government ministries in order to improve women's status and to empower them in the national development process, stipulated gender mainstreaming as one of the major principles that must be carried out in development policies and programs (Empowerment, 2006a). With strong political will, the government has been working to institute gender responsive policies in carrying out the national development process. It is expected that with gender sensitive and responsive development policies in place, changes in the attitudes of government officials towards women stereotypes and their potential will gradually change.

During the implementation phase of a number of government's gender equality strategies, one of the biggest challenges affecting the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts in Indonesia has been the lack of understanding of what gender and gender stereotype mean, as well as and long standing view on patriarchal culture. The opinions on women's role and status held by the majority of Indonesians, including government officials, have been considered as a major factor impinging on the success of gender mainstreaming initiatives. To many, gender equality is seen as a threat to existing power relation structures. Therefore, there has been a suggestion that there is a tendency to preserve the power relation status quo by government officials. On this note, Richard Dyer asserts that

the establishment of normalcy (i.e. what is accepted as

“normal”) through social and stereo-types is one aspect of the habit of the ruling groups ... to attempt to fashion the whole society according to their own world view, value system, sensibility and ideology. So right is this world view for the ruling groups that they make it appear (as it does appear to them) as “natural” and “inevitable” – and for everyone- and, in so far as they succeed, they establish their hegemony (1977, p. 30).

King and Mason, when talking about how social institutions influence gender relations argue that

societal institutions –social norms, customs, rights, law- as well as economic institutions, such as markets, shape roles and relationships between men and women and influence what resources women and men have access to, what activities they can or cannot undertake, and in what forms they can participate in the economy and in the society (2001, p. 13).

Kofifah Indar Parawansa, former Minister for Women’s Empowerment during the AbdurRahman Wahid presidency, acknowledged that while efforts to improve women’s role and status in Indonesia have long been a concern, women are still struggling to achieve gender equity and equality (Parawansa, 2002). Despite the fact that a number of legal frameworks concerning the promotion of the rights of women have been passed by the government, the task to ensure the gender equality initiative is still an enormous undertaking. However, the government’s effort in this area has shown promising results. Considerable achievement in the education sector, for example, is contributing to the overall improvement in

women's status in society. In other words, there has been a change in the way gender relations are perceived in Indonesia.

In the higher education sector, the Indonesian government mandated the nationwide establishment of the Centre for Women Studies (CWS) to be established to help disseminate gender related programs at universities. A core formal function of the CWS is to assist local governments in research on gender for planning and policy formulation. "The formal implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in educational sector has been in place since 2002 when the Ministry of National Education established Gender Mainstreaming Workgroups within the Ministry" (Empowerment, 2006b, p. 19). In the education sector, a number of programs and activities have been designed to accelerate and improve implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts. This involves conducting:

- a. advocacy with senior officials of Ministry of National Education
- b. policy analysis
- c. cooperation with Center for Women Studies as well as non-government organizations
- d. preparation of education profile and development of education database by gender type, in a bid to produce statistical data as well as gender-conscious education indicators
- e. communication, information, and education regarding gender equality and justice (Empowerment, 2006a, pp. 20-21).

The advocacy programs through workshops and capacity building activities were aimed at enhancing awareness



of senior government officials on gender related issues. The expectation of such programs was to bring about a gender sensitive policy making process within government departments which in turn would result in gender responsive policies. Educational policy analysis was needed to evaluate whether existing policies within the Ministry of National Education were designed to improve gender equality. The results of this policy analysis would lead to the formulation of gender responsive educational policies in the future. It is clear that despite the limited impact on the overall situation of gender equality agenda in Indonesia, the Indonesian government has shown strong political will to improve women's status in society, which is reflected in the issuance of the Presidential Decree and government regulations.



# **WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CULTURE OF PUBLIC ORGANISATION IN INDONESIA**

## **I. Introduction**

This chapter presents the issue of women and leadership and the culture of public organisation in Indonesia. The key points covered in this chapter include the state of women working in public sector, and their opportunity to assume leadership roles. An illustration of women's involvement in the political arena will be presented to show the progress of women's participation in the public domain. This is essential as the political domain has always been regarded as an indicator of women's progression in the public sphere in Indonesia.

Women's involvement in leadership roles in higher education institutions, including those working in Islamic higher education, is also a topic that is addressed. Discussion on the culture of public organisations will be presented in order to provide a connection between women's opportunity to assume leadership roles. There is also an examination of the role of organisational culture on this issue. In this way, a view of the dynamics of organisational culture and women's aspiration to leadership roles is evident.

## **II. Women in leadership in Indonesia**

The issue of women's involvement in the public domain is not a new theme in Indonesia. As a matter of fact, Indonesian women have been taking part in the struggle for independence and in Indonesian national development process. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Indonesian government has been working to improve women's role and status through a gender equality agenda. Progress made in the education sector, for example, has been one of significant factors in addressing the problem of gender disparity in the public domain in Indonesia. Positive impacts can be seen in the increasing number of women who manage to pursue their tertiary education over the years. A number of legal products in relation to gender equality initiatives have been put in place in order to improve the state of gender relations. As a result, there has been a steady increase in the number of women working in the public domain. Nevertheless, despite the increase in the number of working women and in the improvement of the status of women in society, the gender gap between men and women in public domains persists. This is particularly true in the area of public leadership roles, including in the higher education sector. In a similar vein, Murniati asserts that "gender disparity tends to be wider in leadership positions" (2012, p. 2).

Women continue to land jobs that are traditionally identified as females' jobs, and are usually referred to as pink collar work. This term is used to refer to women-dominated jobs and professions including childcare, cleaning, nursing, secretarial work, teaching and waitressing. This is surprising considering the fact that a number of researchers have

stressed the importance of having female qualities in the management of organisations (Eagly & Carli, 2003a, 2003b; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). In a similar tone, Connell points out that “gender equality is now a widely accepted goal in public administration” (2006, p. 837), and that “one of the main goals of Western feminism has been to open the top levels of public administration and politics to women” (2006, p. 837).

Despite the realization of women’s positive contribution to organisations when appointed to leadership roles, the trend still shows that the number of women occupying lower-level management positions persists (Eagly & Carli, 2003a; Statistics, 2009), while the number of women assuming leadership roles remains limited. In Indonesia, statistical data show that the majority of women are working in the sector that traditionally belongs to women’s area of expertise such as early childhood education, and clerical and administrative work, and that they mostly occupy lower level positions. Understandably, when it comes to working in area that traditionally belongs to men, women’s representation is even lower.

The steady increase in the number of working women is not necessarily reflected in the number of women holding leadership roles as most of them only occupy lower level management and an administrative type of work. A similar phenomenon can also be seen, for example, in the lack of women in the political arena in Indonesia. The following table shows the proportion of members of the National House of People Representatives from 1955 until 2009.

Table 5. Composition of members of House of Representative 1955-2009

Year of General Election	M	%	F	%	M + F	Total %
1955	256	94,12	16	5,88	272	100
1971	429	93,26	31	6,74	460	100
1977	423	91,96	37	6,74	460	100
1982	418	90,87	42	9,13	460	100
1987	441	88,20	59	11,80	500	100
1992	438	87,60	62	12,40	500	100
1997	442	88,40	58	11,60	500	100
1999	456	91,20	44	8,80	500	100
2004	485	88,18	65	11,82	550	100
2009	460	82,14	100	17,86	560	100

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia, 2010, p. 51

It is clear from the above statistical data that while there has been a gradual increase over the years in the number of women appointed to the House of People Representative, the number of women sitting in the parliament is considerably lower than that of men.

With women being under-represented in the national political arena, it will be difficult for them to influence and create meaningful changes in areas that are important to their welfare, such as gender mainstreaming policies, gender sensitive budgets, etcetera. It is fair to say that with a limited voice in the male dominated parliament,

formulating gender equality and equity programs in the national development agenda would be a huge undertaking. In addition, it would be difficult for women to assume leadership roles in a male dominated area such as politics.

The lack of women in leadership positions can also be observed from the number of women who occupy top echelon positions in government institutions in Indonesia. The following table shows the composition of civil servants in Indonesia in December 2005.

Table 6. The number of civil servants based on echelon in December 2005

No	Rank	M	%	F	%	Total
1	Echelon I	582	90,23	63	9,77	645
2	Echelon II	10.500	93,29	755	6,71	11.255
3	Echelon III	47.887	86,44	7.509	13,56	55.396
4	Echelon IV	167.217	77,91	47.422	22,09	214.639
5	Echelon V	10.793	77,68	3.102	22,32	13.895
6	Special Functional	924.939	48,71	973.986	51,29	1.898.925
Total		1.161.918	58,57	1.032.837	41,43	2.194.755

Source: Badan Kepegawaian Negara, 2005

It can be seen from the table that in 2005, the number of women occupying top echelon position (echelon I) in Indonesia was 63, which only makes up 9,77 per cent of the total top echelon positions in the country. The percentage of women in the echelon II position is even worse. Out of

11.255 echelon II positions, there were only 755 women who managed to land the second most senior position that civil servants can achieve during their careers. This only constitutes 6,71 per cent of the total number of civil servants in this rank. These two top echelons are the most senior echelons. Those who want to apply for senior leadership roles where decisions on strategic development policies are executed must have these two top echelons. Not surprisingly, the number of women who manage to assume leadership roles is significantly lower than men. Understandably, it is difficult for women to penetrate and influence the male dominated policy making process as they are mostly excluded from the decision-making process.

What can be concluded from the above table is that as the levels of rank decrease, the number of women holding positions in these levels increases. Still, the number of women in lower level echelons is lower than that of men. These figures clearly describe gender disparities within government institutions with regard to women in senior leadership roles. This phenomenon is disturbing considering the measures taken by the government to implement gender mainstreaming strategies and improve the status of women in society. What this means is that despite progress in the field of education, gender mainstreaming efforts to decrease the gender gap in the public service sector have not had the desired impacts. Lubis, in addressing the phenomenon of lack of women in leadership roles in the public domain in Indonesia argues that

the gender gap in the field of education and politics has had a greater effect on the leadership role of women in society



than perhaps any other factors. To a great degree, gender gap hinders expanded roles of leadership and restricts the empowerment of women in leading and participating in organizations (2002, p. 43).

The above quotation suggests that the lack of leadership roles for women is the result of gender disparity existing in society which is then reflected in women's opportunity in the public domain. Connell argues that "around the world and in most spheres of public sector activity, women remain seriously underrepresented in positions of political and administrative authority" (2006, p. 837). As mentioned earlier, in the Indonesian political arena, which can be regarded as a representation of women's actualization and involvement in public sphere, a considerable gender gap still exists in the composition of members of the House of People Representative (DPR) which, according to Lubis, affects women's political bargaining when it comes to the gender sensitive policy decision-making process.

In a similar vein, Robinson (2009, p. 158) suggests that Indonesian women legislators and activists have identified the increasing representation of women in the national and provincial legislatures as an important goal, both for its symbolic value and because they feel it gives women an opportunity to influence government policies that impact them. Women's right advocates in Indonesia, who have been working towards increasing women's political representation since the first general election was held in 1955, understand "the necessity of increasing women's participation in development programmes to realize the officially sanctioned goal of gender equity (*kemitrasejajaran*)" (Robinson, 2009,

p. 158). To be able to influence gender sensitive development policies and to push agenda that are close to women is important to increase women's political participation.

With limited voices in determining decision-making in the formulation of development policies, it is unlikely the issues that are important to women will get appropriate attention and resources. In the efforts to improve women's representation in both political and public realms, in the run-up to the 2004 general election, the government adopted a new measure by instigating that political parties must have a 30 per cent seat allocation for women as their candidates. Despite the varying degree of successful implementations within political parties: "the discourse about the need for increased political participation of women reached a new level of prominence" (Wayong, 2007, p. 48). This measure was seen as a positive and promising step in closing the gap between male and female parliamentarians. Whether this affirmative action will lead to an increase in the number of women assuming senior leadership roles in the public domain in Indonesia remains to be seen.

The problem of women's under-representation can also be observed in the higher education sector. It has been acknowledged that higher education in Indonesia is dominated by men. This can be seen in the composition of men and women working in this sector. The following section will present a brief discussion on the overall situation of HE in Indonesia. This sets up a conceptual framework for the analysis of women's increasing involvement in the HE sector.

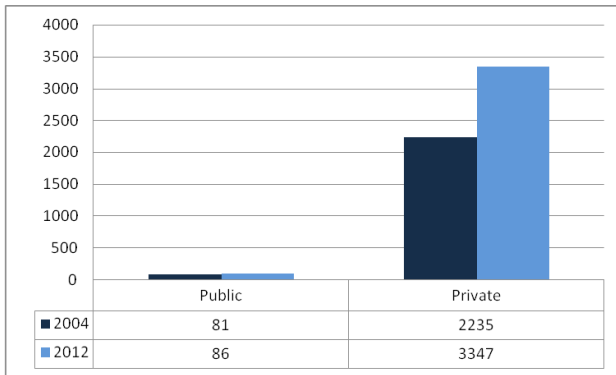
### **III. Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia**

Contemporary Asian higher education is fundamentally influenced by its historical traditions (Altbach, 2004, p. 15), and in the case of Indonesia, by its colonial ruler. “Secular higher education in Indonesia has a relatively short history. It began with the establishment by the Dutch colonialists of tertiary schools training indigenous people in medicine and engineering” (Buchori & Malik, 2004; Wicaksono & Friawan, 2011, p. 159), to address the need for professional manpower to support the colonial administration. This was due to a shortage of engineers and other professionals from the Netherlands, caused by World War I (Buchori & Malik, 2004, p. 253).

Later, the Indonesian government founded GadjahMada University in Jogjakarta on 19 December 1949 through Government Regulation No. 23, 1949. GadjahMada University was established by combining several educational institutions into one. Over the years, the number of higher education institutions has increased significantly. With high economy growth, the demand for skilled workers, particularly in science and technology, has become even more important. This has led the government, through the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGHE) of the Ministry of National Education (MONE), to create a framework that standardizes the national HE system, and regulates the structure of academic programs, governance, and the roles and responsibilities of faculty members (Wicaksono & Friawan, 2011). This development, coupled with the high number of senior secondary graduates, has seen a significant increase in the numbers of universities in Indonesia as shown in the

following figure.

Figure 3. The number of public and private universities in Indonesia in 2004 and 2012



Adopted from: Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE), MoNE, 2004 & 2012

The latest statistic from the DGHE indicates that in 2012 there were 3433 universities, consisting of 86 public and 3347 private universities. The number of private universities jumped from 2235 in 2004 to 3347 in 2012, an increase of 1112 within an eight year period. While the number of private universities jumps considerably, the number of public universities only increases to 86 in 2012, an increase of five universities since 2004. Three of these state-run universities are in Aceh province. The above numbers are specifically for one type of HEI, that of ‘university’ and do not count the numbers of other types such as academies, polytechnics, advanced schools, and institutes. Understandably, “the private sector has been instrumental in the development of higher education, specifically in terms of expansion” (Buchori

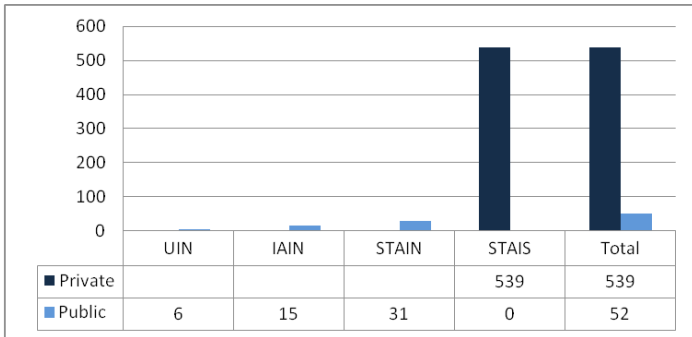
& Malik, 2004, p. 265). It is not surprising to see that private HEIs have the biggest share of student enrolment in the country, accounting for more than 60 per cent.

With regard to Islamic higher education, the establishment of *Akademi Dinas Ilmu Agama* (ADIA) or the Academy of Religious Sciences in 1950 in Yogyakarta, gave impetus to the birth of the Institute of Islamic Higher Learning (IAIN) in 1960 (Welch, 2006, p. 670). Later, through the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 49, 1963, dated February 25, 1963, it was transformed into the first Islamic HE, State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Yogyakarta, followed by IAIN SyarieffHidayatullah, Jakarta. These establishments are seen as recognition of the role and influence of Islamic education in the national development, especially in the education arena. However, unlike secular HEIs which take most of the student enrolment in the country, “modern Islamic HEIs contribute to 15 per cent of total HE enrolments nationwide” (Buchori & Malik, 2004).

In terms of educational structure, duration of studies, and stages of learning, “Islamic HEI resembles those of secular HEIs. IAIN graduates were, and indeed still are, considered to have the equivalent status of graduates of secular HEIs” (Buchori& Malik, 2004, p. 267). Since their establishment, Islamic HEIs have evolved quite significantly and recent developments have seen them move towards research based institutions. “New orientation towards research is clearly visible, not merely reflected in the building of IAIN institutionally, but also in the strengthening of education and research among IAIN intellectuals” (Buchori& Malik, 2004, pp. 267-268). One of the most important developments

and achievements of Islamic HE was the conversion of IAIN SyarifHidayatullah from institute to Islamic university with the issuance of Presidential Decree Number 31 of 2002, dated May 20, 2002. The following statistical data show the number of public and private Islamic HEIs in Indonesia in 2012.

Figure 4. The number of Islamic HEIs (IHEI) in Indonesia in 2012



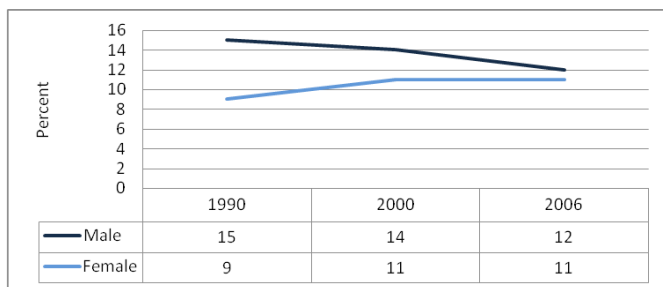
Adopted from: Directorate General of Islamic Higher Education (DGIHE), MoRA, 2012

The above statistical data show that there are 539 private Islamic HEIs, accounting for 91.8 per cent of the total Islamic HEIs, and 52 state run Islamic HEIs, accounting for 8.8 per cent of Islamic HEIs in Indonesia. Of 591 Islamic HEIs, there are 19 HE institutions in Aceh province, three state-run Islamic HEIs consisting of 1 Institute and 2 advanced schools and 16 private Islamic HEIs. These data show the extent of expansion that the private HE sector has undergone in Indonesia. As a result, the numbers of students enrolled in private Islamic HEIs are higher than those of public ones.

Despite its historical importance as the early form of HEI in Indonesia, when it comes to infrastructure, the Islamic educational mainstream system falls behind its secular counterpart. From the above data, it can be seen that the total number of Islamic HEIs in 2012 is 591, accounting for less than 15 per cent of total 4024 HEIs in Indonesia, consisting both public and private HEIs from Islamic and secular mainstream systems.

While the increasing number of universities has contributed significantly to accommodate the number of students who want to pursue their studies, HEIs in Indonesia still have not been able to keep up and accommodate the growing demands as a result of increasing senior secondary graduates resulting from better access and school infrastructure throughout the country. In relation to enrolment rates (ER) in HE, an interesting trend between male and female gross ER took place from 1990 to 2006 as indicated in the following table.

Figure 5. The enrolment rate between male and female students in HE from 1990-2006

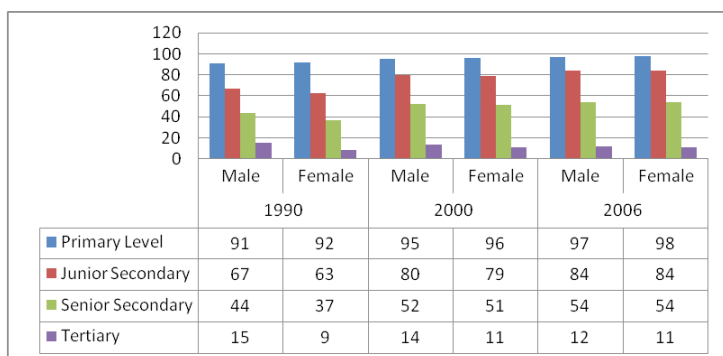


Adopted from: Badan Pusat Statistik, 1990, 2000, and 2006

The above figure shows that in 1990, the female ER was 9 per cent, compared to 15 per cent to that of the male's.

However, by 2006, the gap between female and male ER in HE had narrowed to 11 and 12 per cent respectively. This indicates that while female ER in HE has continued to rise, male ER on the other hand has declined from 15 to 12 per cent from 1990 to 2006. The above figure indicates a promising trend in the number of women accessing HE. In this sense, it is an indication of a changing perception in Indonesian society in the value of education for women and the contribution they play; a positive sign in a patriarchal society like Indonesia.

Figure 6. The enrolment rates at all levels of education in 1990, 2000, and 2006



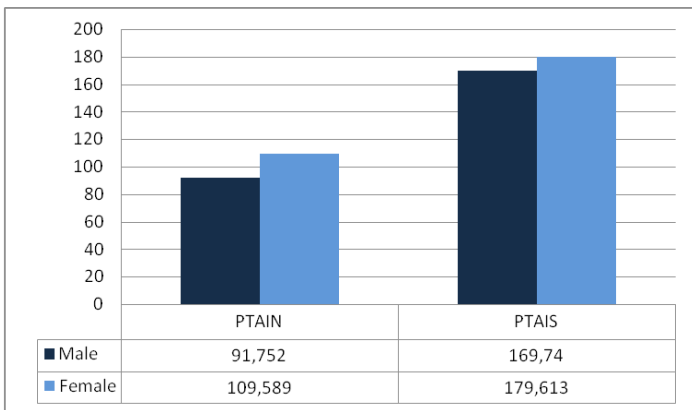
Adopted from: Badan Pusat Statistik, 1990, 2000, and 2006

Figure 7 indicates that the enrolment rate of boys and girls at primary level in 1990, 2000, and 2006 is considerably higher compared to the rest of the education levels. At primary level, from 1990 to 2006, the female enrolment rate was in fact higher than that of males. Besides the success of educational policies and improved school infrastructure in both urban and rural areas, “a change in attitude of parents



towards the importance of education for their children regardless of gender” (Wayong, 2007, p. 125) has also been a major factor in this improvement. In 2010, the number of female students enrolled in Islamic HEI in Indonesia surpassed that of male students. This can be seen in the following figure.

Figure 7. The number of male and female students at IHEIs in 2010



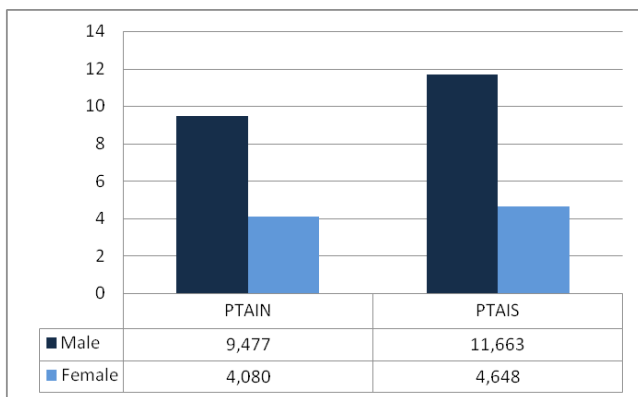
Adopted from: Directorate General of Islamic Higher Education (DGIHE), MORA, 2012

From the above figure, it is safe to conclude that perceptions of women’s potential and their economic contributions to the family have changed considerably as reflected in the number of female students pursuing their HE. This can be seen in the number of women enrolling in both public Islamic higher education (PTAIN) and private Islamic higher education (PTAIS), which surpassed the number of men’s enrolment. The same trend can be seen in Aceh. Statistical data in

2009 also show that the number of women enrolled in HE in Aceh was higher than that of men. The number of men going to university in 2009 in Aceh province was 15,420. On the other hand, the number of women going to university was 21,420. This was a clear indicator of the paradigm shift in the value of girls with regard to education. It indicates changing perceptions within Acehnese society about women and their contributions in society. This is quite a remarkable achievement for a strong Islamic patriarchal society like Aceh. Some of the early opinions which regard women as less valuable compared to men and do not need higher education have slowly given ways to new attitudes towards women's potential.

This progress has definitely been a positive and promising development in improving the opportunity of women getting recognition in the work force. While this progress has had positive impacts on women's role and status and has improved the number of women working in the public sector, as mentioned earlier, it does not necessarily enhance the number of women in leadership roles in the public domain, including in the higher education sector. As a matter of fact, there is still a significant gap between male and female academics in the HE sector. The following figure shows the number male and female lecturers in IHEIs in Indonesia in 2010.

Figure 8. The number of male and female lecturers at public and private IHEIs in 2010



Adopted from: Directorate General of Islamic Higher Education (DGIHE), MORA, 2012

From the above data, it is clear that female academics only constitute less than half of all academics in public IHEIs. Female academics constituted about 30% (4.080) of the total 13,557 academics in public IHEIs in 2010. This number is even lower in private IHEIs which makes up only 28.5% (4.648) of the total academics. What this means is that despite the increase in the number of female students and graduates over the years, it does not necessarily mean the increase in the number of female academics in the HE sector. One of the reasons contributing to this situation is that anyone applying for lecturer position must now have at least a master's degree as a minimum requirement.

The government, realizing the importance of improving human resources and as part of the ongoing effort to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia introduced Law

Number 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. Basically, this law is intended to improve the quality of human resource in the education sector. With its introduction, to qualify as lecturer at higher education institutions, one must have an accredited post graduate degree in his/her field of expertise. Article 46 of the Law stipulates that those having completed master's degree level are qualified to teach at undergraduate level, and those having doctoral degree are qualified to teach at both under-graduate and post graduate levels. Undoubtedly, with the increased academic credential needed to apply for lecturer positions, it becomes even more important for both male and female academics to pursue post-graduate level study. Failing to comply with this Law results in administrative sanctions that could relegate their lecturer status to administrative staff.

This Law affects men and women differently. For women, this Law has in a way accentuated their burden in balancing work and family responsibilities. Working women, including those in higher education sector, have to be able to negotiate and navigate around existing work and family tasks while improving their academic qualification. Despite a considerable change in attitudes towards women and their education, pursuing graduate studies for working women poses considerable challenges. Not surprisingly, the number of women pursuing post graduate studies is lower than men.

#### **IV. Female Leadership in Higher Education Institution in Indonesia**

As mentioned in the earlier section, the increase in women's enrolment rates in higher education in Indonesia has also

improved women's status and their opportunity to contribute in the public domain. This improvement indicates a shift in society with regard to the women's value and contribution. It shows the changing cultural values concerning women. "Cultural perceptions of the roles which women are expected to fill are reflected in the extent to which women participate in formal education and the type of education to which they have access" (UNESCO, 1993, p. 12). What this means is that women's place in society can be judged from their participation in education. The above statement is particularly true in a developing country like Indonesia where patriarchal cultures is still strong. The education sector can then be one of the measures used to analyse the state of gender relations in society.

This achievement is critical in bringing about a new wave of educated young women who will later form work forces in Indonesia. Education represents an important life opportunity for women and men, and a vital social and economic resource for societies (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 401). There is no doubt that "rising levels of female education, along with increasing urbanization, have made for rising levels of female participation in the kinds of work that takes them outside of households" (Jones, 2009, p. 15). "Gender parity indicators can signal whether social forces maybe shifting to allow greater access of girls to schooling, enabling them to catch up with boys in an important dimension of life opportunity" (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 402).

The issue of women and leadership in higher education in Indonesia is complicated. When it comes to gender inequality in universities, limited research on women and leadership

in the context of Indonesian higher education has been conducted, making it difficult to provide comprehensive evidence on the issue. What makes it worse, is that the areas of gender, higher education, and development have rarely intersected, leading to silence in terms of policy, literature, and research (Morley, 2005, p. 209). In a similar tone, Toma's, Lavie, Duran, &Guillamon argue that

In the case of educational organisations, gender studies have experienced considerably less development and only in the last decade have we seen a certain systematization in the analysis of relationships between gender, power and organisational culture (2010, p. 487).

It has been argued that organisational culture within the higher education sector is highly gendered. Indication of men's superiority in HEIs is emblematic of patriarchal culture characters, as it is in many other public institutions in Indonesia. Similarly, Ramsay and Parker assert that "the history of organisation and administration clearly indicates that men not women, were the key actors in the shaping of organisational structures" (1992, p. 260). As such, in addition to resistance towards gender equality which is considered culturally offensive in the context of public organisations in Indonesia, changes in attitude, if any, towards gender relations are limited, as officials themselves have not fully understood the competitive advantage gender equality has on an organisation's effectiveness and productivity.

In the context of Indonesia, where state gender ideology has penetrated the way organisations are run, this becomes even more challenging and complicated.

Therefore, implementing gender equality programs would be seen as challenging patriarchal organisational cultures. With regard to the higher education sector, Jackson asserts that the problem of women's low representation in certain disciplinary areas, especially when it relates to decision-making positions, is a persistent theme in higher education research (Jackson, 2002). Morley also asserts that, "underrepresentation of women in senior posts, access, the absence of women from particular disciplines and professions, and gendered micro political experiences of the academy" (2005, p. 209), are main issues needed to be addressed to improve gender equality. Although the advancement of women to university leadership roles takes place, it does so with only slow progress being made towards equity (Davidson and Burke, 2004).

Despite the increase in the number of women studying at higher education level, this has not always been accompanied by a change in the qualitative dimensions of the outcomes of education (Gunawardena, Rasanayagam, Leitan, Bulumulle, & Dort, 2006, p. 562). Not many women occupy senior leadership roles in higher education Indonesia. This can be seen in the composition of lecturers at IAIN Ar-Raniry where this study was conducted. The following table shows disparity between male and female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry from 1966-2006.

Table 7. The number of male and female lecturers at five faculties based on their sex from 1966 -2006

Faculty	1966		1976		1986		1996		2006	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Islamic Law	4	0	19	2	21	1	31	5	46	6
Islamic Education	5	1	32	3	36	4	61	18	79	29
Islamic Communication	0	0	12	0	18	1	23	1	29	7
Islamic Theology	4	0	14	0	21	1	27	5	32	6
Islamic Arts	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	2	22	9
Total	13	1	77	5	96	7	155	31	208	57
Total F + M	14		82		103		186		265	

Adopted from: Buku Statistik IAIN Ar-Raniry 1966 –2006, Biro Akademik, IAIN Ar-Raniry.

The above table clearly indicates the disparity between male and female academics in the five faculties at IAIN Ar-Raniry from 1966 to 2006. This discrepancy shows the state of gender relations at the university. The fact that female academics only make up of 21.5 per cent of the total lecturers in five faculties at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2006 provides a clear indication of the degree of male domination in the composition of academics at the university.



Table 8. The number of lecturers based on work unit and gender at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2011

No	Work Unit	Male	Female	Total
1	Islamic Law Faculty	55	6	61
2	Islamic Education Faculty	84	33	117
3	Islamic Theology Faculty	33	6	39
4	Islamic Communication Faculty	38	9	47
5	Islamic Arts Faculty	22	11	33
	Total	232	65	297

Adopted from: IAIN Ar-Raniry website

<http://www.ar-raniry.ac.id/?content=datadosen>, accessed on 12/10/12)

Since 2006, there was a slight increase in the percentage of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry, from 21.50 % to 21, 88% in 2011.

Table 9. The number of administrative staff based on work unit and gender at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2011

No	Work Unit	Male	Female	Total
1	Bureau Academic and Finance	92	29	121
2	Islamic Law Faculty	15	8	23
3	Islamic Education Faculty	24	24	48
4	Islamic Theology Faculty	14	7	21
5	Islamic Communication Faculty	13	7	20
6	Islamic Arts Faculty	10	7	17
	Total	168	82	250

Adopted from: IAIN Ar-Raniry website <http://www.ar-raniry.ac.id/?content=datastaff>, accessed on 12/10/12)

The above table shows the gap between male and female administrative staff and lecturers at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Female administrative staffs make up only 32.8 per cent of the total staff. Undoubtedly, this situation indicates that IAIN Ar-Raniry is still a male dominated organisation. To investigate the issue of women and leadership at IAIN Ar-Raniry, the researcher needs to examine existing policies, statutes and regulations at the university. This is important as they play significant roles in shaping organisational culture at the university, and in turn influence career development of female academics.

## **V. Culture of Public Organisations**

As mentioned earlier, the culture of public organisations in Indonesia is very much influenced by state gender ideology. State gender ideology in Indonesia, while formulated to help national development, has adopted values of patriarchal cultures. Not surprisingly, the culture of public organisations in Indonesia, including in the higher education sector, has privileged men over women. This affects the way gender relations are perceived within the institutions. As much of the literature on organisational cultures is derived from experiences in the West, there has been limited research done on this issue in the context of Indonesia, which makes it difficult to provide a comprehensive account of the matter. Therefore, most of the literature used for the theoretical framework in this section mainly reports experiences from the developed countries. Schein's definition of organisational culture is

a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and

internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (2010, p. 18).

Regardless of types of organisations, organisational culture is considered by many organisational management experts as a key aspect of organisational competitiveness. It is at the heart of an organisation's effort to bring about efficiency and productivity (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). However, in the case of Indonesia, there has been a claim put forward by gender equality advocates that patriarchal organisational cultures, fostered by state gender ideology found in government organisations, have become one of the problems in improving competitiveness of organisations. This is because access to resources and power circles only within certain groups in organisations of mainly men. According to Schein,

culture implies stability and rigidity in the sense that how we are supposed to perceive, feel, and act in a given society, organisation, or occupation has been taught to us by our various socialization experiences and becomes prescribed as a way to maintain the social order (2010, p. 3).

Much research in the area of organisational management has identified organisational culture as one of the factors that is resistant to change. Newman concurs that "organisational cultures have been highlighted as a significant barrier to change. Even in organisations where equal opportunity initiatives are well developed, their cultures may be resistant

and intractable” (1995, p. 11).

Lewis and Taylor contend that “organisational cultures are grounded in deep-seated beliefs about gender, the nature of work and the ideal employee, which reflect societal norms and are often implicit or even unconscious and are therefore difficult to challenge” (1996, p. 112). In the context of developing countries like Indonesia, what it means is that the influence of socio-cultural values, religious values, and state gender ideology on organisational culture cannot be taken for granted. This is reflected in practices of patriarchal cultures. It prescribes the role and responsibilities that men and women have within society and ultimately within organisations.

There is no doubt that in the context of gender equality efforts in Indonesia, organisational culture has been argued as one of the factors that often affects the effectiveness of the implementation of gender-related programs. People’s unyielding perception, hundreds of years old social and cultural norms, stereotyping, and notions of what is expected of women and men, more often than not result in collective resistance towards new development, especially gender-related programs. It is widely accepted that existing socio-cultural values that undermine women’s potential have been responsible for marginalization experienced by women, especially in the public domain.

In many developing countries, including Indonesia, this situation often leads to pessimistic attitudes and limitations of women’s potential. This is why gender mainstreaming efforts are not effective, although interventions at the formal level such as putting in place new policies and procedures

have been carried out (Newman, 1995). In the case of Indonesia, the government's gender ideology has in many ways accentuated the degree of complexity to the issue.

Organisational culture in the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia has been considered patriarchal. Statistical data showing men's domination in HEIs, as in many other public institutions in Indonesia, confirm that practices of patriarchal cultures in these institutions are the main reasons for the situation. On this note, Ramsay and Parker assert that "the history of organisation and administration clearly indicates that men not women, were the key actors in the shaping of organisational structures" (1992, p. 260). Not surprisingly, changes in attitude towards gender relation are limited, if any, as government officials themselves have not fully understood the competitive advantage gender equality has on an organisation's effectiveness and productivity. Implementing gender equality programs means challenging organisational cultures.

In Indonesia, the patriarchal culture, reinforced by state gender ideology and religious values, which gives men privileges in both private and public domains, has in many ways influenced the way public institutions are run. This results in gendered organisational culture. It shapes people's roles and expectations as well as influences the culture of organisation with respect to gender relations. An immediate ramification of gendered organisational culture is the lack of women holding senior leadership roles. It is a situation where women's careers cannot progress despite them having the same qualifications as their male counterparts. This phenomenon is often referred to as the glass ceiling by

sociologists. This is not to say that the government does not work to address the issue of gender gap in the Indonesian public domain. A number of legal products and government policies intended to improve this problem, as mentioned in Chapter Three, have been put in place. Despite these efforts, gender disparity in the public domain continues, especially in relation to women in leadership roles. The following section discusses the concept of the glass ceiling and its ramifications to gender relations.

## **VI. Glass Ceiling Phenomenon**

The glass ceiling is “the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” (Commission, 1995, p.4). It has long been identified as one of the barriers that minorities and women have to confront as far as the ladder of leadership is concerned. As a result,

women are still scarce in top leadership positions in wealthy industrialized societies in spite of substantial gender equity in education and the entrance of an increasing number of women into high prestige professions and managerial jobs long dominated by men (Acker, 2009, p. 200).

In the United States, the recognition that the glass ceiling has had a crucial effect on the economy and on social justice led to the establishment of The Glass Ceiling Commission in 1991. It was enacted “to study the barriers associated with glass ceiling and issue recommendations for eliminating these hindrances to the advancement of women and minorities” to

“management and decision-making positions” (Commission, 1995, p.4).

According to Maume, “the glass-ceiling concept connotes the idea that women and minorities are recruited into firms dominated by White men, but fail to progress as far as White men in climbing the corporate hierarchy” (2004, p. 250). Specifically, The U.S. Department of Labour defines the term glass ceiling as “those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organisation into management-level positions” (1991, p. 1). When women and minorities are close enough to the top positions, but are being passed over for them, this is what many think of as a glass ceiling (Maume, 2004, p. 250).

It has been argued that even in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia, the glass ceiling phenomenon is a recurring theme that affects performance of organisations. In Indonesia, research on glass ceilings and their impacts on women’s career progression is limited, if there is any. In strong patriarchal cultures like Indonesia, glass ceiling practices in both public and private institutions in Indonesia are not uncommon. Statistical data showing the lack of women in leadership or decision-making positions reflect the widespread practices of glass ceilings. Due to the dearth of literature on this issue in the Indonesian context, literature used in this thesis refers to the research conducted in the West.

The glass ceiling phenomenon is often considered the result of gender stereotypes. Heilman asserts that “gender stereotypes have frequently been used to explain why women

are not hired into positions leading to organisational power and prestige” (2001, p. 658). Schein (2007, p. 7), elaborating about gender stereotype states that

managerial position is viewed as “male” in gender-type, the characteristics required for success are seen as more commonly held by men than by women. All else being equal, a male appears more qualified, by virtue of his gender alone, than does a female to enter and advance in management. Gender stereotyping of the managerial position fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions.

The above quotation shows the privilege associated with being men in relation to career progression. Despite men and women having equal qualifications, gender stereotypes that favour men over women often determine whether she gets the job or not. Likewise, Heilman asserts that barriers that prevent women from assuming leadership positions are viewed as a natural consequence of gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about what women are like and how they should behave (2001, p. 657). She argues that

gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about both what women are like (descriptive) and how they should behave (prescriptive) can result in devaluation of their performance, denial of credit to them for their successes, or their penalization for being competent (2001, p. 657).

According to Heilman, “the way gender bias influences evaluation in work settings, provides no assurance that a



woman will advance to the same organisational levels as an equivalently performing man, although they are as competent as their men counterparts” (Heilman, 2001, p. 657).

Understandably, “When people hold stereotypes about a group, they expect members of that group to possess characteristics and exhibit behaviour consistent with those stereotypes” (Eagly&Carli, 2003a, p. 818). In a similar tone, Heilman asserts that “essential to understanding how the female gender stereotype can obstruct women from advancing up the organisational hierarchy is the realization that top management and executive level jobs are almost always considered to be “male” in sex-type” (2001, p. 659). Despite new studies showing positive influences that women bring to the performance of organisations, women’s under-representation in decision-making positions continues to exist, mainly because of gender stereotypical attitudes (Wood, 2009).

An earlier study conducted by Berthoin and Izraeli, talking about women in management worldwide, showed that “probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in all industrialized countries is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male” (1993, p. 63). Feminine characters that are often associated with women have been used to deny women from climbing the leadership ladder. Women are often considered indecisive, weak, and irrational when confronted with difficult decisions. This is why “prejudice against women as leaders and potential leaders would interfere with women’s ability to gain authority and exercise influence and would produce discrimination when it is translated into personnel

decisions within organisations and political structures” (Carli & Eagly, 2001). It is clear that the glass ceiling phenomenon has crippled women from the opportunity to pursue the development of their career, especially in the traditionally male-dominated areas. Connell suggests that

the key points in the glass ceiling approach are as follows: (1) there has been discrimination against women, proved by the statistics of unequal access to the top; this reflects traditional stereotypes and prejudices against women in authority. (2) This discrimination is irrational – it leads to an underuse of women’s talent and conflicts with rational administration. (3) it can be overcome by organisational measures that remove the barriers to women’s advancement, such as eliminating prejudice and enforcing equal employment opportunity rules in promotion (2006, pp. 837-838).

Connell’s argument suggests that the glass ceiling phenomenon is a form of discrimination towards women leading to the lack of women in leadership roles. Investigating the factors that lead to the lack of women in top management positions, Eagly and Carli explore questions such as:

(a) whether men and women behave differently in leadership roles, (b) whether women receive prejudiced evaluations as leaders and potential leaders, and (c) whether leadership by women might be more effective or better meet the needs of organisations than leadership by men (2003a, p. 808).

They see the need to examine whether the lack of women’s involvement in high level positions is related to

their leadership styles and whether existing stereotypes have prevented women from progressing up the ladder of leadership (2003b). They also look at the impact of “prejudice and discrimination directed against women as leaders which consists of unfair evaluation of a group of people based on stereotypical judgments of the group rather than the behaviour or qualifications of its individual members” (Eagly & Carli, 2003a).

Chemers argues that, as situational theories of leadership contend, the effectiveness of leader behaviours depends on contextual variables, such as the nature of the task and the characteristics of the followers (1997). Women, may well be able to be as effective as men as leaders if they have the right approaches to the tasks and issues they face. The main question remains whether women will make more effective leaders or will better meet the needs of organisations than men if they get the opportunity (Eagly & Carli, 2003a).

Despite the long standing notion that the position of authority which has been historically interpreted as primarily a masculine activity, and hence has been gendered (Gillet, 2004, p. 1), more and more people are in accordance with the idea that stereotypically feminine qualities of cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration are important to leadership as well, certainly in some contexts and perhaps increasingly in contemporary organisations (Eagly & Carli, 2003a). The fact that technology such as contraceptives, power tools, and computers have changed modern life to such an extent that the specialized talents (for example, nurturance and physical strength) that gender roles describe are no longer essential for success in modern life: instead, both women and

men need combinations of feminine and masculine traits to succeed (Chrisler, 2004).

Although the above arguments suggesting that women, when it comes to skills and qualifications, are equally qualified as men, the situation in both developed and developing countries does not reflect this changing trend. Women are still scarce in senior leadership roles in public institutions. To address this particular issue, one of the strategies proposed and which has been adopted in many developed countries is that of affirmative action. To have a level playing field between man and women, proponents of affirmative action assert that this is one strategy that can be implemented to create gender equity. The following section discusses the concept of affirmative action and the debate between proponents and the opponents of this notion.

## **VII. Affirmative Action**

The debate of women's under-representation in the public realm in a developing country like Indonesia is intriguing, especially in the political and education sectors. On the one hand, the government recognizes the need to accommodate changes in the way government institutions and private organisations run their management. On the other hand, the recruitment process based on principle of meritocracy and equal opportunity do not leave much room for women to enter the system. Just like the glass ceiling issue, the issue of affirmative action in Indonesia has not had much attention, making it difficult to provide comprehensive illustration on this issue. What has been done in Indonesia in this regard is the implementation of a quota system in the 2004 and 2009

general election. Outside the political domain, discourse about affirmative action is rare. This is why literature on this issue mainly refers to research conducted in developed countries.

Affirmative action has been regarded as one of the measures to address the problem of women's under-representation in the public domain. This is because "affirmative action policy regulates the allocation of scarce positions in education, employment, or business contracting so as to increase the representation in those positions of persons belonging to certain population subgroups" (Fryer & Loury, 2005, p. 147). As such, it makes it possible for minority or marginalized groups, including women, to play a role in an organisation.

The demand to have a certain number for women in decision-making roles was triggered by The Beijing Platform for Action which includes the provision of the target for the number of women in decision-making positions, previously agreed upon by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This provision, stating "that women should have at least a 30 per cent share of decision-making positions" (UNIFEM, 2000, p. 9) has been instrumental in the effort to improve the odds of changing direction of development policies and strategies towards a more gender neutral and gender sensitive approach. As a result, "over 25 countries have adopted legal or constitutional quotas for women in legislature, primarily at the national level and at the local level" (Tinker, 2004, p. 532). This trend indicates that affirmative action has been considered as a strategy that could bring about changes in achieving gender equality and equity within the public domain. "The need to implement

affirmative action policy in high level decision-making positions is seen as necessary in order to provide a critical mass that would allow significant changes in policies and procedures” (Tinker, 2004, p. 531).

Referring to the context of the US, Bergman suggests that the need to make systematic efforts to fight discrimination, the desirability of integration of achieving race and gender diversity in certain activities, and the reduction in the poverty of certain groups marked out by race or gender are the motives behind the affirmative action agenda (Bergman, 1999, p. 758-759). For the proponents of affirmative action, it is seen as a workable and plausible solution to the problem. In Indonesia, where women make up of 51% of the total population, women’s under-representation in the public arena is a concern, especially for women’s right advocates. According to Mar’iyah, this condition is not acceptable as “women form the majority of the citizens of this country, yet their rights as citizens are given insufficient consideration, and they are continually marginalized in the decision-making process” (2002, p. 1).

To challenge this situation, she also calls for an affirmative action in the form of a quota for women. This is a medium through which gender disparities are minimized as women are still discriminated against in many aspects of the public domain, especially in politics and economics. It then must be considered as a temporary measure which will later be removed once gender equality and justice are achieved. For her, “the quota is a provisional mechanism to ensure the recruitment of women into the political domain so that political, economic and ideological obstacles in the path of

women's progress are minimalized" (Mar'iyah, 2002, p. 2).

Because of socio-cultural and political barriers faced by women, the need to have a quota for women becomes even more important. While quotas are not in the spirit of equality and equal opportunity, it is seen as a temporary measure that could trigger a long term solution while it is in place. Interventions in the form of "training, affirmative action, anti-discrimination policies, work-family benefit programs, and, most recently, personnel practices that recognize and reward traditionally feminine skills" (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 590) are all geared towards improving gender equity. This is especially important in Indonesia in general, and in Aceh in particular, considering the extent of practices of patriarchal cultures in private and public domains, as well as the religious values that are deeply ingrained within the people's world view.

Although the notion of introducing and implementing affirmative action is often faced with resistance, there is no doubt that having some sort of intervention that will improve gender equality and equity within the public domain is needed. Critics of affirmative action often cite under-qualified human resources, unfair recruitment procedures, ineffective and less productive working environments will be the issues that may result in the adoption of affirmative action policy. This is not case as, in principle, having affirmative action in place does not detract from the principle of meritocracy. It is a strategy to ensure that equally qualified and capable individuals - women and minorities - who are often denied from assuming decision-making positions because of practices of patriarchal cultures privileging certain members

of groups within organisations, be given the opportunity to take on leadership roles.

Although it is often considered against the principle of equal opportunity and meritocracy, and often questioned whether it really has positive effects on addressing gender equality issues, evidence from the US indicates that “without the policy and the use of gender, race, and/or ethnicity as part of the decision-making process, the employment status of women and underrepresented minorities would have been worse” (Harris, 2009, p. 359). In spite of pessimistic opinions from the critics of affirmative action, it is likely that affirmative action will be socially and economically justifiable as the potentials and involvement of women and minority groups are utilized in the development process.



## **ISLAMIC LAW IN ACEH: HOW DOES IT RELATE TO GENDER RELATIONS?**

### **I. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the historical account of gender relations in Aceh and the political contestation between Aceh and the central government leading to the enactment of Islamic Law in the province. Presenting the dynamics of centre-periphery relations is important in understanding the cultural, social and historical context of the formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh. Factors leading to formalization of Islamic Law form the discussion in this chapter.

This section also addresses the impacts of Islamic Law on gender relations and responses towards its implementation. As such, the discussion on the influence of Islamic Law on people's perception in relation to gender relations, as well as to the strategic roles of the *ulama* in Aceh is presented in this chapter. Finally, the link between Islamic religious values with existing patriarchal culture and what they mean to socio-cultural norms in Acehnese society are discussed.

### **II. The Influence of Islamic Law on Gender Relations in Aceh**

Gender relations in the context of the Acehnese society are complex. Complex because the centre-periphery relations

between Aceh and the central government has also influenced women's roles and positions within Acehnese society as they become marginalized during the conflict. Jauhola asserts that "dominant gender norms in Aceh are constructed and negotiated as a continuous interplay between customs (*adat*), Islam, state ideology, 30 years long violent conflict and militarization and exploration of natural resources"(Jauhola, 2010, p. 36). Therefore, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, any discussion about gender relations in Aceh must take into account all these factors. One of the female respondents (FR1), asserted that

Social and cultural values in Aceh, including gender relations, are closely related to Islam. Islamic values have significant influence on shaping people's worldview. However, political struggle in Aceh also plays a significant part in the marginalization of women. Because of the political unrest between Aceh and central government, Acehnese women were pushed out of public domain. All these factors contribute to shape gender relations as we see it today in Aceh.

Her opinion is shared by other respondents confirming that a strong Islamic identity and disastrous relations with the central government has had a significant influence on the way the Acehnese perceive gender relations. Aceh's distinct historical account and strong Islamic culture are two factors considered by the central government in proposing a reconciliation process. Owing to this fact, granting Aceh the authority to implement Islamic Law is seen as one of the measures to achieve sustainable peace. According to Miller:

the passing of Law No. 18 of 2001 on 'Special Autonomy for the Province of Aceh Special Region as the Province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam' signified a major development in the Indonesian government's strategy to resolve Aceh's protracted conflict. Ratified by President Megawati Sukarnoputri on 9 August 2001, the 'NAD law' conferred unprecedented authority to Aceh over its internal affairs (2004, p. 333).

The above quotation and historical facts mentioned earlier in chapter II clearly suggest the importance of the institutionalization of Islamic Law in Aceh as one of peace strategies adopted by central government. Although some elements of society question the real motive behind this political move, Acehnese people welcome the government's granting of Islamic Law in Aceh. With Islamic Law in place, it is interesting to see its influence on gender relations in Aceh. What does it do to women's role and status? How are people affected by this Law?

Although Aceh has been considered a patriarchal society, gender relations in Aceh have not always been patriarchal. Historical evidence shows that gender relations in Aceh were tolerant when four female rulers were in reign in 17<sup>th</sup> century Aceh Islamic kingdom. This phenomenon has been referred to describe the high status of women in Aceh during that period. One of male respondents (MR 2) asserted that

Aceh Islamic kingdom once was known for its lenient and moderate approach to gender relations that can be seen in the appointment of four Queens as rulers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This could not happen if they had traditional views on the status of women.

If we look at the common perception that equates Islamic Law with rigidness and intolerant attitudes towards women, it would be impossible for women to be appointed as Queens. The above illustration indicates the opposite situation. This shows that there was a time when the interpretation of the *Qur'an* in Aceh made it possible for women to be leaders in society, even in a kingdom. When Islamic Law was formally institutionalized in Aceh, overwhelming support from the Acehnese people indicated that they welcomed the idea. Acehnese people from all walks of life showed their enthusiasm as they immediately referred to the glorious era of the Aceh Islamic kingdom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under Sultan IskandarMuda when Islamic Law was exercised. Although there have been different views on how Islamic Law should be exercised, for the majority of the people in Aceh who support it, it is seen as a solution to “rampant socio-economic, moral and political illnesses, such as corruption, collusion and nepotism that have severely damaged the province and its society” (Afrianty, 2010, p. 90).

To the Acehnese, Islamic Law “is seen not only as an assertion of Acehnese identity, but also as a means of re-emphasizing perceived traditional Acehnese values and, thereby, it is hoped that Aceh will regain its past prosperity” (Martyn, 2005, p. 217). As such, to the majority of Acehnese, the formalization of Islamic Law is considered as the answer to many social problems. It provides guidelines for the people to act in accordance with Islamic values. It is also seen as a medium through which people achieve happiness, both in the world and in the hereafter. Commenting on this issue, male respondent 1 (MR 1), one of the highly respected religious

scholars in Aceh, stated that:

Implementation of Islamic Law is welcomed by the Acehnese because it is seen as one of the ways to improve morality and social order. Although Islam has been around for a long time in Aceh, unfortunately the reality in society does not reflect Islamic values which promote justice and equality. This is why Islamic Law is vital in ensuring Islamic teachings are upheld for the betterment of the society.

The above response clearly suggests the importance of Islamic Law to the Acehnese people in addressing moral and social problems in society. This does not come as a surprise considering the historical background of Islam in Aceh. Unlike the Acehnese people who consider the formalization as Islamic Law as the answer to social problems, the motive behind this grant for the central government is purely political, to end years of political unrest. Despite different motives behind formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh, it served both parties well.

The degree of optimism in relation to Islamic Law that I picked up during field work shows people's high hope towards a better society. I noticed that people keep referring to the importance of adhering to Islamic Law in order to address social issues, corruption, and other negative attributes taking place in society. I also observed that local newspaper often publishes articles on the importance of having *Qanun* that regulates criminal acts based on Islamic Law. At the moment, serious criminal acts are prosecuted using KUHAP (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana or Book of the

CriminalJustice Act). During some informal discussions with my colleagues, it was evident that Islamic Law is considered as the source of reference that provides moral guidance on how Acehese Muslims should behave. Female respondent 1 (FR 1), when asked whether Islamic Law in Aceh influenced people's perception on gender relations, stated that:

Islam has become the way of life in Aceh for hundreds of years, even before Islamic Law is formalized. Islamic values have always been used as moral and social guidance for Muslims in Aceh. Therefore it also influences how people think about gender relations. Islamic Law in this case institutionalizes these values.

Her opinion indicates that, in Aceh, Islamic values which are now institutionalized in the form of Islamic Law, play a significant role in shaping people's worldview. As a matter of fact, it reaffirms and cements existing cultural and religious values in Aceh. With Islamic Law in place, the Aceh government, together with the *ulama*, has the task of putting in place a number of *Qanuns* aimed at providing moral guidance and social order, reducing criminal offences and establishing institutions to oversee the implementation of Islamic Law. If we look at Wadud's classification of *Qur'anic* interpretations mentioned in chapter II, the interpretation of the *Qur'an* in Aceh can be regarded as traditional one, using literal approach to understanding the *Qur'an*. This approach often has no or little room for interpretation.

In an already strong religious society like Aceh, where practices of patriarchal cultures are rarely questioned, the formalization of Islamic Law has in many ways strengthened

people's perception on gender relations. Not surprisingly, the gender equality agenda advocated by women's right activists is often challenged as it often contradicts the principles of patriarchal cultures. This challenge is often triggered by a lack of understanding of gender issues. Speaking on this issue, female respondent 1 stated that:

the majority of Acehese people do not understand the concept of gender equality. Most of them think that gender equality is about women's retaliation against men's domination. The majority of people even consider gender equality agenda as an attempt to eradicate religious values in society.

In this case, her opinion is in line with Sadli's statement mentioned in Chapter One which argues that the gender equality agenda is misunderstood by most people who automatically relate it to the feminist movement, which has a bad connotation in Indonesia. This is also true in the context of Aceh. During my field work, I discovered that many people link gender equality to social phenomena such as lesbian or homosexual. They were convinced that gender equality has hidden agenda to eradicate Acehese Islamic culture. This misunderstanding was highlighted by female respondent 1 when asked why there has been resistance from majority of the people in relation to gender equality. She said:

I think, in the early stage, gender equality or gender mainstreaming initiatives face considerable resistance from Acehese society. They think the gender issue is propaganda from the West; as such, ideas brought forward by the infidels, which must be rejected.

The above responses show that proposing a gender equality agenda in patriarchal society like Aceh is a difficult endeavour, especially when the religious dimension adds to the already divisive issue. As gender equality is seen as feminist agenda, to the majority of people, it is considered a threat to local cultures and religious values (Sadli, 2002). This powerful influence of religious values and patriarchal culture is reflected in everyday life in Acehnese society. It often translates to gender discrimination in both private and public domains. One of senior female lecturers, female respondent 2, commenting on this issue said:

Although there has been cooperation between men and women, the most striking discrimination takes place in the domestic realm. Most domestic work must be carried out by women. This is the impact of long standing patriarchal cultures and religious teachings that emphasize women's devotion to their family.

Her opinion suggests that religious values and patriarchal cultures have shaped gender relations in the smallest form of social structure in society, the household, which often results in discrimination against women. For women, having been subjected to gendered cultural and religious values for a long time, it becomes their worldview that they have to fit into the gender roles that are prescribed to them. When gender stereotypes of women are taken for granted, it becomes the norm in society. When women perceive gender stereotypes as true, this is referred to as internalized sexism.

Unlike in developed countries where women are now aware of their rights and roles, in a patriarchal society like Aceh, the



view that women are caretakers and men are breadwinners is culturally cemented and is often uncontested. As such, gender inequality and the segregation of work is common occurrence in most Acehnese households; so much so that it appears to be taken for granted and is not perceived as inequality. Male respondent 2, one of the most senior bureaucrats at IAIN Ar-Raniry, asserted that:

In Acehnese society, it is culturally accepted for women to deal with households chores. I think this is because of an overwhelming assumption in society which expects women to take care of family. Men, on the other hands, are expected to provide for his family. I think this perception has its root from Islamic teachings.

His opinion suggests that cultural and religious values play an important role in shaping people's perception on gender norms. What this means is that the majority of people, men and women, do not realize that gendered cultural and religious values have been manifested and ingrained in daily practices, both in the private and public spheres. Understandably, gender inequality and segregation of work are common in most Acehnese households.

Although there have been considerable changes in the social structures within Acehnese society, especially in the last two decades, in the eyes of women's rights advocates and feminists, the status and roles of women in Aceh is still considered inferior compared to those of men. In the case of Aceh, it may be argued that this situation has, in many ways, been accentuated by Islamic religious beliefs. This is not surprising considering the history of Islam in Aceh.

Female respondent 2, for example, points to an incident in the Plimbang sub-district, North Aceh, where a female head of the sub-district was asked to step down from her office because her appointment was considered against Islamic values. She explained:

A male member of regional the House of Representative in Bireuen, using religious sentiment to justify his statement asked the female head of the sub-district to step down or to be revoked from her position. This shows the level of understanding of some people in Acehese society on gender issues.

The above anecdote illustrates that people's perception of the role of women is heavily influenced by religious values. He specifically refers to *surah* An-Nisa (4), verse 34, which states: "Men are leaders for women, because God has made them (men) excel over others (women), and because they (men) spend from their (own) means". As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the literal interpretation of this verse has been the root of the problem. Therefore, it is not uncommon in Aceh to see that religious teachings are used as justification to preserve practices of patriarchal cultures. The literal and rigid interpretation of the *Qur'an* commonly found in patriarchal cultures often stands against women's interests. Referring to the above incident, female respondent 2 said:

This is caused by religious values, because *salafiyulama*(traditional *ulama*) are socializing the concept of *Arrijaluqawwamunaalannisa*, that leaders must be men, both in public and private domains.

It can be seen, that the way traditional *ulama* understand and interpret the *Qur'an* has been a major factor in the existing understanding of gender relations in Aceh. The above *Qur'anic* interpretation was used as the reason to ask for the dismissal of female leadership in the incident in Plimbang. According to female respondent 2, this interpretation of *Qur'anic* verse has not taken the context of its revelation into account. She said:

I think this *Qur'anic* verse is intended within the context of private domain. But they (*salafiusulamas*) socialize to the society that top position must be in hand of men.

Her argument is certainly not popular in Aceh as people still hold on to practices of patriarchal cultures, especially those living in rural areas. I think the way this particular verse is understood has far more serious implication, not only for women but also for men. For example, from a perspective of organizational effectiveness and productivity, preventing a group of people from certain opportunity has limited the ability of the organization to explore and deploy the best possible solution to improve. The fact that there have been examples of how women assigned to leadership roles contribute positively to the organization (Eagly & Carli, 2003a) should be consider as positive indicator that women, when given an opportunity may perform as well as their male counterpart.

When asked what can be done to address this issue, one male respondent, male respondent 5, a senior lecturer at IAIN Ar-Rabiry, suggested the need to revisit some of the understanding and practices of religious teachings in order

to bring about the principal values of Islam, equality and justice. The fact that there have been many concerns towards the way Islamic Law is implemented in Aceh indicates that there are issues that must be addressed. He said:

I think our understanding and interpretation of Islam have not yet answer the issues faced by society. Patriarchal interpretation of the *Qur'an* does not reflect the true spirit of Islam, justice and equality. Interpretation of the *Qur'an* must be able to address problems faced by the society.

Both female respondent 2 and male respondent 6 agree that the interpretation of the *Qur'an* has to consider and address evolving problems faced by society. However, they did not provide answer as to how this can be done. From the above opinions, it is clear that the current dominant understanding of the *Qur'an* has relegated women to an unfavourable situation, which is not in line with the spirit of equality and justice. Ramifications of the long standing patriarchal interpretation of the *Qur'an* on women themselves have been enormous. So much so that both men and women, especially in strong patriarchal cultures like Aceh, have internalized the gender roles determined on them. female respondent 2said:

Iagreethattheway *ulamainterpret* *Qur'anicverseshas*been one of the reasons why women do not feel comfortable in doing self-actualization. Most Acehnese women would immediately relate to what the *Qur'an* says and how they will be perceived socially when they do something. Unfortunately, the interpretation of the *Qur'an* is still dominated by men as we do not have female *ulama*.

Her response shows how religious values affect women's self-perception, which often reflects the way they carry themselves in daily life. It could be argued that religious values also affect the way men perceive their role in society. They cement their privileges within social structures. Often, this patriarchal interpretation of the Qur'an translates into sexist behaviour. Regardless of whether sexist acts are unintentional, "the cumulative effects of sexism are pervasive, impacting how women shape their personalities and identities, negotiate their relationships, feel about themselves, make meaning out of their experiences, and make choices about their lives over the short and long term" (Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009, p. 11). Interviews with both male and female respondents confirm that the influence of patriarchal gender norms is alive and well within Acehnese society, including in higher education. On this note, female respondent 4, a senior female lecturer and also women right activist, asserted that:

Female academics do not want to be perceived as ambitious, which has a negative connotation among Acehnese. They are satisfied with their current positions and mostly accept the reality that as women they have limitations and family obligations. This is why, whenever there is an opening for senior leadership roles, often no female candidates take part in the process. Maybe they do not want to be labelled aggressive and ambitious.

The above quotation describes how female academics at IAIN internalize people's perception toward them. They, in turn, take safe measures not to be labelled as aggressive and ambitious. This phenomenon is often considered the result of

internalized sexism. During field observations, it was noted that during a meeting at faculty level, female lecturers seldom gave opinions on the issues discussed. This was surprising because all were well educated. It was not until the meeting was over, that several of them started to talk informally and suggested their opinions. Perhaps their hesitation to talk in the formal forum was caused by the fact that they did not want to be perceived as ambitious or aggressive. This may be the result of gender norm internalization.

Unfortunately, the majority of women in Aceh are not aware of the impact of gender stereotypes and the effect they have on their private and professional lives, or the internalized sexism that they experience. Oey-Gardiner argues that one of the reasons that this socially constructed attitude towards women is difficult to change is because, more often than not, women themselves, especially in developing countries, are not fully aware of their rights (2002, p. 106). The reason behind this can be linked to the variability of sexist practices in society resulting in women's negative perception towards themselves. The following quotation shows the form of internalized sexism that may influence women's attitude in daily lives:

Women and girls may learn to have low expectations of their capabilities, may be subtly channelled by teachers or parents into gender normative fields and away from traditionally male-dominated roles, may lack female role models in professions of interest, may be treated as if they need to be taken care of, may paradoxically be expected to be caretakers, to serve men, and put the needs of others before their own, may be criticized or ostracized for being assertive, visible, or outspoken, may

find their opinions discounted, may be disliked as leaders unless they fit female stereotypes by acting nurturing, may be valued and appreciated primarily for their looks, bodies, or sexualities, may face expectations that they will spend considerable time and money modifying their physical appearance, may need to manage unwanted sexual attention or physical contact from men, may be expected to act passive in sex, dating, and relationships, may lose their names when they get married, and may be excluded from written or spoken discourse by the default use of male pronouns and other male-centric language constructs (Bearman, et al., 2009, p. 11).

The above remark shows the wide spectrum of socially constructed behaviours that may take place in family life, educational institutions, the workforce, political arena, and other private and public spheres. Holmes explains that socially constructed attitudes are created by the social environment that prescribes what appropriate behaviours or conducts are suitable for women and men, boys or girls (2007). It creates gender roles for members of families and society that often dictate the dynamics of power between men and women, both in the public and private domains.

As often with the case in many developing countries, especially in rural areas, women in Aceh tend to accept views on how women should be in their everyday life. Any deviation from expected behaviours will be seen as wrong doing and often result in social punishment or uncomfortable situations.

Not surprisingly, over a long period of time, people who are thought of as having certain stereotypes or characters would feel (often unconsciously) that the stereotypes attached to them are true. As a result, women often operate according to

what is socially and culturally acceptable in a given society. The implication of this phenomenon on women is often underestimated. Female respondent 2, commenting on this issue, suggested that:

I often see the case where women refuse to get involve or to compete with their male counterparts because they do not want to be characterized as aggressive and run a risk of being singled out. Their concerns and decisions are of course influenced by their worldview on what are expected of them as women.

The above response clearly illustrates the impacts of internalized social norms on the way women go about their professional life. To avoid being labelled as aggressive individuals, women often choose not to participate or to challenge commonly accepted norms. According to Subrahmanian, this is why “women often exclude themselves from opportunities that maybe on offer, and active encouragement maybe necessary to support women to challenge internalized social norms that may informally be placing barriers on their participation” (2005, p. 399).

In the context of Aceh, this social internalization may also emphasized by religious values. Religious teachings and people’s understanding and interpretation of what constitutes a good Muslim plays an important role in shaping men’s and women’s perception about what is expected of them, which over time, becomes social norms that are not contested and taken for granted in everyday life.

This is apparent in one of the interviews with a female respondent indicating the importance of women’s obedience



to their husbands in order to be rewarded with a greater gift in the hereafter and to have a meaningful life. Emphasis on harmonious relations and obedience based on religious teachings is highly regarded in Acehnese society. Female respondent 1 asserted that:

It is a dilemma for women in dealing with gender issue. This is because they have to observe cultural values, religious teachings, and other social norms that prescribe the role and status of women. So when women do something that is outside the prescribed criteria, they will be labelled negatively. It is also important for a woman to have the blessing of her husband in her activities.

The above comment suggests the complexity of social norms within Acehnese society that must be considered by women. Considering the strong patriarchal culture within Acehnese society, it is plausible to conclude that social norms related to gender relations affect men and women differently. Women will be more likely to be put under scrutiny when they do not behave as they are expected to. There will be a sort of social punishment to those who fail to conduct themselves as expected by gender stereotypes. On the other hand, they will be rewarded in the hereafter if they observe and behave according to the prescribed gender roles. Within Acehnese society, especially from a religious perspective, woman's observance to their husbands has always been emphasized and highly regarded. A woman, when she is able to conduct herself in the manner that pleases her husband, will be rewarded with heaven, which is the ultimate goal of one's life on earth.

This state of mind certainly underlies the notion of an

ideal woman. Therefore, most Muslim women believe that when they do not have the blessing of their husbands in fulfilling their activities, they will not live happily and will be punished in the hereafter for failing to follow religious teachings to obey their husband. Male respondent1, when asked his opinion on the influence of religious values on one's world view, suggested that:

Religious and cultural values have significant role in the way Acehese women behave. This is not uncommon to see this phenomenon where women are subjected to gender roles or stereotypes. In Aceh, however, this is closely related to one's religious conviction. It is just natural for us to pursue happiness in the world and hereafter.

The above response indicates the long standing internalization of gender roles and religious teachings in Acehese society. It shapes the way Acehese women see themselves. Internalization of what constitutes a good person from the Islamic perspective seems to have considerable effects on existing gender relations in Aceh. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter One, years of socialization of state gender ideology within the national development framework have cemented practices of patriarchal cultures within public institutions, making it even more difficult for women working in the public domain, such as in the higher education sector, to advance their career. Commenting on this issue, female respondent 2 asserted that:

Women's position is problematic, especially those who have careers outside their home. They are often accused of neglecting their families and people often use *Qur'anic* verses to justify their accusation. This is because

people's perceptions on women's role are derived from religious values. This makes it difficult for women because if they do not behave according to patriarchal gender norms, they will be considered as violating their religion.

This above response illustrates the existing phenomenon faced by women, especially working women. Working women, especially those with young children, also have to think about people's perception when deciding to pursue their career. They have to be able to balance family and work responsibilities as they will be judged by the society. In most cases, working women in Aceh often prioritize family over career. This situation has been one of the reasons that often prevent women from assuming leadership roles. In a strong religious society like Aceh, where practices of patriarchal cultures are often taken for granted, it is not difficult to see how religious values influence the way people live. According to male respondent 3:

It is no doubt that Islamic Law in Aceh will determine the way we live. It is a basis of governance in Aceh. It prescribes how society should be. How we bring ourselves in society.

In a similar vein, male respondent 5 said that:

Islamic Law is intended to create a prosperous society based on the principle of justice. It provides guidance to the people on how to behave according to Islamic religious values.

These responses clearly suggest that institutionalization and implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh is intended to create a prosperous society based on Islamic principles. All

respondents, both male and female, agree that Islamic Law is accepted by Acehnese people because they want to have a better society. As such, it plays an important role shaping the way Acehnese people's world view and the way they live their life. What often becomes at issue in society is the way Islamic Law is interpreted and executed. While all Acehnese accept the institutionalization of Islamic Law, recent incidents pertaining to the way it is implemented in society have resulted in criticism. The following section discusses how people react to the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh.

### **III. Responses towards Implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh**

There has been mixed reaction towards the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh. The majority of Acehnese people agree with the formalization of Islamic Law. This is understandable considering that Islamic teachings and values have always influenced tradition and cultures of Acehnese people. It is seen as the way to bring back the glorious time of the Aceh Islamic kingdom when Islamic Law was implemented, especially during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda when Aceh experienced its pinnacle. There is a real sense of hope within Acehnese society that the institutionalization of Islamic Law would bring about positive impacts. To liberal Muslim intellectuals and women's right activists, however, this move is seen as the revival of Islamic conservatism. Andren asserts that:

the phenomenon of increasing Islamic conservatism is in part a response to the frustrations and insecurities associated with the modern, globalized world, where

modernity is characterized by an emphasis on scientific rationalism, capitalism, democracy, the ubiquity of the mass media and urbanization (2007, p. 8).

The above quotation indicates that Islamic revivalism happening in many Muslim countries around the world was the answer towards the invasion of Western cultures, and institutionalization of Islamic Law in many parts of Islamic worlds is considered as the answer to preserve local culture from invading values. In addition, Islamic Law is seen as the answer to the disappointment of people towards the failure of the secular system adopted by the government. It is regarded as a solution to eradicate an increasingly unjust, immoral, and corrupt government. According to male respondent 1, a senior lecturer and a well-known religious scholar, in the case of Aceh:

Islamic Law is intended to bring about a prosperous society that promote and uphold good moral values for the betterment of society. For Acehnese people, Islamic Law is seen as the solution to moral decadency in society. It is also regarded as a tool to improve social structures and governance in Aceh.

His position on this issue is shared by all respondents of this study. There are, however, some people who are concerned about the formalization and implementation of Islamic Law. There has been strong opposition coming from liberal Muslim intellectuals, women's rights activists, and feminists who argue that the formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh would result in Islamic radicalism and would further marginalize women. They argue that formalization of Islamic

Law does not necessarily solve social problems. “The most important means of solving problems in Aceh is through the empowerment of civil society and socio-economic life” (Ahmad, 2007, p. 162), not by granting the right to legally implement Islamic Law.

Some elements of Acehnese society, although they do not reject the institutionalization of Islamic Law, are also concerned with the way it is implemented. Male respondent 1, commenting on the concerns voiced by some segment of society, stated that:

It is understandable to see the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh is received with mixed reactions. Especially because in its early stage there are many issues arising concerning the way it is carried out. This does not mean we have to reject Islamic Law. What we need to do is to evaluate and revise how it can be best implemented so that it creates positive impacts on society.

His response suggests that there have been issues in the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh which create an anxiety in society, especially for women. Understandably, since its inception, there have been countless public debates on the impact of Islamic Law on Acehnese society and what it entails for women. Numerous incidents taking place throughout Aceh since the inception of Islamic Law have had more damaging impacts on women than on men. Not surprisingly, women’s rights activists are calling for a re-evaluation of the formulation of the *Qanun* and other public policies, by taking into account the need and interests of minorities and marginalized members of society, including women and children’s welfare. Their concerns over the

implementation of Islamic Law gained momentum in the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami in Aceh, which was made possible by the influx of national and international NGOs.

Women's rights activists and progressive Muslim intellectuals have voiced their concerns on the readiness of government officials and how they use their authority. These segments of Acehnese society, have been arguing that the institutionalization of Islamic Law will further deepen the disparity between men and women, strengthen patriarchal culture in Aceh, and undermine gender equality initiative carried out by the central government if it does not consider a gender sensitive approach. On this note, female respondent 1, mentioned that:

Islamic Law is supposed to improve social condition, not creating dilemma in the society. If the implementation of Islamic Law is used to serve dominant groups in society, it will only bring up new issues. Therefore, formulation of *qanun* and the way it is carried out must consider people's well-being.

Her position on the implementation of Islamic Law indicates the implications may arise from the rigid interpretation of Islamic teachings and misuse of authority, which have been recorded since the enactment of Islamic Law in Aceh. An incident in Bireuen, north of Aceh, in 2010 for example, when a female head of sub-district was asked to step down from her position became the subject of national and international headlines and attracted widespread criticism from women's rights activists. The lack of understanding on

women's rights and gender relations issues and the resistance towards having women as leaders in Aceh is the reason behind this incident which attracted worldwide attention. The request to demote the female sub-district head came from the speaker of the People's Representative in the Bireuen district, citing that Islam does not permit a woman to be a leader. This kind of incident is a major blow for the gender equality initiative as it came from one of the most senior officials in the Bireuen district. Commenting on this incident, female respondent 2 stated that:

It is unfortunate to see that government officials themselves have not been able to promote a conducive environment in implementing Islamic Law. Maybe there is a political reason behind this incident in order to get sympathy from people with traditional views on gender issue. As you can see, this incident actually makes people concerns about how Islamic Law is interpreted because it can be used to suit certain groups in the society, especially those with vested interest and authority.

The above comment indicates that Islamic Law in Aceh is the product of *ulama's* interpretation. According to the respondent, it is very unlikely that a gender sensitive approach was taken into account in the process of making legal products such as *Qanuns*. The fact that the majority of government officials assigned to oversee the implementation of Islamic Law are men, makes it even more one-sided for women. This incident in the Bireuen district shows how traditional interpretations of the *Qur'an* still exist in society, even within the highest political elites. This is precisely what has been criticized by women's rights activists and



gender equality advocates. This kind of incident will occur if traditional essentialist approaches to the *Qur'an* are used in the formulation of *qanun* in Aceh. It mostly affects women and marginal groups in society and preserves the hegemony of patriarchal culture where men have privileges to access resources and power. On this note, Afrianty states that:

Many Acehese women have voiced concern over discriminatory practices in the implementation of Islamic law, through activities in local women's groups and women's NGOs. Some Acehese women activists see the implementation of Islamic law only giving attention to the regulation of women's religiosity, including women's dress and women's sexual mores (2010, p. 90).

Their concerns are not unfounded as in its early stage, the implementation of Islamic Law has disadvantaged women. While *Qanuns* are formulated to accommodate both men and women, there have been many examples of how their implementations have mainly targeted women. A number of other incidents have also been recorded by local and international newspapers confirming the concerns of some segments of society in the way Islamic Law is exercised and how it affects women's role and status in Aceh. Unfortunately, the majority of people still hold the traditional interpretation of the *Qur'an*, which can be damaging for women. What makes it worse, is that women are seen as rejecting Islam if they disagree with the patriarchal interpretation of the *Qur'an*. According to Srimulyani:

Muslim women cannot reject *Shari'ah* as it would be seen as rejecting their heritage, their identity, and often, when they question some aspects or dimensions of *Shari'ah*, they

will be accused of ejecting their religion. Adopting feminism, meanwhile, is regarded as betraying their religious, political and nationalist identities. (2006, p. 339).

Despite the overwhelming acceptance of the institutionalization of Islamic Law in Aceh, the way it is implemented, however, has been criticized as it often victimized women. Factors such as lack of professionalism and limited Islamic knowledge on the part of the government institutions responsible for overseeing the implementation of Islamic Law contribute to the issue. A study by Afrianty(2010) indicates that the lack of professionalism on the part of *WilayatulHisbah*, a form of morality police, was mainly caused by the low level of education, especially on the knowledge of Islamic Law. As a result, the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh has somewhat created a polemic in the society. Female respondent 7asserted that:

Lack of knowledge on the part of officials assigned to oversee the implementation of Islamic Law has demeaned women's status. This is why many women's right activists are concern with the way Islamic Law is implemented. There must be something that can be done to deal with this issue. It does not matter how good the rules are, if the people responsible do not have the capacity to implement it, it will only create problems.

One example of inappropriate conduct carried out by *WilayatulHisbah*, for example, was related to the violation of the Islamic dress code, which mainly targets women. While the majority of people support the tasks of WH in creating an offence free society, it is the way WH conducts its authority that has attracted harsh criticism from both proponents and

critics of Islamic Law. Some of the measures conducted by WH personnel are even considered un-Islamic as recorded in an incident where the hair of female teenagers was shaved for their failure to cover their heads. This situation triggered an over-whelming response from women's rights and human rights activists demanding the Aceh government to evaluate and observe women's interests. When asked what can be done to address people's concern on this issue, male respondent 3 stated that:

We need to improve the qualification of the people responsible for implementation of Islamic Law to ensure that it is carried out correctly and the authority given to them are not abused. We also need to make sure that any misconduct on the part of these officials will not go unpunished as they are at the fore front of the Law.

His response indicates that to address issues of lack of professionalism of the officials which often victimize women, the Aceh government needs to work on improving the qualifications of human resources working in the institutions assigned to oversee and implement Islamic Law. This is important in order to gain people's confidence and trust that Islamic Law in Aceh is not gender blind. It will also address the concerns of women's rights activists in Indonesia who regarded the formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh as a major setback in the effort to achieve gender equality, as it mainly targets women in its implementation.

To women's rights activists, this is seen as further backwardness and worrying signs of what already is a difficult situation for women. On one hand, women are required to

observe and practice Islamic teachings; on the other hand, the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh has, according to women's rights activists, resulted in discriminatory measures against women. As such, the initial phase of the implementation of Islamic Law, as described in an earlier part of this chapter, has attracted strong criticism from women's rights advocates. Although the issuance of *Qanunis* intended to provide security and order in the society, in many instances, its implementation has been considered hostile towards women. It is criticized because the way the government apparatus carries out its mandate often victimizes women and does not take into account their needs and circumstances. Female respondent 3, a senior lecturer and also women's rights advocate, said:

To me, the implementation of Islamic Law has been unfavourable to Acehnese women. It seems that the implementation of Islamic Law is intended to deal with women's issue rather than social issue. Whenever the raids are carried out, it is more likely that women will be targeted, whether it is dress code issue, or other issues.

The response clearly indicates that the way Islamic Law is implemented creates new issues. All respondents agree that the implementation of Islamic Law is still far from ideal. Surprisingly, despite a general consensus on the inferior status and roles of women in Acehnese society as well as criticism towards the impacts of Islamic Law on women, Afrianty suggests that women's involvement in the public domain has not been limited (2010). In general, restriction is mainly concerned with the way women carry

themselves in the community, and acceptable codes of dress, not with their opportunity to get involved and contribute in the public domain. Despite these criticisms and shortcomings, the implementation of Islamic Law has had promising and positive signs over the years with regard to gender issues. With increasing media coverage and publications, as well as public debates on the status and role of women, slowly but surely gender issues have become a mainstream topic. Afrianty declares that:

Acehnese women who have joined local women's movements have challenged the legal system and have demanded the reform of Qanun, or Provincial Regulations, the chief mechanism by which Islamic law has been introduced in Aceh. The implementation of Islamic law in Aceh has thus, in fact, motivated, even enabled, women's NGOs and other elements of civil society to become involved in wider discussion about the future faces of 'sharia' in Aceh (2010, p. i).

People find it more acceptable now to talk about some of the changes taking place in society. The Bureau for Women's Empowerment and Children's Protection (WECP) and the Office of Islamic *Shari'a* of Aceh province have been actively involved in disseminating and advocating Islamic Law to include a gender sensitive approach in government development programs. The Bureau for Women's Empowerment and Children's Protection, under the Provincial Secretariat, was established through the Governor of Aceh Special Region Decree No. 58 of 1999 and has a mandate to address issues related to women and children. Its main objectives, as stipulated in PERDA No.3/2001 are

to promote gender equality and justice, and prosperity and protection of children within the family, society and state. It also sought to increase the quality of women's education, health, and economy, and to increase women's involvement in politics and other public roles (Afrianty, 2010, p. 152).

The fact that women are actively engaged in the direction of implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh creates public exposure to women's concerns and thoughts. To be able to do this, the government needs to work with the *ulama*s they play strategic roles in the implementation of Islamic Law in Aceh. The following section discusses the role of *ulamain* shaping gender relations in Aceh.

#### **IV. The Role of the *Ulama* in Shaping Gender Relations in Aceh**

One of the most important groups in Acehese society is the *ulama*, the religious scholars. The position and role of the *ulama* since the institutionalization of Islamic Law has become even more important with the establishment of Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), the *Ulama* Consultative Assembly, through PERDA No 3/2000. Later, the implementation of Islamic Law was further strengthened in 2000 when the Aceh government introduced the Regional Regulation (PERDA) No. 5/2000 regulating matters related to Islamic faith as well as other social affairs. This PERDA confirms the *ulama's* influential role within the provincial parliament and the government of Aceh. As a matter of fact, "the MPU is independent in the sense that it has an equal status with, and is on the same level as, the executive and the legislative branches of provincial government" (Salim, 2008, p. 155).

The extend of the *ulama's* authority can be seen in Article 5 of the *Qanun*No 2/2009, cementing the MPU's strategic role in local governance by giving it the authority to issue fatwa (religious rulings) on issues of governance, development, economy, social and culture. On this note, both male and female research participants agree that the *ulamahave* influential and strategic roles in Acehnese society. In Law No. 11/2006 on the Aceh Government, the authority given to the *ulamaincludes* the provisions:

1. To obtain information from the executive and the legislative branches of the provincial government regarding policies that might be implemented.
2. To issue legal opinions, to offer considerations, and to present proposals of regional policies to the executive and the legislative branches of the provincial government.
3. To supervise and to review the implementation of regional policy in accordance with *Islamic Shari'a*.
4. To request an explanation from the executive and the legislative branches of the provincial government, state officials, and other ordinary citizens regarding any urgent action of regional policy that is needed to be taken directly or indirectly.

Undoubtedly, the authority given to the *ulamagives* them a strategic role in determining the formulation of public policies in Aceh. As the *ulamaare* highly regarded in Aceh, people turn to them to resolve or reconcile issues that they face in society. Their opinions on religious matters and social issues are often taken as considerations in the decision-making process. FR1, illustrating the central role the *ulamaplays* in Acehnese society, stated that:

Whatever the case, in Aceh, people will listen and believe when the *ulama* talks. If the persons talking are coming from campus, people tend to ignore them. However, if *ulama* such as AlyasaAbubakar and Muslim Ibrahim talk, the people will probably believe that certain issues are in line with religious teaching.

Her opinion reflects the *ulama*'s strategic and important roles in social, economic, and political life in Aceh. As such it is vital to have their support in improving women's role and status in both private and public domains. For this reason, in order for gender equality programs to succeed, it is important to harness the *ulama*'s strategic position in Acehnese society to improve women's status. The *ulama*'s opinions with regard to the role of women in society are often referred to. That is why their opinions on social and political matter are influential in shaping people's perceptions in Aceh. Speaking about the view of the *ulama* on the role and status of women in the public domain, male respondent 1, explained that:

there have been different views of *ulama* (religious leaders) on women's involvement in public domain. Radical views states that women can not involve in public roles, and that woman's ultimate roles is in households, taking care of children and husband. While this view is not shared by many Indonesian, nevertheless, there are a small number of people who take this view. Traditional views on the status and roles of women in society argue that women can get involve in public domain, only if their participation is in line with their "destiny" as woman. Examples for this view suggest that women should take part in the field that are perceive as "female" jobs, such as teacher, or nurse. A more progressive view on this issue suggests that women



can get involve in public domain and do not have to be constrained to particular jobs.

From the above response, it is clear that the *ulama's* stand on gender issues has a considerable influence in influencing and shaping people's perceptions of gender norms. If the majority of *ulamata* takes a radical interpretation of the *Qur'an*, it will definitely marginalize women in society, preventing them from getting involved in the public domain. This kind of interpretation prescribes gender roles based on one's biological features. It does not leave room for change, and it shares similarities with essentialist theory of gender, which prescribes gender norms based on one's sex.

While *ulamas'* position on women's involvement in the public arena varies, the overwhelming majority of them are of the opinion that women are allowed to participate as long as they do not neglect their responsibilities as wives and mothers. This is a slightly moderate approach compared to the radical interpretation of the *Qur'an* that forbids women from the public domain. This position of course stands against a holistic interpretation of the *Qur'an* disseminated by younger more moderate Islamic scholars advocating that it is not Islam that sets out to undermine the role and status of women in society, but the way the *Qur'an* is interpreted that creates gender inequality within society.

Therefore, besides "a real need for contemporary Muslim women constantly to engage with Islamic issues, mount a challenge against the monopoly of interpretation and constantly maintain their struggle against the control by patriarchal religious authorities (Hadiz & Eddyono, 2005, p. 340), other aspects, such as cultural norms and gender

equality strategies should also be carefully designed to influence changes in the way people perceive gender relations. One of female respondents, female respondent 9, stated that:

There is an urgent need to have a holistic interpretation of the *Qur'an* if we are to influence people's perception on gender issue. And in Aceh, *ulama's* strategic role is obviously important in this process. This is because people refer to them when it comes to divisive issues such as gender issue. People want some kind of assurance that they are not standing against Islamic teachings. So there is a need to include *ulamain* this effort.

The response indicates that to improve women's role and status, a more holistic approach of interpreting the *Qur'anic* required. In the context of Acehnese society, it is crucial to include the *ulamain* gender equality in order to provide assurance to the people that gender equality does not stand against Islamic values. Integrating religion in development is something that must be explored in the context of a strong religious society like Aceh. Mesbahuddin asserts that:

contrary to popular belief, religion in various cases has played a catalytic role for progress. Several studies have highlighted that religion not only plays a positive role in the process of development, but it can in certain cases act as a welfare means of last resort through the provision of charity for the poorest in society (2010, p. 222).

In the case of Aceh, the influence and strategic roles that *ulama* have in society can be used to change how gender relations are perceived by the people. The fact that media coverage on the implementation of Islamic Law

in Aceh has increased the exposure of women's issues in society is clear evidence that a once sensitive and taboo issue can now be publicly discussed. To have lasting and sustainable impact, however, *ulamamust* be included in the gender equality agenda. Commenting on the current progress on gender issues, female respondent 1 stated that:

Slowly but surely, people start to become familiar with the idea of gender equality. In the socialization efforts, however, the reasons given for gender equality must be supported by the *Qur'an* and *Hadiths*. While Islamic Law is important in improving and creating a good society, we need to reconsider the way it is interpreted. This is why I think we need more *ulama* who have progressive views on this matter. We also need to include women in the process of formulating *qanun*so that women's perspective is taken into account.

Her opinion on the importance of having opinions of female *ulamain* the process of *Qanun*formulation is not unfounded. According to women's right activists, the absence of women's concerns and interests has marginalized and victimized women. This can be seen in a number of incidents affecting women's involvement in public domain as mentioned in earlier section of this chapter. The demand to have their interests heard gathered momentum in 2007 when a local NGO, MISPI (Mitra Sejati Perempuan Indonesia or the True Partner of Indonesian Women) conducted a workshop for women *ulama*. This workshop was intended to equipped women with Islamic knowledge in order to improve their role in society and to have the supports from the government (Afrianty, 2010). Some of the recommendations

from the workshops can be seen in the following table.

Table 10. Recommendations from women *ulama* workshop

No	Issues identified	Recommendation
1	The different <i>madzhab</i> (school of thought) within <i>Fiqh</i> (Islamic jurisprudence)	Women <i>ulama</i> need to be equipped with the knowledge of the different <i>madzhab</i> in attempt to understand <i>Fiqh</i> , so that they have the ability to disseminate differences to their community.
2	The limited roles of women <i>ulama</i> .	Women <i>ulama</i> need more acknowledgement and acceptance from the community of their equal status with male <i>ulama</i> .
3	Problems with the implementation of sharia.	There is a need for the women <i>ulamato</i> take active roles in promoting <i>Qanun</i> , so that all Acehnese will better follow the teaching of Islam.
4	How sharia is implemented in other places	<i>Ulama</i> of Aceh need to learn from the experience of <i>Sharia</i> implementation elsewhere.
5	Education and training for women <i>ulama</i>	There is a need for the local government to support women <i>ulama</i> and for government institutions such as MPU to provide more public spaces for women <i>ulamato</i> engage in wider discussion on sharia.
6	Support from other women institutions, such as from women's NGOs	There is a need for women <i>ulama</i> to get better support so that they can advance their activities in disseminating the new knowledge to other women.

Source: Afrianty, 2010, p. 215-216.

From the above table, we can conclude that there has been a push towards women's contribution in Aceh. Realizing the strategic role that *ulamahas* in Acehnese society, women, especially those with educational background in Islamic knowledge, have now started to demand for more space and role in the implementation of Islamic Law, including in the formulation of *Qanun*. I think, the limited role that women *ulamahas* in this process has been one of the reasons why the implementation of Islamic Law has been demeaning to women.

*Ulama's* strategic role in Aceh is not only evident in social matters, but also in the political arena. An example of how the *ulamahas* been influential in the political sphere can be seen during the general election campaign in 2009. Whenever the *ulamata* talks on behalf of a certain political party, people come in huge numbers to listen to what they say. If they endorse a particular party or candidates, it is very likely that these candidates would be elected. With this kind of influence and authority that they have as the result of institutionalization of Islamic Law, it is no doubt that the *ulama* is vital to any social change in Aceh, including people's world views on gender relations.



## **GENDER RELATIONS AT IAIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH - INDONESIA**

### **I. Introduction**

In this chapter, the state of gender relations and leadership in Islamic Higher Education in Aceh is addressed. Some brief information on the research site, IAIN Ar-Raniry, is presented and a look at the dynamics of its organisational culture and how they affect gender relations at the institute are also examined. This particularly focuses on how these dynamics affect female academics' opportunity to access senior leadership roles at the institute.

Major points to be discussed and examined in this chapter include the composition of academics, qualifications and ranks of lecturers based on their gender, as well as the institute's policies and statutes in relation to academic professional development programs, promotion and the staff recruitment mechanism. This will provide a comprehensive insight into the university's direction on the issue of gender equality.

### **II. Organisational Culture at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh**

Like other public institutions in Indonesia, the organisational culture at IAIN Ar-Raniry is considered a patriarchal one.

An indication of patriarchal organisational culture can be observed in the existing male domination and women's under-representation at the institute, especially in senior leadership roles, as shown in Figures 11 and 12. Since its establishment, there has been a significant gap in the composition of male and female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry. As a matter of fact, one of the issues that often came up during interviews was the issue of women's under-representation at the institute, especially in senior leadership positions. Since its foundation in 1963, the number of female academics has always been considerably lower than that of male.

One of the indicators used to determine the state of gender relations within an organisation is the composition of human resources working at that institution. This gives a general illustration of organisational culture as it reflects the dynamics of power relations within the institution. As such, for the purpose of this study, it is necessary to look at the composition of academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry in order to gain a comprehensive insight into this matter. Interview questions were designed to investigate and examine factors contributing to the gender disparities in leadership roles within the institute. Respondents were asked whether the university's policies and statutes have, directly or indirectly, given advantage to certain groups in relation to the opportunity to assume leadership roles.

Responding to this question, one of senior male lecturers, male respondent 5, suggested that as far as he knows, there are no different measures implemented with regard to career development towards male or female academics. He said:

I do not think university's statutes and regulation have



prevented anyone, male or female in pursuing their careers. If female academics have the capacity to lead an organisation, they will have it. For example the head of our department (English department), I think they have it. Our department has been led by female academic for several terms, almost 5-10 years because of their capability.

Referring to the English department at the university, male respondent 5 indicated that until now, the English department, one the most popular departments at the university, has been headed by females for three terms in a row. Under their term, the department at IAIN Ar-Raniry was awarded an A accreditation from National Accreditation Bureau, the highest level a department can achieve. This award reflects the quality of teaching delivery in that department. This achievement indicates the capability of female academics in leadership roles when they are given the opportunity to assume these decision-making positions.

He, however, has not further explained the reason female academics have been appointed to assume the position of head of the English department. Is it because the organisational culture at the English department is different from other units, or is it because male academics do not want to take on this particular position for certain reasons? On this issue, I think there are at least two reasons for this situation. First, it could be argued that lecturers at English departments, who mostly get their post graduate degree from abroad, have been exposed to and familiar with gender equality issue. This awareness on gender equality issue is reflected in the appointment of female academic as head of

English department at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

My observation during field work pointed out that male lecturers at English department are not or less threatened by the appointment of female academic as the head of English department. Having said that, I could not argue that it is a feminised department as majority of lecturers at English department are male lecturers.

Another explanation for this situation can be linked to the nature of works associated with the position of the head of department. A person appointed to the head of department must dedicate a lot of time for administrative work, the sort of works that are avoided by male academics. This also means that the person has limited time for research activity. Nevertheless, in this case, it indicates that at English department, female academics can assume leadership roles if they have the qualifications required for the job. As has been the case in this department, female academics have been able to improve and maintain the quality of the English department. However, when the composition of academics at the institute is scrutinised more closely, gender disparity at IAIN Ar-Raniry, especially in leadership roles, is still a major issue.

When asked whether educational policies and university statutes have contributed to this situation, both male and female respondents seem to agree that regulation of career development and promotion are formulated on the basis of meritocracy and equal opportunity principles. These principles require that one is selected based on his/her merit, and that he/she cannot be discriminated based on prejudices or preferences. Commenting on this issue, male respondent

4 asserted that:

Specifically, there are no particular regulations that differentiate between men and women in relation to pursuing senior leadership positions. The process of leadership appointment goes naturally.

This response indicates that regulations at the university do not favour certain groups and that the university's policy and statutes on career development have been formulated with principles of equal opportunity in mind, giving both male and female academics the same opportunities to apply for senior leadership roles. His opinion, however, does not seem to consider the extensive network that male academics have which often influence the result of leadership appointment. Female respondent 3, a senior female lecturer, commenting on whether female academics have equal access and opportunity as their male counterparts, had a different point of view. She said:

I think female academics have the same opportunity in advancing their career. However, there is something bothers me. When the university does not distinguish between male and female academics, it looks like it has no gender bias, objective. But I think that is where the problem lies. For example, in rural areas, there are limited infrastructure while in urban areas have all the support needed. It is not fair if the people are required to compete with uneven starting point. The same thing exists on campus. From the beginning women have been culturally positioned to fit in certain criteria. Also, women start to work in the higher education later than men.

Her opinion, while acknowledging the existence of equal opportunity and meritocracy principles in the university's statutes, is different from the rest of the respondents. She was able to see the implications of equal opportunity measures on women at the university. It can be concluded from her response that it will be unlikely for women to assume senior leadership roles because they have not had the same tenure as men. This is due to the fact that most of them became academics at the institute in the late 1990s. Even when women had the same qualifications as their male counterparts, female academics often found it difficult to compete for leadership roles, as they had not worked as long as men.

What she suggests in the above response is that, female academics, despite having required academic credentials and having worked hard to arrive at their current positions, may have been passed over in terms of getting leadership roles, mainly because they have not worked at the university as long as their male counterparts. This is commonly known as the glass ceiling phenomenon. Her opinion is shared by male respondent 3 who said that:

Sometimes having equal opportunity principle becomes an issue, especially for female academics. I know that when it comes to applying for senior leadership positions, women will have a very slim chance of getting the job, not because they do not have the qualification, but because majority of candidates are men. And most of the time men, because of their network and experience, will get the position.

The above response shows that despite having the same qualification as men, it is very unlikely for women to get

appointed as senior leadership roles at university due to the fact that they do not have extensive network. This is an example of the glass-ceiling phenomenon. Much research in the area of organisations and their management has pointed out that the glass-ceiling phenomenon is a major hurdle that women have to face at some point of their career. Referring to this phenomenon, Janet Holmes argues that, “a good deal of research in the area of leadership also indicates a remarkably masculine conception of what makes an effective leader” (2006, p. 35). In addition, “leadership has traditionally been construed as a masculine enterprise with special challenges and pitfalls for women” (Carli, 2001, p. 633). This is why, although women have the same qualifications as men, they often have to face collective resistance from their male counterparts regardless of equal opportunity and meritocracy measures. Commenting on this issue, one of male respondents, male respondent 4, said:

Legally, both (male and female lecturers) are given the same opportunity develop their potential. Nevertheless, because the number of men (at the university) is much more than women, men feel more comfortable to be led by men. In our culture, it is unlikely for us to elect women for a position if there are other men who have the same qualification.

The above opinion seems to reflect a wider glass ceiling phenomenon in the public domain in Indonesia in general. Analysingtheresponsefromfemalerespondent 3, it is evident that she does not like the idea of equal opportunity because this principle does not take into account the situations that female academics are forced to face ontaking up their current

positions. In other words, men have uneven an advantage given the practices of the patriarchal cultures in Aceh society.

In the context of higher education in Aceh, it may be argued that the glass-ceiling phenomenon is not seen as part of a wider gender inequality existing in the society. Instead, it is considered as the natural consequence of career progression that one has to deal with. It is evident from interviews that none of the respondents mentioned the glass ceiling phenomenon as one of the reasons behind the lack of women in leadership roles at the university. Although most of them, especially female respondents, clearly described examples of the glass ceiling phenomenon in action, they did not refer to the term itself. One male respondent, male respondent 5, when asked about the reason in the gap in the proportion of male and female academics at the institute, and those occupying leadership roles at the institute, said:

There are two things that can be observed in this situation. It is possible that practices of patriarchal cultures that privilege men still exist in our university, or it can be that women are given the same access and opportunity to hold certain leadership position, but because lack of qualification do not meet the requirement, automatically they are left out of the process.

The fact that male respondent 3 referred to patriarchal culture as one of the reasons contributing to the lack of women occupying senior leadership roles at IAIN Ar-Raniry reflects the wider social condition at the time in Aceh. His remark indicates that gendered organisational culture exists at the university. These gendered cultures may be in the form of regulations or unwritten conventions. Gendered cultures

that privilege men over women, commonly practiced in Aceh during the 1960s to 1990s, offer one of the reasons contributing to the disparity between men and women in the higher education sector. People's perceptions on the role of women in society have had a significant effect on gender disparity in the public domain, not only in the higher education sector.

Other reasons that contribute to existing conditions where the number of women in the public sector is considerably less than that of men is the lack of educational infrastructure, and poor economic background of most households in Aceh during the early years after independence. These factors have also been argued as being the culprits to the above problems. Lack of infrastructure, for example, makes it difficult for students to attend school, especially for girls. Even when parents are willing to send their daughters to pursue higher level education, the cost associated with the transport and school make it impossible for them to do so. Financial and safety reasons, as well as the social conditions of Acehnese society during this period have mainly influenced these decisions. Most parents could only afford to send selected children to university. They predominantly chose their sons to universities rather than their daughters. Considering the distance and cost associated with sending children to school and the fact that during this time boys were regarded as the family's breadwinner, understandably girls were not afforded the opportunity to pursue a higher education degree. As a result, it is common for young women to get married early and have families instead of pursuing their study. The same phenomenon also exists in many other parts of Indonesia,

as indicated by Wayong in his research (2007). On this issue, male respondent 1 said:

Women got married when they reached the age of 18. So, they rarely continued their study. Another issue is that, women in our tradition – now maybe there has been changes – when they get married, they are busy taking care of their family and do not pursue ... masters and doctoral degree level study. In the meantime, most senior leadership roles require a candidate to have a doctoral degree. So the first factor is that not many women pursue and achieve their post graduate level qualification. This is why most senior lecturers at the institute are men.

The above illustration is not uncommon in Aceh, especially in rural areas. Nowadays, the situation has improved which can be seen in the increasing number of women pursuing higher education level. However, the problem of lack of women in leadership roles still remains. To get perspectives from female respondents on this issue, they were also asked whether the university's statutes and policies are associated with the gender gap and the lack of women in senior leadership roles. Female respondent 1, also famous for her works in advocating women's right issue in Aceh, stated said:

When it comes to strategic leadership roles such as dean, vice dean, or other important position on campus, women still face barriers (to assume those positions) because of their ranks/echelon and qualifications that do not meet the requirement.

Her opinion is similar to the opinions of male respondent 5 and female respondent 3 mentioned earlier which confirm



that lack of academic credentials is one of the factors contributing to the low number of female academics in leadership positions. In a similar vein, female respondent 2, also a senior female bureaucrat who graduated from IAIN Ar-Raniry, when asked about the opportunity of women to get involve in public domain and leadership roles, said that:

There is no obstacle for women to get involved in the public domain. The problem of lack of women in high echelon must be seen from the criteria required. There are a number of criteria. The first criterion is the stratification according to rank, and administrative requirements. Not too many women in the executive have the requirement to hold echelon II position for example.

The above responses from female research participants reiterate opinions of other respondents. Female academics, according to research participants, have the same opportunity to apply for leadership roles. What has caused the lack of female academics assuming these positions is the academic credentials on the part of the women who have not met the requirements needed for the jobs. This situation, as indicated by male respondent 1 and female respondent 3, was the result of an uneven playing field between women and men in the 1960s to 1990s leading to the current phenomenon where female academics are not able to compete with their male counterparts.

After analysing the responses and statistical data available at the university, there appears to be a number of salient factors that could explain the existing gender gap and organisational culture at IAIN Ar-Raniry. One of the most significant reasons shaping organisational culture at

IAIN Ar-Raniry is the practice of patriarchal cultures. These practices, accentuated by, in the case of Aceh, strong religious values held by both men and women, have been a major factor contributing to gender disparities at the university. Practices of patriarchal cultures that regard women as second class citizens play a major role in women's lack of academic credentials needed to get involved in the public domain, especially in the higher education sector. When asked what can be done to address gender disparity at IAIN Ar-Raniry, female respondent 3 said that:

I think, we need to think about giving quota to women. If they are not given a quota, all strategic position will be held by men. On one hand, I do not agree with giving certain quota to women, but on the other hand I agree.

Her opinion comes out of the concern that all important leadership roles would be held by men. As mentioned earlier, she is also sceptical towards equal opportunity measures instituted in the university's statutes and regulations. Male respondent 5 shared a concern voiced by female respondent 3. He, considering the practices of patriarchal culture at the institute, sees the need to have a quota for women, an affirmative action. He said:

I think it will be a great idea if we can establish a certain quota, as you say, for women to take part in leading an organisation and we need to encourage them. What we see today, men dominate all important decision-making positions. If we propose certain quota, let say 50 % for female and 50% for male, there will be a fair proportion for both genders. We need to have policies that allow

women to be assigned as leaders or to assume senior leadership roles like dean, vice dean. We need to seriously create policies that accommodate this change. If we have clear policy regarding the power balance, I think women will be more enthusiastic to get involved in pursuing this change and they will be encouraged to take part in leading positions.

Theiropinionsonhowtoapproachgenderdisparityat IAIN Ar-Raniry is obviously not a popular one in an institution that still has a strong patriarchal culture. Interviews and observations conducted in this study suggest that, in general, organisational culture at IAIN Ar-Raniry reflects a wider perception of gender relations in society, a patriarchal one. The observations during field workfor this study reveal that a majority of members of the senate at faculty level are men. This fact makes it difficult to push for a change in the way leadership roles are appointed. During interviews, the majority of respondents expressed that there are lecturers and academic staff, both women and men, who still hold traditional views on gender relation. Male respondent 6, stated:

I think organisational culture at IAIN is influenced by cultural and religious values. There is a perception that if women are superior to men, it means that it is against the culture. So I think it is influenced by norms and the culture of the Acehnese people.

Many academics usually refer to religious and cultural values in presenting and justifying their opinions regarding women, their roles in family life and in the community. This

is intriguing as most lecturers have finished their Master's degree and yet the majority of them have conservative views on gender relations. This situation shows the "prevailing norms about what women and men do, and how their activities and roles are to be valued determine the opportunities to which they have access" (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 398). These norms are referred to as gender stereotypes which "tend to be simplistic and based not on the characteristics or aptitudes of the individual, but on over-generalized perceptions of one gender or the other" (Wienclaw, 2011b). In the context of Indonesia, existing assumptions and expectations of women's role within society, perpetuated by state gender ideology, socio-cultural and religious values have resulted in a gendered culture in which women's self-actualization has been considerably restricted. According to Lubis, there are several contributing factors to the gender gap in leadership roles in Indonesia. They are:

less access to education for women; large numbers of women in the fields of agriculture and the urban wage-earning sector, which includes teaching, service and production; gender differences in work experience; cultural discrimination against women; and wage inequities at every level of education (2002, p. 45)

In a similar tone, King and Mason suggest that "inequalities in political representation, whether at the local or national levels, reflect the extent to which women and men have voice in public policy debates and formulation" (2001, p. 35). As a result, as has sometimes been the case in Indonesia, it is extremely difficult to change public policy aimed at achieving

gender equality.

While access to education has improved over the years, cultural discrimination against women resulting in stereotyping still exists and has been a major hurdle in the effort to achieve gender equality and equity in Indonesia. In the context of Aceh, patriarchal culture accentuated by religious norms has been considered as the most significant aspect that prevents women from moving forward in relation to their career development. It is plausible to conclude that a gendered organisational culture has been the major obstacle in achieving gender equality in leadership. The following section will discuss the composition of academics and appointment of leadership at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

### **III. Composition of Academics and Appointment of Leadership at IAIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh**

#### **Composition of Academics**

The composition of an organization can be considered as an indicator of organizational cultures. Showing composition of academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry would reveal the state of gender relations. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the composition of human resources at IAIN Ar-Raniry, indicates the discrepancy between male and female academics. One of the reasons behind this gap relates to the lack of higher education infrastructure in Aceh in the early 1960s and 1970s which makes it difficult for women to pursue their university degree. With the establishment of two public universities in Aceh, Syiah Kuala University established in 1962, and IAIN Ar-Raniry established in 1963, pursuing a higher education

qualification became available to women in Aceh which, in turn, gave them more opportunity to compete with their male counterpart to get academic positions.

Before the establishment of these universities, Acehnese people who wanted to study at higher education level had to travel to North Sumatra or Java. This is one of the reasons why a gender disparity at IAIN Ar-Raniry exists. Financially, only a few people could afford to send their children to university outside Aceh. As most Acehnese households were from low socioeconomic backgrounds, sending children to university was a financial challenge at the time. The fact that not many women were able to study at university due to financial and cultural reasons has been a major factor contributing to the gender gap in the public domain in Aceh, including in the higher education sector. As a result, the composition of academia at IAIN Ar-Raniry is dominated by men. It reflects a typical male dominated society. One of female respondents, female respondent 3 said that:

The gap between male and female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry is caused by women's lack of opportunity to go to university in the 1970s. Unlike male academics, only a few women managed to go to university at the time. This is the reason why not many women become lecturers as only some have qualification.

The above response shows the impacts of women's late entry to university. As can be seen in Tables 7, 8, and 9 in Chapter Three, when it was established in 1963, IAIN Ar-Raniry only had one female lecturer in the Faculty of Islamic Education, only 7.7% of total lecturers. In 2006, the number

of female lecturers reached 57 in all five faculties accounting for 21.5% of total lecturers. This is certainly a considerable improvement, although it is not to say that there are no more gaps between male and female academics.

Men still constitute the majority of lecturers, accounting for 78,5 % of the total number of lecturers, or 208 out of 265 lecturers in 2006. These statistical data indicate a significant disparity between male and female lecturers from 1966 to 2006. For the first two decades since its establishment from 1966 to 1986, women only made up about 7% of the total lecturers at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

Over the years, along with an increasing number of women going to university in the early 1990s, the number of female academics increased to 20% in 1996 and to 27% in 2006. Although there was an increase in the number of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry, a considerable gender gap persists. In addition to gender disparity between male and female academics, the gap of academic rank between male and female academics is also considerably high as shown in the following table.

Table 11. The number of male and female lecturers at five faculties based on their rank in 2005

Faculty	Ranks							
	Expert Assistant		Lector		Chief Lector		Professor	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Islamic Law	13	3	20	1	11	2	3	0
Islamic Education	20	11	33	12	20	7	4	0

Islamic Communication	5	1	20	4	5	1	0	0
Islamic Theology	8	2	14	4	10	0	0	0
Islamic Arts	5	4	9	4	7	0	0	0
Total	51	21	96	25	53	10	7	0
Percentage	70,83	29,17	79,33	20,67	84,12	15,88	100	0

Adopted from: Buku Statistik IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2005/2006

Table 11 shows that women are still under-represented at the higher level echelons at the university. The statistical data indicate that the majority of female academics hold either an Expert Assistant or a Lector position, the two lowest academic ranks at the university. Talking in the context of Australian universities, White asserts that the same trend also takes place in Australia. She argues that “women being over-represented in lower levels of academia” (2001, p. 66). Clearly, the issue of women underrepresentation in leadership roles in higher education does not only exist in developing country like Indonesia, but also exists in developed country like Australia.

Based on the statistic taken in 2005/2006, male academics held 100 per cent of professor ranks and 84.12% of chief lector positions. As academic rank increases, the number of female academics holding higher level of academic ranks decreases. This situation is a common feature in many public institutions in Indonesia, including in higher education institutions. In the case of IAIN Ar-Raniry, as mentioned earlier, women’s late entry into the higher education sector is mainly the reason behind this situation. While there are a

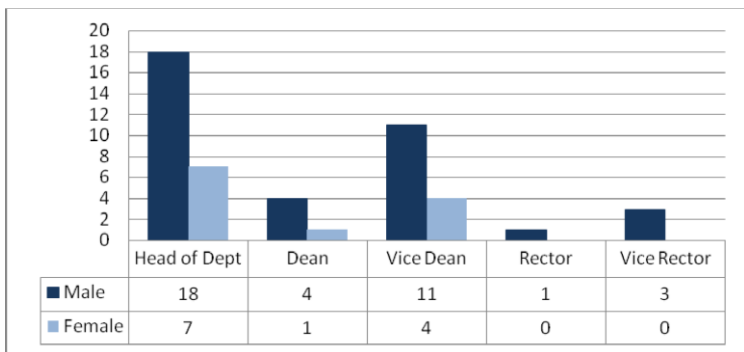


number of factors that contribute to this situation, according to Rasdi, Wahat, and Ismail, one reason that may influence this circumstance is that:

women as academicians, let alone as professors, are considered new comers in the world of academia. Professor is the highest position in the career ladder of an academicians and in that position the person is said to have established in his or her area of specialization (2005, p. 117).

This view is in line with earlier comments made by respondents in this study. Consequently, with the lack of qualifications required to advance their careers, female academics and staff have little chance of assuming senior leadership roles. The following figure shows the distribution of leadership positions at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2004.

Figure 9. The distribution of leadership positions based on sex in 2004

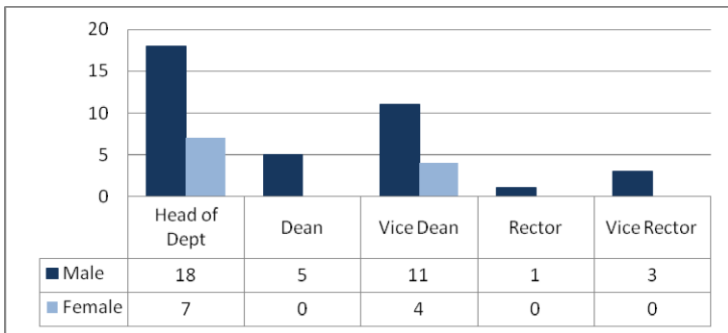


Adopted from: Buku Statistik IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2004

It can be seen that the above statistical data clearly indicate

the disparity in leadership positions at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2004. The positions of Rector, Vice rector, and Dean were all held by men. The highest structural positions held by female academics were the position of Deputy Dean, accounting for 3 (15%) out of 20 positions. The number of women occupying leadership roles as Head of Department was slightly higher, accounting for 7 (35%) out of 20 positions. Despite the limited number of female academics assuming leadership roles, this progress has been promising, considering that only in 1986 the number of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry was only 7 as illustrated in table 7.

Figure 10. The distribution of leadership positions based on sex in 2012



Adopted from: Buku Statistik IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2012.

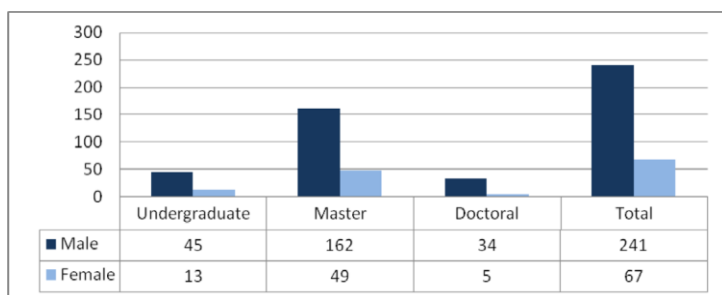
From the above figure, it can be seen that there has been little improvement in the number of women assuming leadership roles at IAIN Ar-Raniry. In fact, there is no improvement in relation to the number of female academics in the positions of Rector and Vice Rector, and as Head of Department. During the span of eight years from 2004 to

2012, there was only one female academic promoted to the position of Vice Dean, accounting for 26%. Obviously, this is not an encouraging sign in the effort to improve gender equality at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

The fact that, in Aceh, female academics have only been recently working in the higher education sector has a considerable impact on their ranks. This is because the length of service as academics would also count towards ones' rank on campus. In addition, working in the higher education sector requires academics to produce research papers and publications which are important in order to improve their ranks and to get promotions.

The discrepancy in advancing academic qualifications between male and female academics is also considered as the impacts of unbalanced workloads that must be carried out by female lecturers. This results in the lack of academic qualification on the part of female academics which can be analysed in the following figure.

Figure 11. The number of lecturer at IAIN Ar-Raniry based on academic qualification and sex in 2008



Adopted from: Buku Statistik IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2009.

The above statistical data indicate that academic qualifications of female academics are lower than those of males. This shows that professional development of female academics is not at the same level as that of their male counterparts, which in turn prevents them from assuming senior leadership roles at the university. This situation is triggered by different impacts that male and female academics experience in relation to their responsibilities at the university which often results in gender disparity. Acker, commenting on internal organisational issues that often influence members of organisation, asserts that:

systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; in work place decision-making such as how to organize work; in opportunities for promotion and interesting work; in security in employment and benefits; in pay and other monetary rewards; and in respect and pleasures in work and work relations (2009, p. 202).

It is interesting to analyse what factors contribute to this situation at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Referring to Table 11, it can be immediately concluded that the gendered organisational culture at the university is the reason behind this phenomenon. The fact that IAIN Ar-Raniry is an Islamic higher education institution has made it plausible to explain that Islamic values have somehow influenced the way gender relation is shaped within the institute. As such, the majority of academics and staff at IAIN Ar-Raniry, whether they realize it or not, still hold patriarchal values. Female respondent 2 argued that:

Even though those working on campus have high level of education, majority of them, especially male academics, still have sinister view with regard to the gender equality agenda. Unfortunately, this situation has made it difficult for us, female academics, to have a fair go. Although we have the required qualification, it is almost impossible to compete with men.

The above remark clearly describes how gender equality is perceived by some male lecturers. This does not come as a surprise. With existing patriarchal cultures and traditional cultural values that emphasize men's superiority over women, when it comes to assuming senior leadership roles, women find it difficult to break through this glass ceiling phenomenon. They can only achieve a certain level of leadership roles within the male-dominated arena like the higher education sector. Statistical data on the composition and ranks of academics indicate that the organisational culture at IAIN Ar-Raniry has not yet addressed the issue of gender equality. This is reflected in the lack of a gender sensitive approach within academic and professional development agenda at the institutes which often do not take into account the interest of female academics. As a result, despite equal opportunity measures, in reality, female academics do not have the same opportunities to pursue their careers. This problem is not unique to IAIN Ar-Raniry. A number of studies have shown that women's under-representation in leadership positions in public establishment has been the feature of gender relation for a while, even in developed countries (Still, 2003). In the context of IAIN Ar-Raniry, this can be seen in the lack of

women occupying top echelon and senior leadership roles.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, the government, in order to improve the quality of HE, issued Law Number 14/2005 on Teacher and Lecturer. This Law requires lecturers to have an accredited post graduate degree in his/her field of study. To upgrade their academic credentials, lecturers are given 10 years to do so. Lecturers will receive administrative sanctions if they have not improved their qualification at the end of the 10 year period. This Law has triggered an increase in the number of academics enrolling in Masters and Doctoral degrees at IAIN Ar-Raniry. The following table illustrates student enrolment at Master's degree level at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

Table 12. The number of Masters degree student at IAIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh from 2005 -2011

Year	Male	Female	Total	Graduated
2005	17	10	27	15
2006	55	19	74	47
2007	38	15	53	17
2008	46	31	77	20
2009	70	36	106	20
2010	89	31	120	0
2011	86	53	139	0
Total	738	285	1.023	509

Adopted from: Biro Akademik, Post-graduate Studies, IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2012.

From the above statistical data, it can be seen that since the enactment of Law 14/2005, the number of enrolments

at post-graduate level at IAIN Ar-Raniry has increased considerably. The number of male students, however, is still substantially higher than that of females. Nevertheless, the number of female lecturers undertaking post graduate studies can be seen to improve significantly in 2011. Female respondent 3, commenting on the step taken by the government to improve the level of lecturer's academic qualifications, said:

I think this is a good policy in order to improve the quality of academics at IAIN. However, we also need to look at how this policy affects us. For men, it may not be too problematic. But for many women, with their domestic responsibilities, it becomes an additional pressure. But if they do not upgrade their qualification, female academics will never get the chance to participate in decision-making process.

From the above response, it can be concluded that the Law on Teachers and Lecturers affects men and women differently. Not surprisingly, in the initial stages after the issuance of this Law, the number of men was significantly higher than women as indicated in the above table. Nevertheless, over the years, female academics committing their time to improving their academic credentials have increased. However, this trend does not take place at the Doctoral level. The reason for this trend is that majority of female academics find it difficult to commit to the time required to undertake a doctoral degree. The following figure shows the number of academics undertaking their master's degree at IAIN Ar-Raniry from 2008-2011.

Table 13. The number of Doctoral degree students,  
Majoring Islamic Education

Year	Male	Female	Total	Graduated
2008	3	3	6	
2009	2	1	3	
2010	10	3	13	
2011	19	7	26	
Total	34	14	48	

Adopted from: Biro Akademik, Post-graduate Studies,  
IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2008-2011

The above data show the number of male and female academics majoring in Islamic education at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Although the number is still considerably lower than that of men, the number of female academics undertaking doctoral degrees is encouraging. Despite the big commitment to undertake doctoral degrees, especially with financial and time commitments, to date, there is a total of 14 female academics enrolled in doctoral degrees majoring in Islamic education at IAIN Ar-Raniry. This can only be a positive sign on the part of women's effort to improve their opportunity of advancing up the ladder of leadership once they graduate.

With regard to their career advancement, once female academics finish their doctorates, academic qualifications will no longer be a factor that prevents them from pursuing top leadership roles on campus. As noted earlier, besides cultural values and organisational culture, the lack of academic qualification has been considered one of the most important aspects that prevent female academics from participating at



the highest level of academic affairs. This degree would also upgrade their ranks within the organisation.

### **Appointment of Leadership**

The appointment of senior leadership roles at IAIN Ar-Raniry is based on the regulation stipulated in the institute's statutes. The regulation emphasizes meritocracy and equal opportunity principles and does not, in any way, prevent men or women from applying for the positions. To be eligible to apply for a Rector position at IAIN Ar-Raniry, according to the statute of 2003, a candidate has to meet the following requirements:

1. Maximum age of 61,
2. Must believe in God,
3. Must have at least a Doctoral degree,
4. Must have a functional position of at least Chief Lector,
5. Must be willing to be nominated as Rector,
6. Must have vision, mission and programs regarding:
  - 1) Quality improvement of IAIN Ar-Raniry during his/her leadership,
  - 2) Improvement of creativity, achievement and outstanding students moral,
  - 3) Creation of a conducive, Islamic, and scientific campus environment,
  - 4) Improvement of the quality of staff and lecturers ,
  - 5) Implementation of program effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

For Vice Rector position, one must be able to meet the following criteria:

1. Maximum at the age of 61,
2. Must believe in God,
3. Must have at least Master's degree,
4. Must have a functional position of at least Lector,
5. Must be willing to be nominated as Vice Rector,

For the position of Dean, the following requirements are needed:

1. Maximum age of 61,
2. Must believe in God,
3. Must hold at least a Master's degree qualification,
4. Must have a functional position of at least Chief Lector,
5. Must be willing to be nominated as Dean,
6. Must have vision, mission and programs regarding:
  - 1) Quality improvement of the Faculty during his/her leadership,
  - 2) Improvement of creativity, achievement and outstanding students moral,
  - 3) Improvement of the quality of staff and lecturers ,
  - 4) Implementation of program effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

Besides the above criteria, with regard to the appointment of a Dean, the Rector will consider the following criteria:

1. The quality of vision, mission and program of the candidate,
2. Academic background of the candidate,
3. Track record and personality of the candidate,
4. Consideration of the senate of the Faculty on the

candidate.

From the above statutes, it is clear that the requirements for leadership roles such as Rector, Vice Rector, and Dean are the same for all academics. Both male and female academics who are eligible to apply for the job will have the same opportunity to apply for these leadership positions. Candidates will then be elected by the members of the senate of the university. Research participants of this study, referring to the statute, are in agreement that as far as equal opportunity is concerned, the university does not privilege certain groups or gender.

During field observation, however, I noticed that the majority of members of the senate at faculty and university levels were men. There were only four women out of 39 senate members at university level in 2012. As the highest form of body at the university, male domination seems to influence the result of leadership selection. What this means is that men have certain advantage over women when it comes to applying for leadership roles. The fact that the Rector takes candidates' personality and track record into account when endorsing someone as a Dean shows that male candidates have the upper hand due to the extensive network that they have. According to male respondent 6:

Many of us don't feel comfortable to have women as leaders. If we have male candidates with the same qualification as female candidate, I am almost 100% certain that male candidate will get the position. This is because men have extensive network and they are not hesitant to lobby senate members. It does not mean female candidates do not qualify for the job, but we often

do not consider women as capable or competent.

The above response indicates the importance of having extensive networks at the university. During observation, it was discovered that, unlike male academics who have no reservation in exploring their connectedness with members of the senate who have the right to vote, female academics do not consider this avenue as appropriate. Perhaps this is due to perception that women lobbying for leadership positions are regarded as aggressive. Understandably, it will be very unlikely for senate members to choose female candidates when male candidates still take part in applying for the positions.

During interviews, respondents were asked if the appointment of senior leadership roles has in any way favoured certain groups. In relation to this question, one of senior bureaucrats at IAIN Ar-Raniry, male respondent 2, asserted that:

Appointment of staff or academician to certain position at the university is based on meritocracy principles. No one is discriminated against. The candidate is selected based on his/her merit. This is regulated in the statutes of university.

The same answer was also given by female respondent 2 when asked if policies and regulation on professional development and promotion at the university have restricted women from applying for top jobs. She stated:

That is not true. With regard to administrative and qualification requirements, both women and men who

want to apply for teaching position or senior management position have to meet the same requirements.

Both male and female respondents stated that there is no discrimination against women or privilege given to men in relation to career promotion and appointment of leadership positions at the university. In a similar tone, male respondent 4 asserted that:

The same opportunity is given to female academics and staff to hold certain leadership positions. However, because of the lack of quality or their inability to compete, for example, women become marginalized indirectly.

The above responses indicate that the principle of equal opportunity exists in university's policies. Respondents, however, did not mention contributing factors leading to the lack of women in leadership roles other than the obvious reasons such as lack of academic qualifications and tenure on the part of female academics. Respondents of this study, both male and female, did not mention male domination in the senate, and the networking ability of male academics as contributing factors to the phenomenon. These factors often influence the outcome of leadership appointments.

In addition, none of respondents, but female respondent 3, saw the problem with equal opportunity measures in the university's statutes. She suggested that equal opportunity is precisely the problem. In this sense, having equal opportunity measure, as one of gender equality strategies, has not contributed to the progress towards reducing gender gap at the university and has resulted in the lack of women in senior

leadership roles. This is mainly because equal opportunity is based on the principle that treatment for both women and men must be the same, failing to recognise that equal treatment will not produce equitable results. In this sense, it is a form of discrimination. It seems that the majority of people equate gender equality with equal opportunity, and thus create an unbalance playing field between women and men. This is clearly misleading. In an organisation, when a gender equality initiative is equated with equal opportunity, as far as career advancement is concerned, it will certainly position women on the back foot. This is because women do not have the same privileges in accessing resources and supports and are often impeded with household commitments, something that men are often not subject to. Female respondent 3 argues that:

because women are, in many ways, behind men when it comes to access to resources, including access to professional development programs, then female academics do not have a fair chance to compete against their male counterparts.

She also recognizes the fact that women start late in terms of admittance to lecturing positions and that they do not get sufficient support from the beginning, which makes it an uneven playing field for them. Thus, equal opportunity becomes an issue, not part of solution. It becomes clear that equal opportunity measure has not succeeded in considering different life experiences that men and women have. Although female academics are not discriminated against in applying for senior leadership roles, the culture of university

certainly advantage men for the reasons mentioned above.

Organizational cultures often play considerable roles in determining women's career progression in a traditionally male-dominated field such as higher education.

Subrahmanian argues that "even where women are able to negotiate their burdens in order to participate in different opportunities on offer, gender inequalities are often institutionalized in the norms, processes and structures of interventions and institutions and present barriers to equitable outcomes" (2005, p. 399). Hence, equal opportunity measure is also considered one of the reasons contributing to the long standing problem of gender gap with regard to women and leadership roles, as noted by female respondent 3. She asserts that:

considering the current situation of gender disparities in academic qualifications, equal opportunity measure is precisely the problem. Because women are in many ways behind men when it comes to access to resources, then women do not have a chance to compete against male counterparts. Because women do not get sufficient supports from the beginning, equal opportunity then becomes an issue.

The above response illustrates the problem with current regulations and statutes with regard to applying for senior positions at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Equal opportunity policy as one of the measures taken to reduce gender gap may, at times, be a factor that contributes to the problem. In relation to this matter, Knights and Richards (2003, p. 214) state that:

part of the problem has been precisely the commitment

to a universal system of meritocratic values that are at the base of equal opportunity policies in modern liberal regimes. While these values have to be supported to restrict discrimination on the basis of class, race or sex, when universally applied they militate against equal opportunity for women in a patriarchal society.

It can be concluded from the above quotation that although equal opportunity policies adopted by both public and private institutions are aimed at reducing discrimination, in reality it could escalate the already disadvantageous situation for minority groups such as women. In this sense, I think equal opportunity is actually a form of implicit discrimination within organization, which is responsible for the lack of women in leadership roles. Wayong asserts that:

Implicit discrimination is often unintentional, but is frequently used to filter women or a given group out of advancement and opportunity, including demanding for qualifications or characteristics when selecting people for an academic position that a given gender is known to be unlikely to possess (2007, p. 63).

This implicit discrimination can be traced in the requirements set out in the university's statutes. Despite the principle of equal opportunity, the criteria relating to Rector, Vice Rector, and Dean certainly favours men more than women.

As mentioned earlier, while equal opportunity is considered to be one of the measures that can be carried out to improve women's opportunity to be appointed to senior roles in organisations, it can also be an impeding factor as



previously explained. Nevertheless, it has been used as a feature in the recruitment and promotion processes within organisation, including in educational institutions such as universities. To investigate whether patriarchal culture, commonly practiced within Acehnese households, is reflected in the way women are perceived in an organisation, and therefore affects women's opportunity to hold leadership roles, female respondent 2 asserts that:

that is not the case. In public domain, the influence of patriarchal culture is not evident. People look at the quality of women whether she has the potential or not. In a meeting for example, we are not marginalized, in contrary, we are respected. Actually, this is strange. So the habit within household is not reflected in public domain.

The above remark indicates that, although in typical Acehnese households women have to do much of the domestic work with little support from their husbands, when it comes to public spaces, women are given the same opportunity to contribute. Her explanation is in line with other research participants who state that, in the context of HE, women are not discriminated against with regard to career progression and professional development. The problem lies, as mentioned earlier, in the nature of equal opportunity designed in the university statutes, and in the lack of qualification. Male respondent 6 suggests that under-representation of female academics in top leadership positions at IAIN Ar-Raniry is also caused by the culture of under-appreciation of the potential of female academics and staff. He stated:

the stakeholders, they do not really look at women as capable or competent. They underestimate women, even if they (women) are competent. In general, the people in campus, the stakeholder, they underestimate women's capacity.

His statement indicates that despite having the same qualification as men's, women will find it more difficult to break through the glass ceiling. It seems that the grip of patriarchal culture and cultural values on the way the academia at IAIN Ar-Raniry perceive women's potential has positioned women as less valuable assets for the organisation.

Nevertheless, there has been one major breakthrough in the old pattern of male domination in top leadership management at IAIN Ar-Raniry. The appointment of Dr. Arbiyah Lubis as the Dean at the Faculty of Dakwah (Faculty of Islamic Communications) in late 2004 has made her the first female Dean in the history of Islamic HEIs in Aceh. She was also the first female to achieve the highest functional rank as professor at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Her achievement has clearly signalled positive progress in breaking the old tradition of the male-dominated domain and the glass ceiling in the management of IAIN Ar-Raniry. It also sent a clear message that women can be appointed to senior leadership positions if they have the qualifications and merit required to do the job.

It is clear that from the interviews and observations conducted during this research, that administrative and academic qualifications which have been used to consider prospective candidates who apply for certain positions, have become a major problem that prevents many female

academics from holding senior management positions at university. The fact that women have not entered higher education until fairly recently has been considered as one of the reasons contributing to the lack of women in leadership roles. In addition, male domination, implicit discrimination in university's statutes, and the glass ceiling phenomenon also complicate the problem. Understandably, although equal opportunity measures are in place, the possibility for female academics to successfully get top management positions is extremely remote. This can be seen in the composition of leadership at IAIN Ar-Raniry shown in Figures 11 and 12. This gender gap in leadership roles, however, does not mean the absence of a gender equality agenda. There have been efforts to improve gender relations at IAIN Ar-Raniry such as the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The following section will discuss the workload of academics at the institute and its consequences on the career of female academics. This is important in order to analyse whether workloads at the university play a role in the current state of the gender gap in leadership positions.

#### **IV. Workload and Responsibilities of Academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh**

Based on Law No. 14, 2005, Article 45 on Teachers and Lecturers, lecturers are required to have academic qualifications, competence, educator certificates, physical and spiritual health, and meet the other qualifications required by the Higher Education institution they work for, and have

the ability to realize the goals of national education. In the context of Islamic HEIs, in addition to having the knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a professional educator and scientist, the lecturer must have competence in carrying out their duties, namely:

- a. Professional competence, namely, the breadth of academic knowledge and depth of knowledge of the materials science faculty who practiced;
- b. Pedagogical competence, namely, mastery in lecturing on a variety of approaches, methods, classroom management, and evaluation of learning according to the characteristics of the material and the development of students;
- c. Competence personality, ie, the ability lecturer to properly present himself/herself as a role model and showed enthusiasm and love of the profession;
- d. Social competence, ie, the ability of lecturer to value diversity, active in various activities social, and able to work in team. (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi Islam, 2011, pp. 17-18)

In addition to academic qualification, the above competencies are also taken into account when a lecturer applies for promotion, especially for senior leadership positions. Considering respondent's opinion on the existence of practices of patriarchal cultures in the university, the above competencies are more likely to advantage men, especially because male lecturers have longer tenure and extensive network. Most male lecturers, for example, would not have any problems to socialize and work long hours in order to

develop their career. As a matter of fact, it is important to get involve in social activities in order to extent their network, which is important when they want to get promoted. For female academics, on the other hand, they would find this difficult for at least two reasons. Firstly, female academics have to take care of unpaid domestic works. Understandably, they would not have much time to socialize and develop the network. Secondly, female academics often withdraw from social activities on and off campus due to gender norms in society that portray women as aggressive and ambitious individuals when they want to develop their careers. In these ways, the above competencies are gendered.

The main responsibilities of lecturers, as described in “The Guidelines for Faculty Workload and the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Tridharma for Lecturers of Islamic State Universities” are the tasks of Education and Teaching, which is the equivalent of nine (9) credits each semester. These education and teaching tasks can be in the form of:

- a. Conducting lectures/tutorials and test;
- b. Conducting education in the laboratory, teacher practice, practice workshop/studio/technology teaching;
- c. Guiding student seminars;
- d. Guiding Field Work (GFW), Community Service, Field Work Practice, Internship, or Work Practice;
- e. Guiding student research theses including guiding the research result report;
- f. Examiners at the final exam;
- g. Develop a lecture program;
- h. Developing teaching materials;
- i. Fostering student activities in the field of academic and

- student affairs;
- j. Guiding junior faculty members. (Direktorat PendidikanTinggi Islam, 2011, p. 19).

The above responsibilities must be carried out by all lecturers. All those activities are important in applying for rank promotion. While all lecturers have the same responsibilities, in reality, certain tasks are often reserved for male lecturers. The number of male lecturers assigned to guide junior faculty member, for example, is a lot higher than that of female lecturers. This helps extend their networks. Having an extensive network is one of the factors that contribute to their career progression.

Besides the main responsibilities above, lecturers are also required to conduct research, whether individually or in a group. Research outputs are one of the criteria used by the university to promote lecturers to higher rank. In addition to research tasks, lecturers in Islamic Higher Education are also required to carry out supporting tasks such as academic advising, and community service duties such as providing direct service to the community or other activities that support their implementation of the tasks of general government and development. All these tasks carry three (3) credits per semester. In total, lecturers have to undertake 12 credits per semester.

Looking at the responsibilities that must be carried out by lecturers each semester, it is understandable that both male and female lecturers have to be able to wisely manage their time, especially working couples with young children. In terms of working hours, lecturers, unlike administrative staff who work from 8 am to 5 pm, have more flexible working

hours, in that they do not have to be on campus from 8 am to 5 pm from Monday to Friday, as long as they conduct their teaching, research, and community service duties. Lecturers must deliver the courses as scheduled by the academic unit of the faculty, along with other tasks and responsibilities assigned to them during the two semesters in one academic calendar year. According to male respondent 6:

All lecturers have the same workloads. We have to fulfil our teaching responsibilities and also work on our research. This is important for our career as lecturers. For those who have the ambition to pursue senior leadership roles, they also have to improve their academic qualification. To be a rector for example, you need to have a Doctoral degree.

The above response clearly shows the extent of responsibilities that must be carried out in the area of teaching, research, and community service by all academics at state Islamic university. Although these responsibilities must be carried out by all academics, they have different implication for male and female academics. During observations, I noticed that when it comes to conducting research, the number of female academics taking part in this activity is considerably less than male academics. As research is highly competitive, and the fund is limited, to be able to get the grant to conduct a research is a prestigious achievement. It is a very important component that counts towards rank promotion.

The way higher education is run and organized seems to advantage men as argued in previous section. For academics to be able to improve his/her rank, they need to dedicate

more times in order to take part in research activity. For female academics, this is not an easy decision to make. They have to be able to balance their responsibilities at work and at home. Taking part in research activities would take their time away from their family and potentially create issues.

For those working in the higher education sector, the research component is usually one of the most difficult and demanding criteria that must be addressed by academia, especially for female academics. As research activities often require long hours and a long completion time, it makes it even more demanding for female academics working in the context of patriarchal cultures. As a result, it is difficult for them to improve their ranking or apply for leadership roles as they often do not have research outputs. Talking in the context of Australian universities, White concurs that:

the Australian literature suggests that gender is a factor in women getting started in research and/or establishing a research reputation in academia. If the distribution of women in academia in Australia in the last few years is examined, a picture emerges of women being over-represented in lower levels of academia and, therefore, having fewer opportunities to gain the necessary qualifications to become research active (2001, p. 66).

While the above quotation exemplifies the condition in Australian universities, it is also relevant to the condition of universities in Indonesia. This situation can be found in most state Islamic universities. At IAIN Ar-Raniry, for example, the majority of female academics occupy lower level positions which often prevent them from competing in competitive research schemes.



In addition to research task, all lecturers, as mentioned earlier, have the education, teaching, and community service tasks that they have to do. These tasks, stipulated in “The Guidelines for Faculty Workload and the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Tri Dharma for Lecturers of Islamic State Universities”, are also important components that count when academics apply for rank promotion. Again, these tasks have different impacts on male and female academics. Some of the responsibilities that require them to travel for a period of time, for example, may not be assigned to female academics who have family obligation to fulfil. Consequently, it will be more difficult for female academics to apply for promotion. According to Santos and Cabral-Cardoso,

Traditional concepts of work and careers assume that workers are male, and work is separate from the rest of life with work playing the primary role in life. The “ideal” worker is one that devotes his, or her, entire life to a full-time job and does not allow family obligations to interfere with production. Productivity and commitment tend to be defined in terms of hours spent at work, thus ignoring women’s unique needs and demands. (Santos & Cabral-Cardoso, 2008, p.446)

From the above quotation, it can be argued that, in general, the nature of work has been thought of as men’s domain which often ignores women’s interests. This is also true in higher education sector. In a strong patriarchal society like in Aceh where women carry the burden of domestic labor, the long hours work culture often privileges men. It is argued that organizational culture in higher education sector has

advantaged men.

In relation to improving academics credential, in addition to their teaching responsibilities, both male and female academics also have to work on their career by taking part in professional development programs. This is required when they want to apply for certain leadership positions within the university. The government, through Law Number 14/2005 on Teacher and Lecturer, for example, requires lecturers to have Masters Degree to be able to teach at undergraduate level. This is part of professional development programs designed to improve the quality of higher education. The implication of this Law for male and female lecturers is different.

As argued earlier, work responsibilities and domestic duties that female academics have to deal with have restricted their involvement in pursuing their careers. Some female academics have to put their career on hold until they can resolve this issue. In the context of Aceh where most domestic works are taken care of by women, it is difficult for female academics to take part in professional development programs without having conflict of interests with family duties. A more comprehensive discussion and its implication on female academics will be discussed in chapter Six.

From the above illustration, it is plausible to conclude that despite the same responsibility at the university, workload and responsibilities of female academics are more intense than men. As a result, when it comes to conducting other academic activities besides teaching or supervising students, they often find it difficult to participate in professional development programs, such as conducting research

components.

### **V. Gender Equality Effort at IAIN Ar-Raniry**

To address the problem of gender disparity and patriarchal organisational culture at IAIN Ar-Raniry, the institutes established the Centre for Women's Studies (CWS) in 1989. This establishment of the CWS occurred long before the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 9, 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming, indicating that the university had begun working on the gender equality agenda while the New Order regime was still in power. The creation of the CWS was intended to improve gender relations and gender disparity between male and female academics at the university. In addition, its founding was intended to bring about gender discourse on campus and help to disseminate ideas and concepts related to gender issues in higher education, as well as to improve the status of female academics and women in general.

At the early stage of its existence, the CWS had limited resources in terms of funding and human capital. Political will to improve gender equality on the part of the government had not been reflected in the adequate allocation of funding to execute its programs. This problem, coupled with limited facilities needed to implement programs, was the main reason the CWS did not have a significant impact on campus in relation to gender issues. Another factor, according to female respondent 5, contributing to the CWS's inability to successfully implement its programs was because it had not got the right staff. She said that the:

CWS was exclusive because in its initial stage it was

not socialized sufficiently. Internally, only a few female lecturers are aware of its programs and knew where CWS office is. At the beginning, the structure of CWS is handpicked by the rector. This creates an issue as almost 50% of the staff chosen to implement the programs is very busy senior lecturers who have important position at their faculties. So they almost have no time to contribute in the programs.

This situation makes it difficult to coordinate and execute programs. When asked whether the CWS faces obstacles in implementing its programs, female respondent 5 asserts that there has been resistance from both inside and outside the campus. In the context of gender mainstreaming efforts in Indonesia, organisational culture has been argued as one of the factors that often affects the effectiveness of the implementation of the gender-related programs. People's unyielding perceptions, hundreds of years old social and cultural norms, stereotyping, and notions of what are expected of women and men, more often than not result in collective resistance towards new development, especially towards gender related programs.

It is widely accepted that existing socio-cultural values that undermine women's potential have been responsible for marginalization experienced by women, especially in the public domain. In many developing countries, this situation often leads to pessimistic attitudes and limitations of women's potential. This is one of the reasons gender mainstreaming efforts are not effective although interventions at the formal level such as putting new policies and procedures in place have been carried out (Newman, 1995). Sometimes, resistance also

comes from women themselves as they often do not want to improve their qualifications as it means spending more time outside their home. On this note, Female respondent 5 asserted that:

We often mention that the CWS is not set out to ask women to go out from their home and neglect their family. What we advocate is that women need to know what they want and need. If they chose to work outside, they can have a good career with the help from their spouse and children. I have seen cases in which women holding doctoral degree decide to stay at home and are not able to utilize their knowledge. Nevertheless we have to respect their decisions.

This makes it even more complicated for gender equality efforts to have their intended impacts. It can be concluded that these women's decision to choose family over career is influenced by their religious understanding that the blessing of their spouse is paramount to their happiness in the hereafter. While this opinion is shared by most people, it does not necessarily mean that pursuing a career means neglecting their family. It is possible that, with negotiation and better time management between spouses, both family and work-related matters can be resolved. To get respondents' perspectives on the gender equality agenda at the university, the researcher asked their opinions about this issue. Male respondent 6, suggested that:

So far, majority of lecturers at IAIN are not really familiar with gender issues. Only some activists know the gender issue on campus. This is because they do not really involve

in any activities created by gender activists on campus.

His opinion reiterates previous comments by female respondent 5 indicating the lack of exposure of gender-related programs carried out at the university. In addition, at IAIN Ar-Raniry, gender related programs at CWS have always been managed by female academics, leaving men out of its programs. This is not uncommon as male academics find it awkward or inappropriate to get involve in programs initiated by CWS. If we refer to chapter Two, it is clear that CWS adopts WID approach rather than WAD approach in executing their programs. This can be seen in the absence of men in the structure of their organization. In a way, CWS exists in isolation rather than in conjunction to other institutions at the university. Not surprisingly, the majority of academics do not have a clear understanding of gender equality. Female respondent 1 mentioned that:

Although most academics have got their advanced degree, especially male academics, they still have sinister view on gender issues. They even have the opinions that talking about gender equals talking about women's effort to overthrow men's position. So they are not keen on gender issues.

From the above responses, it can be concluded that the gender equality agenda has not yet been successfully disseminated among academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Not surprisingly, most respondents agree that despite having pursued their postgraduate studies, considerable numbers of academics, both male and female still hold conservative views on the concept of gender equality. These responses

indicate that academics' unawareness of and unfamiliarity towards the gender-equality initiative also contribute to the already complex issue. Male academics, because of their ignorance, perceive gender-related activities as threats to the status quo. Adding to the problem, some female academics do not feel the need to take part in gender mainstreaming programs in order to improve the situation. Consequently, gender mainstreaming programs at the university have had limited impact on the state of gender relations at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

With regard to the implementation of gender mainstreaming programs at the university, there is also a financial issue that often affects the operation of the CWS. Unlike other institutions at the university, funding for the CWS is not allocated through government channels. Concerning this issue, female respondent 3 stated that:

the CWS is different from, for example, the University Research Centre or the Centre for Quality Assurance that receive their funding from the central government. The CWS on the other hand is higher than these centres and it is recognized in the university's statute. However, it does not receive its funding from central government. Its funding is allocated through local government budget, which is only available if there are activities conducted. In 2007, for example, the funds allocated to the CWS to implement its programs for the whole year was 20 million rupiahs (equivalent to AU\$250). It is difficult to have meaningful results with such limited funds. On the one hand, the CWS is required to contribute in promoting gender equality; on the other hand, it has limited funds to carry out its programs.

Her comment shows why gender equality efforts at the university have not been successful. The fact that the majority of male academics still have traditional views on gender relations, as mentioned by female respondent 5 above, can contribute to the unsuccessful execution of the gender equality agenda at IAIN Ar-Raniry. More specifically, it can be seen in existing gender gap between male and female academics, not only at leadership positions, but also at mid and low level positions. Figures 11, 12, 13, and Table 11 clearly show this gender gap at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

To deal with the shortage of funds, consequently, the CWS had to find ways to attract funding. Cooperation with NGOs and other government institutions was one of the ways explored. It was not until the December 2004 tsunami when the CWS at IAIN Ar-Raniry had begun to be considered as a contributing institution. This was largely due to its ability to work with major international donors and NGOs in promoting gender issues in Aceh.

Gender related programs at IAIN Ar-Raniry started to take off after the 2004 tsunami when the Canada International Development Agency (CIDA) entered with the support to improve the capacity of the CWS at IAIN Ar-Raniry. Numerous training and professional development programs were conducted aiming at socializing gender issues and raising awareness of academic staff on the importance of having gender balance at the university and in society. The three year cooperation between CIDA and the university has resulted in positive outcomes. More and more academics are now aware of gender issues.

One of the initiatives that has been implemented at



IAIN Ar-Raniry, aimed at helping lecturers who have young children at the university, is the establishment of day child-care run by the CWS. This day care has been a successful program at IAIN Ar-Raniry because many female lecturers as well as members of the community around campus now have the support they need when they undertake their professional work. Despite limited resources in the day care, it helps female academics resolve the issue of minding their children when working, especially those who do not have extended families to turn to. Another program which was designed to increase awareness on gender issues was the leadership course sponsored by the CIDA.

As part of the cooperation with the CIDA, during the period between 2006 and 2009, a number of lecturers, both male and female, were sent to McGill University, Montreal, to attend a short leadership course on management and women issues. This was intended to improve their awareness on gender issues as well as to upgrade their portfolio with regard to professional development. It was expected that with new perspective on management and gender issues, these academics would be at the forefront of management reform at IAIN Ar-Raniry. This also means designing curriculum to include gender issues so that students are exposed to the idea of gender equality. As part of the machinery of gender mainstreaming initiatives, one of the CWS's functions is to help disseminate gender equality initiatives in order to create awareness of gender issues at the university.

While positive results have taken place at the university in relation to gender mainstreaming efforts, there are still issues that must be addressed in order to achieve gender

equality. One issue that is of great important is that there is still a view among both male and female academics that gender issues are the domain of female academics. This can be seen in the composition of the CWS. During field work, it was evident that all members of the CWS at IAIN Ar-Ranirywere female academics. This situation does not help because men also have a vital role as they are part of the solution: “It has become increasingly clear that a ‘women-only’ approach to gender planning is insufficient to overturn the patriarchal structures embedded in development institutions and to readdress gender imbalances at the grassroots in any fundamental way “(Chant & Gutmann, 2002, p. 270).

It is clear that the focus on women without men’s involvement will compromise gender equality efforts because it does not challenge the dichotomous categorization and stereotypes that men are all offenders and women are the victims (Chant, 2000). In addition, the absence of men is likely to increase women’s workloads and responsibilities, and the success of ‘women-only’ projects is constrained as men are a central part of gender relations(Chant, 2000). There is then a need to find a workable method in incorporating men into gender mainstreaming initiatives. In the context of Aceh, this is not easy. For Acehnese men, regardless of their occupations, working to promote gender equality will likely be seen as betraying their own groups. Therefore, we rarely see men take part in gender mainstreaming initiatives. To overcome this problem, male respondent 6, stated that:

Because men are the ones that have been privileged by patriarchal cultures, their participation is important in gender equality efforts. In doing so, we may need to

make use of local cultural values so that gender equality initiatives are welcome.

Considering existing patriarchal cultures which often challenge the efforts to improve gender equality, including men becomes even more important. Chant asserts that the focus on women without men's involvement will compromise gender equality efforts because it:

does not allow men to challenge the dichotomous categorization and stereotypes that men are all bad and women are the victims, 2) has the potential to increase hostility between men and women and jeopardizes the success of gender initiatives, 3) it is likely to increase women's workloads and responsibilities, and 4) the success of 'women-only' projects is constrained as men are a central part of gender relations (2000, pp. 9-11).

Men's involvement in gender mainstreaming efforts will be likely to have a positive impact as men are a major factor in the process. This is especially important in Aceh. Aceh is known for its Islamic Law where *ulama*(men) have a very important role in shaping and influencing people's worldviews. There is a need to include *ulama* in any development programs in order to have sustainable impacts on society. When asked about *ulama*'s role, female respondent 1 said:

In Aceh, *ulama* are vital in providing religious assurance to the people. This is why the way the *Qur'an* is interpreted in relation to women's issues becomes very important. The majority of Acehnese people still hold strongly to the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. So, if gender mainstreaming efforts do not have the support from the *ulama*, it will be very

difficult to have meaningful results because this is a sensitive issue.

The above comment clearly shows the complexity of the gender equality agenda in Aceh. The influences of patriarchal cultures and religious values that shape people's worldview on gender relations have positioned women as second class members of society. Therefore, to be able to change the way people perceive gender relations, there is an urgent need to involve men and, in the case of Aceh, the *ulama*, in formulating and implementing gender equality initiatives.

# **GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR, WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND WOMEN'S CAREER PROGRESSION**

## **I. Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion on the gender division of labour and the influences it has on women's career progression. As such, it discusses factors hampering the efforts of female academics to pursue their careers at IAIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. In answering the research question on the challenges and hindrances that women face in taking up senior leadership positions and in analysing competing interests faced by women working as academic professionals, a comprehensive account of the gender division of labour, family work relation (family-work conflict), the issue of double burden, and cultural assumption on women's role in Aceh will be presented.

In doing so, this section also scrutinizes the implications that these factors have on the career progression of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry. It does this by providing an illustration and analysis on power relations within typical Acehese families, and how these translate into the public arena, specifically in Islamic HE institutions in Aceh.

## **II. Gender Division of Labour in Aceh**

The gender division of labour is the classification of work into

two categories based on sex or gender. Biological difference is used to justify the division of work between women and men. This approach to work is the reason behind social inequality in the majority of cultures around the world, both in developing and developed countries. As most women, at some point of their usually give birth, take care of and bear young children, especially during the early years of infancy, their role and status within a society is tied to these arenas.

These prescribed characteristics, when it comes to one's career, have been considered as contributing factors to the existing job division of labour in both developed and developing countries. An earlier study by Newman (1995, p. 14) indicates that:

the gender typing of jobs has traditionally been fairly strong, with women occupying the functional specialism (such as personnel) or service professions (such as nursing, social work, teaching of young children) most closely associated with female roles. This strong gender distinction between jobs has, traditionally, meant that women were frequently found in senior positions in some settings (such as hospital matron, infant school head, and personnel manager).

In many developing countries, including Indonesia, as a result of patriarchal culture, jobs in society are segregated based on gender. It is common to see certain types of jobs being dominated by men, while the rest are dominated by women. In the context of Acehnese society, one of the female research participants, female respondent 2, asserted that the gendered division of labour is common in Acehnese households. She argued that this situation is influenced by patriarchal culture

and, in many Muslim countries, by the interpretation of *Quran'ic* verses by traditional *ulam* legitimating the superior status of men in the society. Commenting on the labour division within Acehnese families, she said that:

discrimination in labour division is the problem faced by women in the domestic domain. It is influenced by a long standing notion of patriarchal culture where women, because of their gender, have to take care of household work. Men on the other hand are responsible for providing financial support.

Because of the long standing perception of women's role in Acehnese society or gender stereotypes, women become responsible for much of the household work. In the context of Aceh where Islamic values are strongly held by society, people are of the opinion that the gender division of labour is a natural consequence of being men or women. Not surprisingly, the gender division of labour is taken for granted. This situation has social and economic implications indeed, leading towards one's opportunity to access resources. It has long been recognized that in most developing and under-developed countries, boys enjoy more privileges than do girls by being the future breadwinners of the family. Boys also get more access to resources compared to girls. Understandably, this power imbalance between men and women in households results in poor allocation of resources to women, and thus creates gender disparities (King & Mason, 2002). Elaborating on the impact of the household power imbalance, King and Mason, assert that:

gender inequalities in education, access to other

productive assets, employment, or earning affect power relations between women and men – thus their relative ability to influence decision within their households. These inequalities also translate into disparities in women's and men's capacity to take advantage of economic and other opportunities (2002, p. 35).

It is clear that “systems of meanings and norms prescribing different activities and characteristics for men and women seem to exist in most cultures” (Wayong, 2007, p. 78). Female respondent 1, responding to the same issue and its implications for women, commented that:

a man has more time to work on their academic research. When he gets home, he can isolate himself from his children and family to work in a study room where he cannot be disturbed. And his wife, being a good partner, supports this by looking after the children and taking the children away so that her husband can work peacefully.

This view is shared by female respondent 2 who stated that:

The load of domestic work is mainly done by women. It is taboo for men in Aceh to take on domestic tasks, especially in rural areas. As a result, women do not have time to improve their potential, their self-actualization. They spend most time to take care of 1001 domestic works.

The above comments illustrate atypical gender relation and job division within Acehnese households and the implications it has for women. In Aceh, the construction of socio-cultural and religious values has positioned women as nurturer of



family. This perception has somewhat confined and restricted them from getting involved in professional development activities vital to their career progression. It results in women's inability to participate in academic activities, preventing them from improving their qualifications. Undoubtedly, without considering the condition of women and their specific circumstances, qualification requirements for leadership roles will certainly give competitive advantages to men. Despite legal reform in the area of equal employment opportunity, which promotes the involvement of women in the public domain, "the constraints placed on women by their domestic responsibilities continue to impede women's access to public sphere" (The Jakarta Post, 2012, p. 55). According to female respondent 3:

Men do not look at this as a serious issue. Most of them think that it is just natural to have different responsibilities between men and women, part of our life as human beings. There are tasks that men are not good at that we, women, are good at, and vice versa.

The above comment illustrates the opinion of the majority of men in a typical male-dominated society. This phenomenon, where certain areas of work are dominated by men and others by women can be seen in official documents with regard to the number of public servants based on work unit and sex. It reveals that job division of labour exists in the government of Aceh province. The following table shows job segregation at several work units in Aceh province in 2010.

Table 14. The number of public servant based on sex and work unit in the government of Aceh province, 2010

Work Unit	Rank							
	I		II		III		IV	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Women Empowerment and Children Protection Agency (WECPA)	0	0	3	9	12	23	4	7
Government Hospital (ZainoelAbidin Hospital)	1	0	131	213	161	272	28	64
Mining and Energy Department	0	0	15	10	58	35	6	0
Department of Social Affairs	0	0	23	16	78	54	11	3
Department of National Education	7	0	33	23	155	72	56	20
Department of Islamic Law	3	0	20	8	35	19	8	2

Adopted from: Regional Employment Board of Aceh Province, 2010

The above table shows the gap between male and female in certain work units in the government of Aceh province. Jobs that are typically associated with female type of work are dominated by women. This can be seen at the number of women working at the Women Empowerment and Children Protection Agency (WECPA) and the ZainoelAbidin hospital.

At WECPA, an Agency established to improve women's and children's welfare, the number of women working at this institution is higher than that of men in every rank, from the lowest (rank II) to the highest rank (rank IV). The same trend can also be observed in the state run ZainoelAbidin Hospital where women outnumber men. As a matter of fact, women make up nearly 70 per cent of the highest rank at the hospital. It is probable that this phenomenon is closely related to job segregation in our Acehese society which considers certain jobs are classified masculine and others are feminine.

In the context of IAIN Ar-Raniry, based on observations during field work, the researcher noticed that at several faculties, specific tasks were given to women and others are given to men. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the appointment of female academics to the position of Vice Dean for financial affairs in four faculties at IAIN Ar-Raniry in 2012. The appointment of female academics in charge of financial affairs at faculty level, may be related to the perception in Acehese society that women are regarded as good financial planners.

This may also be closely related to the fact that in Acehese tradition women have always been regarded as *Oreung Po Rumoh* (the owner of the house), responsible for managing the household's affairs, including financial matters. In Acehese tradition, a husband will give part of their income to his wife to cover the needs of their family. A wife has to be able to wisely manage the money so that it is enough to fulfil the need for the whole family. This is one of the reasons, perhaps, why positions related to financial affairs at four faculties at IAIN Ar-Raniry were assigned to female academics. Male

respondent 6 said that:

At Tarbiyah faculty, we can see that a female academic has been appointed to assume Vice Dean position for three terms in a row. Why can't they be appointed to the position of Vice Dean for academic affairs? I think this relates to the assumption in Acehnese society that women are good at managing money.

Male respondent 6's response suggests that gender stereotypes still very much influence the way people behave. Unfortunately, job segregation does not make it easier for women to penetrate other types of work considered to be the male's domain. It is then important to change the attitude of employers, including the government itself, to widen their perspective on this particular matter. Although women have now been able to improve their academic qualifications, it is also important to have an accommodating working environment where women have the same opportunity as men to assume jobs, regardless of the nature of the job. This is, of course, a difficult undertaking in any patriarchal culture. That is why the government has to lay out non-discriminatory measures in the recruitment process. If needed, affirmative action should be considered as a short term measure to guarantee an equal playing field for women and men. This does not mean compromising the quality of the people recruited. There are plenty of qualified women who otherwise may not be able to get the job without affirmative action due to cultural and personal reasons. One of the cultural reasons is that Acehnese women do not like to face confrontation by competing against men to get the

job. People perceive them as rebellious and greedy when they challenge others for a position. This is why affirmative action can help.

### **III. Work-Family Conflict (WFC)**

In the past two decades, the term work-family conflict (WFC) has been used more and more in the research of management and organisations. It is an inharmonious situation as a result of pressures from the work and family domains (Greenhause and Foley, 2007). In this study, the term double burden is used to refer to the same phenomenon. Double burden is a term used to explain a situation of working men and women who also have to perform unpaid domestic work. Therefore, depending on one's priorities, conflicting interests between private and professional lives would be a burden for them.

Essentially, the problem of work-family conflict gained momentum as a result of an increasing number of dual career couples. This phenomenon is common occurrence in developed and developing countries. In the context of Indonesia, in the wake of globalization, modernization, technological change, education development, political change, as well as the shift in the attitudes towards women's economic and social contribution, the number of couples entering the work force increases considerably. Now more than ever women enter into workforces, especially in urban areas. The emphasis on cultural change offers new ways of running businesses, and the possibility of new organisational space for women. As a result, "the past two decades have brought a dramatic increase in the number of individuals with significant responsibilities both at work and with family" (Clark, 2001, p. 348). This is

also true in the context of higher education in Aceh. Better economic circumstances, educational infrastructure, and a growing participation rate in higher education have all led to the increase in the number of women working at universities which started in the late 1990s.

In Indonesia, while the pace of change in the number of couples entering the work force varies throughout the country, it is worth noting that in relation to women in the academic world, they are more susceptible to career stagnancy. This is not to say that there has been no progress at all. The fact that universities have traditionally been gendered, as academic careers are organized based on the male life patterns, means that a university is run on standards that are mostly compatible with men. In the context of Acehnese society, existing cultural perceptions of women's traits which have their roots in patriarchal values have been one of the instrumental factors that prevents women from pursuing their professional development objectives. Although this cultural perception has changed over the years with the increase of women's level of education resulting in a shift in women's ability to contribute in academia, it usually comes with fairly complicated consequences, especially for working couples with young children.

Workloads and responsibilities that must be carried out by working women, including female academics at university have in many ways changed the dynamics of households. With the amount of tasks they have to do, and the time they have to allocate to undertake those tasks on a daily basis, several female respondents claimed that they have had a very difficult time balancing their academic responsibilities and

domestic tasks at home. Literature suggests that while men and women as professionals, partners, and parents struggle with the delicate balance work and family life can pose, the challenge for women is even greater given the physical demands of motherhood, gendered expectations of family obligations, and the ongoing disparity with which working women take on the “second shift” through maintenance of children and home (Drago & Williams, 2000)

This phenomenon, according to respondents of this study, is one of the main factors impeding women’s career progression in the public realm, including in the HE sector. Female respondent 1, a women’s rights advocate and a senior lecturer in Islamic education at IAIN Ar-Raniry, commenting on women’s opportunity to get senior management roles, suggests that women, despite their eagerness to pursue their careers, have to be able to balance their work and family responsibilities. That is, besides working as professional, many women have to also do the unpaid domestic work of being a wife and mother.

When asked which factors that may impede women’s careers, all female respondents agreed that managing and negotiating professional and domestic obligations is the most difficult issue they face. What this means is that female academics have to dedicate time and effort to both their professional and family life. Female respondent 1 stated:

Although women actively engages outside their house to help earning money for their family or helping her husband, at home they will still have to do house works which in Acehnese society are perceived as woman’s work.

Another female respondent, female respondent 3, specifically referred to the term “double burden” to explain her situation. According to her, this situation has a significant impact on the career of the female academic. With regard to the extent to which domestic tasks and responsibilities restrict female academics in advancing their careers, she referred to her own experience. She explained:

I only have two hours to study. I can only study after my children go to sleep. Then I have to wake up early in the morning to prepare everything at home. When it is all over, I often have not had any time left to eat as I have to go to work.

The above response illustrates the intensity of carrying out domestic and academic responsibilities that female academics often have to face on a daily basis. What this means to women’s professional development is that, compared to men, they have less time to work on their academic credentials as they have to spend a considerable amount of time on domestic work and household issues. This double burden phenomenon results in women’s inability to participate in academic activities, preventing them from improving their qualifications. As a result, women find it difficult to advance their careers while building a family (Armenti, 2004). Female respondent 1, describing the workload of female academics, said:

They (female academics) often have no time for academic work once they get home as they have to take care of domestic work. Often they have to take children away from their father so that he can work in peace. This is



typical situation in many higher education institutions, not only in Aceh but also in Indonesia.

The above remark clearly shows that academic and domestic workloads affect male and female lecturers differently. My observation also revealed that the number of female lecturers participating in academic activities that take place outside working hours was significantly lower than their male counterparts. The above responses show that female academics, after work, still have to make sure that domestic work is taken care of. In the Acehnese tradition, domestic works have always been associated with women's responsibilities. Unless there is awareness, understanding, and cooperation on the part of men to help out, women are the ones responsible for unpaid domestic work. In many cases, this situation affects the progress of their careers as they have less time to work on their professional life. Commenting on the impacts of domestic tasks on the career of female academics, female respondent 2 said that:

The reading habit of female academics, which is crucial to their research skills, is very poor. This is due to the fact that they have not had enough time to work on their reading because of domestic works that they have to do.

The above statement indicates that, with considerably less time to spend on academic tasks, the opportunity for female academics to participate in professional development programs has been limited, which in turn prevents them from improving their academic credentials. Female respondent 2 asserts that:

Working women in Aceh, including those working as lecturers, have to work twice as hard in order to upgrade their position at work as they also have to make sure family matter at home are done. Before going to work, they have to prepare breakfast, get the children ready for school, wash dishes and clothes, and other odd jobs before going to work. This is a typical day for them.

Working women, often face difficult decisions when it comes to professional life. On the one hand, prioritizing their career by participating in professional development programs will take their time away from their family. On the other hand, taking care of family will not help their career in the long run as they have not gained the qualifications. This is perhaps why that despite the increase in the number of female academics over the years, it rarely translates to the improvement in their levels of education and qualification. One of the male respondents, Male respondent 5, when asked whether academic workloads of female lecturers contribute to their lack of professional development, stated that:

I think there is no different of work responsibility for male and female lecturers; it is the same. However, I understand that for female lecturers, before they go to work they have to attend the needs of their family, making sure that their children are ready for school, etc. Perhaps, in the long run, it affects their time to work on their career.

His opinion clearly shows the acknowledgement that female academics have been affected by the gender norms which impose domestic work solely on women. Working women, especially those with young children, often face

difficult decisions when it comes to professional life as prioritizing their careers often take away their time from family. When asked about the ability of female academics to work on their credential, female respondent 1 said:

Female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry, although they talk about gender equality outside their house, once they arrive at home they are just like other women, as housewife, who have not had much time to spend on their academic work, like writing and researching. Therefore, not many of us manage to get promoted to higher echelon.

The above response indicates that in the context of Aceh, although a woman is actively involved in promoting gender equality agenda outside her house, ultimately she still must take care of her family and as a result often does not have enough time to work on areas needed to improve her academic qualifications. The lack of time to dedicate to their academic life has affected their academic credentials, which in turn prevent them from competing for leadership roles. This situation is mainly caused by practices of patriarchal cultures that confine women to the domestic domain. Commenting on this issue, Santos and Cabral-Cardoso argue that:

gender differences in organisations are reinforced by the dominant cultural system that associates women with domestic life and characterizes them as emotional, passionate and intuitive, while men are associated with public life and characterized as rational, analytical, productive, and insensitive to personal and life concerns (2008, p. 444).

With less time dedicated to their professional work,

consequently, women will be more likely to have fewer academic credentials than their male counterparts which results in women missing opportunities to apply for better management positions at the university. This is where the WFC takes place, especially when the working couples are not able to negotiate these challenges. Probert asserts that the impact of WFC on women is far more significant, especially for female academics with young children (2005). In a similar tone, Baxter argues that “women’s continuing responsibility for the bulk of unpaid caring and domestic work in the home is often viewed as one of the most important factors restricting movement toward gender equality in the Western industrialized nations”(2012, p. 55). The same is true in developing countries like Indonesia. Commenting on this issue, female respondent 1 pointed out that:

when they (female academics) cannot manage and negotiate their professional and domestic responsibilities, it is impossible for them to even improved their academic qualification. When someone is about to be elected as Dean, Vice Dean, or other strategic positions on campus, women face a challenge in relation to their qualification, rank, and experiences.

The above response illustrates the complexity and the impacts of WFC faced by working women, not only in the higher education sector, but also in other public sectors. This situation is common in Indonesia. Confronted with double burden situation, female academics have to work twice as hard to get to where their male counterparts are. The domestic works they carry out “which are often time-intensive and home-based, can often prevent women from

gaining equal access to opportunities that may in theory be available to them” (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 399). Female respondent 3 mentioned that the double burden that female academics have to go through has crippled their opportunity to continue their study, which in turn results in lack of academic qualification. According to female respondent 3, this is because:

We (women) have to manage two responsibilities, as mother/wife and as professional outside their house. This situation often results in conflict of interest between family and work. If we prioritize our career, it means we have to spend less time with family. On the other hand, if we do not allocate more times to work on our profession, we will not be able to get promoted.

While both men and women face the same scenario, for women living in a patriarchal society like that in Aceh, this situation is more problematic. This is because most domestic work is carried out by women, and men make little contribution, if any, to taking care of housework. Typical Acehnese men usually do not spend much time on household chores. On this note, female respondent 8 said that:

Most Acehnese men find it embarrassing to wash dishes or sweep the floor as it is seen as signs of weakness. Therefore, women have to do all housework. For working women, this becomes a problem because they have to spend most of their times taking care of domestic works.

Undoubtedly, for Acehnese women, when negotiation and compromise between couples cannot solve the issue of

domestic responsibilities, it will be highly unlikely that they put professional life ahead of family interests. As mentioned in Chapter Six, the majority of working women in Aceh take cultural perception and religious values into consideration when resolving issues as they are significant factors shaping Aceh's contemporary cultures. Crompton and Lyonette, speaking on the issue of WFC, argue that social and cultural contexts seem to contribute to the level of conflict and to factors giving rise to that conflict (2006). In a similar vein, Santos and Cabral-Cardoso assert: "children care, the domestic division of labour, the nature of the occupation, working time and schedule, organisational support and formal policies are major factors influencing the level of work-family conflict" (2008, p. 444).

On the point of WFC, promotion to senior leadership positions at university means long working hours, often at the expense of family time. In the higher education context, long working hours have been considered as job consequences for those assuming top leadership positions. This is also true in the context of Islamic HE in Aceh. When appointed to senior leadership roles such as Dean, Vice Dean, or Head of Department, female academics have to dedicate a considerable amount of time to address work-related issues. As discussed in Chapter Seven, in addition to the regular workload that lecturers have to undertake, being assigned to a senior position within a faculty or university means an additional workload, which includes numerous meetings, presentations, etc.

As the long hours culture becomes "the norm" in university settings, academics are increasingly likely to

feel the tensions between work and family life, and the work-family culture that prevails in academia is unlikely to make things easier for faculty members, particularly women, trying to balance the job requirements and the demands of family life” (Santos & Cabral-Cardoso, 2008, p. 443)

In the context of Acehese society, the construction of socio-cultural and religious values has positioned women as nurturers of the family. According to respondents of this study, female academics see themselves as wives first and lecturers second. This perception has, in many ways, confined and restricted women from getting involved in professional development activities vital to their career progression. One male respondent, male respondent 4, explained an incident in a meeting he attended at Islamic Communication faculty. He said: “There was a case when our Dean (female Dean) had to go home and she delegated the meeting to the Vice Dean because she had to attend her guests coming from her village”. This example suggests that no matter how senior a female academic is in an organisation, when it comes to family affairs, she would have to take care of her family first. Although this is part of Acehese tradition to entertain guests coming from far away, nevertheless, it shows the level of influence of culture on one’s worldview. This particular incident also shows the extent of WFC on one’s professional life in the context of Islamic higher education in Aceh. In Acehese society, it is incredibly rude not to attend guests coming from far away. As women are regarded as *oreung po rumoh*, the owner of the house, they have to be there to attend their guests. According to male respondent 2, one of

the most senior bureaucrats at IAIN Ar-Raniry, culturally, women in Aceh are confined to family tasks, taking care of their husbands and children.

Female academics, besides working as professional, also have responsibilities at home as a wife and a mother in her family. It puts additional pressures on women to get involved in academic activities outside their house and pursue their careers. This can also be one of the reasons why the number of female academic in senior management position at State Islamic university in Aceh is still low.

Undoubtedly, without considering the conditions of women and their specific circumstances, the qualification requirement for leadership roles will certainly give competitive advantages to men. Riggs (2005), when talking about women who work as professionals to contribute to family finance and those who stay at home as full-time mothers, suggests that in both cases, it is the mothers who are responsible for taking care of the children. It is “super mothers”, women who juggle both work and households responsibilities, who have to make sure that day-to-day care of the children and other households issues are taken care of (Riggs, 2005). Not surprisingly then if WFC is associated “with psychological distress, job and career dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, absenteeism and lower life satisfaction” (Koyuncu, Burke, & Wolpin, 2012, p. 203).

When women manage to hold some sort of leadership roles, often they have to sacrifice their family life in order to arrive at their positions. According to Gatrell, women who hold some sort of decision-making positions are usually career-oriented ones. Financially, they are not dependent on



traditional patriarchal structures of income support, as they earn their own income (2007). In the context of Western academic culture, “accepted practices and unwritten rules dictate that academics work evenings and weekends, do research “after-hours”, and use the summer breaks to attend international conferences” (Santos & Cabral-Cardoso, 2008, p. 447). This culture is, as indicated earlier, not common in Acehnese society where the majority of women, even if they have their own source of income, are still very much attached to patriarchal rule of thumb.

There is no doubt that, in the context of Acehnese society, women face a dilemma in relation to combining their family life and professional commitment without deviating from the traditional norms of patriarchal culture. Female research participants, like female respondent 1, female respondent 2, and female respondent 3, specifically used the term “double burden” to describe this situation. What it means is that female academics have to dedicate time and effort to both their professional and family life, which often comes at the expense of their career progression. Female respondent 1, for example, said: “Women, while actively engaged outside their home to earn money or help their spouse, they still have to do domestic works which is perceived by Acehnese society as women’s job, their main jobs”.

Female respondent 4, talking about the issue and impacts of double burden on female academics, asserted that:

the reason women do not have a level playing ground with men is caused by double burden, gender stereo type, and patriarchal culture. Regardless how senior their professional positions are, in family setting, women’s first

role is as mother. Emotional attachment that children have with their mother is far stronger than that of father. This situation leads to distracted concentration in exploring their potentials.

It is clear that working couples, especially those with children and especially women, find it difficult to manage their domestic and professional life. As mentioned earlier, female academics with young children will be unlikely to progress well in their career due to the intensity of workloads that they face. The above response also implies that unless they have support from extended families or are able to organise workable task arrangement with their husbands with regard to domestic work, it is difficult for female academics to advance at the rate of their male counterparts.

While this situation may not significantly affect non-working mothers or couples with no children, for women with family commitments who enter the paid workforce, this condition has in many ways crippled their chances of moving forward in their careers. Compared to their male counterparts, the amount of time female academics spend on working towards their career progression has been severely limited by the amount of domestic tasks that they need to do. So much so that when asked about the lack of women in senior ranks on campus and what factor affecting this phenomenon, all female respondents were in agreement that the “double burden” was the one single issue that significantly affected their professional development.

WFC is therefore the key issue impeding women’s professional development. Both female and male respondents clearly acknowledged the impacts of WFC on women’s career

progression. Inability to negotiate between work and family interests will certainly result in poor performance, job dissatisfaction, high anxiety, and poor psychological state. In extreme cases, women who start their careers in large organisations sometimes “opt out” because of work-family concerns (Hewlett, 2002; Kim, 2009). The severity of WFC may also result in disharmonious family life. In the context of Acehnese society, when women confronted with this dilemma, they almost certainly choose to work on family life. It is clear that from the above illustration, which is typical WFC or care-work relation discourse, that within a patriarchal society women have to bear the cost of culturally defined roles.

While in developing countries the issue of double burden becomes one of the most significant factors in relation to women’s career progression, it does not exclusively apply to women in developing countries. Women in developed countries still experience the same problem, although with a different level of complication. ‘Different complication’ here means that in developed countries, regardless of whether it affects the way people perceive gender relations, most people are aware of the gender equality issue. This is not the case in developing country like Indonesia where the majority of people are not aware of the gender equality agenda. Often well-educated people working in the higher education sector have sinister views of the gender equality agenda as mentioned by female respondent 1 earlier.

#### **IV. Time Management and Family Support**

Some female academics who manage to pursue their career

at IAIN Ar-Raniry, often do it by negotiating and working around the situation. As WFC is concerned with time management which is one of major issues impeding women from becoming involved in academic activities, for female academics, being able to negotiate time with their spouses proves to be significant in improving their professional development on campus. In addition, to have the supports from family members to share domestic workloads is very important in reducing the intensity of pressure that working women face. Asked about what can be done to address the problem of WFC, female respondent 4 stated:

it is not a matter of us, women, getting up early, but we need a good cooperation and understanding between husband, wife and children. And if we look at this cooperation (within family members), it will be good for children's education to make them independent and understand what they need for their future. That is why we need to introduce this concept (time and task management) slowly, including to academics here at the institute.

The issue of time and task management is considerably difficult for the majority of men in Aceh as domestic work has always been assigned to women, especially in rural areas. Men in Aceh are regarded as breadwinners and rarely lend a hand in domestic work. While there have been changes and shifts in the way people arrange household tasks between couples, most Acehnese men still do not feel comfortable doing work around the house, which is often seen as weakness.

Female academics often face a dilemma of deciding to take care of family or to pursue their career. As looking after domestic work and taking care of children in Acehnese

society is mostly done by women, undertaking professional development program for a long period of time may not be an easy choice for the majority of female academics, unless they are able to arrange a workable arrangement with their husband. Female respondent 3, referring to her own experience, remarked that:

When I did my postgraduate study in England, I had to take my family with me. If I left my husband, people will judge that I did not perform my duty as a wife because I leave my children with my husband. But if you (male lecturer) undertake a postgrad study abroad and leave your family back home, people will say to your wife that she should be proud of her husband because of his achievements.

Her statement indicates that there is a stereotype driven standard in the way people perceive one's decision in relation to pursuing academic qualifications or professional development. The above response indicates that female academics, besides working on their professional life, are also required to fulfil the prescribed gender roles attached to women. In her case, she was able to negotiate around this problem by taking all her family to England, which would be impossible if her husband did not sacrifice his own work. Her situation, however, is not common. One of the female respondents, female respondent 5, stated that:

Female academics like us, besides spending time on campus, also have to dedicate time for domestic works. If we do not have the support of our husbands, then we have to tackle all this work by ourselves. As we also need to attend children's needs and other odd jobs around the

house, we often have no time left to work on our career.

The attitude illustrated in the above comment is rampant in a patriarchal society like Aceh where domestic work is associated with the female's job. In turn, because of lack of time to work on their professional life, female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry find it difficult to improve their academic credentials. As a result, not many qualified female academics manage to assume leadership roles at the university as illustrated in Figures 11 and 12.

As mentioned in previous sections, this is one of the reasons why the pace of career progression of female academics is slower compared to that of men. Understandably, a number of women activists and organisations voice their distress about WFC issue as they affect women's opportunity to pursue their career. When it comes to WFC, it is women who bear many of the consequences, which in turn affect their professional life. A good example of this was illustrated by female respondent 1. She stated:

When he returns home, a husband can isolate himself from his children and work in a room without being disturbed, and his wife will support him. She will tell the children not to disturb their father. She will even take the children away to other place so that her husband can work in quiet.

From the above illustration, it may be argued that this view comes from the fact that, in a strong religious society like Aceh, putting family first is highly regarded as part of women's piety towards religious teaching. To devise ways around this widely accepted religious view, all female

respondents suggested that women must work with their spouses to organise better time and work arrangements between couples in the household. The domestic workload in Acehnese households which is mostly carried out by women must be shared between men and women so that women can get more time to actualize themselves professionally. Female respondent 7 asserts that: “time management is another crucial issue when we talk about the opportunity for women to get involved outside their house work. Again, support from their husband is important.” She goes on by stating that:

wherever we go, how busy we are, we have to maximize the use of time. Good time management is very important. So try to communicate from the hearts to their spouses so that they understand that what we are doing is to support and help the burden of households and spouses.

The above quotation emphasizes the changing attitudes in relation to time and task workload within the household. The importance of changing the old pattern of practices of patriarchal culture in households is also reiterated by female respondent 4, who says:

We need good cooperation from men, not only from spouses but also from children. To minimize the influence of patriarchal culture, we cannot expect to do it just by flipping palm of your hand. The process need a long time. We need to change the habit and culture together since early childhood. From youngest age, boys are asked to get involved in doing household works as well.

Clearly, changing long standing perceptions of women's status and role within a patriarchal society like Aceh is not an easy task. Even in urban areas where people are more susceptible to new ideas, putting forward initiatives that may challenge the status quo would be a demanding endeavour. In an interview with female respondent 5, and as mentioned earlier in this section, the majority of people in Aceh do not have a full understanding of the benefits of gender equality. She mentioned that she often comes across men with negative views on working women. According to her, the following statement is common and becomes a joke among men: "If women want to pursue their careers and at the same time take care of domestic work, then they have to be ready to face double burden. That is the risk of working and being housewives." This statement is not uncommon in everyday life in Aceh. This view clearly puts women as victims of existing patriarchal cultures. Unfortunately, in patriarchal society like Aceh, this view still represents an overwhelming position taken by men. Having this kind of attitude towards working women perpetuates their struggle in relation to career progression.

When asked whether the notion of patriarchal culture plays important roles in shaping their perception on gender issues, male respondents did not provide clear answers. While not rejecting the claim that religious and cultural values have considerable influence on their perceptions of gender issues, when it comes to the lack of women in senior leadership roles, they would point to lack of academic credentials as the reason behind this situation, not because of regulation or the fear of women taking over important decision-making



position at the university. Male respondent 1, for example, suggested that:

when positions for senior leadership roles become available, male candidates usually get the jobs because historically they became lecturers first. Male candidates are elected because they have required academic qualifications for the job. Not because the process is conducted undemocratically, or because a gendered bias regulations that hampers women's opportunities.

There is no doubt that women's struggle to improve their situation in Aceh is far from over. However, in a few cases where women manage to pursue their academic careers, one of the reasons they manage to hold senior leadership roles is due to family support. Spousal support and good time management in relation to taking care of children and running a household is important in addressing the challenge of paid work and domestic duties women face. When asked whether or not their spouses play a role in their career development, female respondents in this study were all in agreement that their spouses in fact play significant roles in their careers.

Successful negotiation between spouses in relation to domestic tasks has been a significant factor in women's career. As a matter of fact, it is plausible to say that it is a requirement of a successful family-work relation. In the case of female respondent 3, along with her husband, has been able to negotiate her situation and finds ways to undertake and finish her post-graduate degree. Her determination is evident in her success in achieving a Masters degree at one of prestigious universities in the United Kingdom. This would have been impossible if she and her husband were not able

to arrive at a compromise that would allow her to pursue her academic life. Female respondent 3 said that the role of a partner is extremely important to one's career development. If a husband is successful in his career, his success is made possible by his wife's contribution in managing domestic tasks so he can get involved in academic activities without having to deal with household chores. On the other hand, a wife will be able to do the same when her spouse is supportive of her situation.

Female respondent 1, responding to the same question states that it would be impossible for her to undertake many academic activities if not for her husband's willingness to share household duties and to contribute to her academic tasks. In this case, she is able to arrive at a household arrangement that work for both of them. She specifically recalls the times when her husband got involved in the research that she undertook. She, when commenting on the role of spouses in the progress of women's career, stated:

spouse's role in women's career is very important. I realize this myself. It would be impossible for some women who hold certain senior positions if not for their spouses' supports and understanding. For example, once I attended a one and a half month short course to Melbourne, Australia. If my husband did not allow me to take part in this course, I would not be able to participate in this course. In other occasions, I was invited by a number of NGOs to give speeches on Gender and Islam. If not for my husband support, I would not be able to deliver these speeches. My husband even helps me in finding and researching data so I can finish my speeches on time. That is why I think support from spouse is extremely important in advancing

women's career.

In the case of female respondent 1, her husband was very supportive in helping out with both domestic and professional tasks. The fact that her husband is also an academic at the same institution makes it even more supportive for her to pursue her career. This is not, however, a typical power relation within Acehnese households where there are couples who work in the same profession at the same organisation. Referring to the work of Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2008) on spousal support to women managers in an American context, the above illustration shows that her husband has been able to provide her with emotional support, household task support, career and esteem support, as well as the choice of lifestyles and career of the spouse, all of which result in her ability to tackle both domestic and professional responsibilities. The response above was similar to findings in the study conducted by Ezzedeen and Ritchey on spousal support in women's career progression. They argue that with regard to spousal support in women's career progression:

husbands were cited as a significant support source in both personal and professional realms, providing financial, professional, and emotional support. For example, partners' income made it possible for women to make career changes they could not have otherwise. They also provided direct career support in the form of technical assistance and encouragement and validation, especially when they occupied common professions (2009, p. 397).

In the context of Acehnese society, gender relations within Acehnese households are somewhat unique. They

are unique because of the extent to which women could actualize themselves in socio-economic activities still very much depends on their partner's willingness to support and to let them get involved in professional life outside the house. Regardless of whether they have an advanced degree of education, women's career may not be advancing if their husbands do not support them taking part in professional development activities, which most of the times will take them outside the house for an extended period of time. In fact, it would not even be possible for women to pursue an advanced degree which is, in the case of IAIN Ar-Raniry, required as a minimum qualification as lecturer, let alone become involved in professional development programs, if their spouses do not approve their participation in academia. Not surprisingly, spousal support and approval is therefore key to women's professional development involvement and career progress (Rosenbaum & Cohen, 1999).

In the context of Acehnese society, although WFC is considered as one of determining factors in one's career progression, it appears that the way Acehnese families operate has somehow minimized the impact of WFC. As Acehnese families are usually close families, it is not uncommon to see several generations live under the same roof, particularly in rural areas. Not surprisingly, many working couples, not only in the higher education sector, have been relying on their extended families to deal with conflicting priorities with regard to professional and family life. Observations during field work revealed that many working couples at IAIN Ar-Raniry rely on their extended families to resolve this issue. Talking on the tradition of Indonesian people in relation to

this issue, Murniati (2012, p. 38) suggests that:

Other members of the family such as grandparents are typically willing to assume responsibilities in childcare because they believe that it strengthens the intergenerational relationships. Social class and extended family support, therefore, do enable women to break free of domestic and social constraints to pursue careers.

The writer argues that the structure of extended families within Acehnese society is important in helping working parents reduce the impact of WFC on women's family and professional life. Extended female relatives, usually sisters, mother sand grandmothers often assist with looking after young children and other household chores while parents are working. When support systems in the form of child care facilities are absent on campus, this familial arrangement has been invaluable in resolving the issue of WFC. Female respondent 6, said:

I have seen many working couples who turn to their parents to help look after their children when they work. If they do not have this option, then they have to take their children to play groups centers, otherwise they will not be able to work properly.

Having said that, this arrangement does not eliminate the issue of WFC as often it is only a temporary solution to the problem. For those who do not have extended families who can help them with looking after children when they are at work, the issue becomes more complicated. The majority will send their children to child care or pay someone to look

after them when they are working. According to Murniati, “it is a common practice among middle and upper class families to hire live-in maids to do house work and take care of the children when they do not have support from family members” (2012, 38). In a similar tone, female respondent 7 stated that

For working couple whose extended family is not available to support them when needed, they have to take their children to childcare center or hire a maid. This means they have to deal with additional expense and not many people can afford this.

The above remark indicates that although sending children to child care center or hire someone to look after the children may resolve the issue WFC, it does not come cheap. Not all working couples are able to pay someone to come in and look after their children while they work. This is why, in Aceh, it is not uncommon to see women bring their children to the work place so that they can work and contribute financially to their families. When the WFC cannot be reconciled, women would usually put their careers on hold until they are able to solve the problem. This has been the majority of cases in the HE sector. When asked about this phenomenon, female respondent 2 mentioned that:

the majority of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry find it difficult to pursue their careers because of family commitment. They are satisfied with their role and do not want to take more responsibilities which come with leadership roles.

Analysing the above statement, it can be concluded that the majority of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry do not feel the urgency to pursue their careers because they find it difficult to cope with the complexity of juggling both private and academic life. The need to take care of family and dedicate time to their professional life has been a constant struggle for many female academics. Despite this, a small number of them have been able to break down the existing conception on this particular issue. More and more young female academics have now gone on to take their masters and doctoral degrees which will be invaluable to their careers. They do so by negotiating their position with their spouses and managing their time. The following section presents the dynamics of women and their efforts to balance their private and professional life.

## **V. Women's Career Progression**

Much of the literature on WFC and women's career progression refers to the situation faced by women in Western countries. While the impact of injustice and inequality elements of WFC are similar or worse than those experienced by women in developed countries, women in developing countries, living in different socio-cultural situations, may even have to deal with more complicated social structures in relation to their career progression. In the context of Aceh, for example, cultural values and the influence of Islamic Law have been considered as significant factors that shape the way Acehnese society thinks about gender relations. These, in turn, influence women's and men's roles and status in the society.

As far as career progression is concerned, “the pervasiveness of social norms that curtail freedoms for women and are based on undervaluation or devaluation of what women do, can lead women themselves to internalize negative self-perceptions and doubt their own abilities” (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 399). The above quotation implies that socially accepted behaviours on work-family issues may psychologically affect women’s opinion about their self-esteem, ability and capability to perform and contribute to society. In the long run, “individuals learn to differentiate between what the society regards as acceptable versus unacceptable behaviour so to act in a manner that is appropriate for the needs of the society” (Wienclaw, 2011, p. 35).

In the case of female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry, from observations and informal conversations conducted during fieldwork, it is argued that the majority of them based their opinions on religious teachings which put an emphasis on having harmonious relations and being good human beings. So, when it comes to choosing between work and family, most of them would prioritize family interests over career. This is not to say there is no progress made in improving women’s role and status in Aceh. It just describes how cultural and religious values have a significant role in shaping people’s perceptions of what is expected of them. In relation to women’s career progression, female respondent 2 argues that women’s self-perception is one of the factors that determine their career progression. She argues that there are two factors that can be attributed to the lack of women in senior management roles.

The first factor is internal, it relates to women themselves.



They do not want to take up senior position. They feel that their positions as lecturers or the head of a centre at the university are good enough. If they have required qualifications to apply for the Dean position, for example, female academics do not want to participate. There is also an external factor as to why there are not enough women in leadership roles. External factors include lack of qualifications and administrative requirements such as leadership training.

In this case, internal factors are closely related to women's motivation. Women's motivation in this sense is closely associated with the way they perceive themselves, the way they internalize existing gender norms. In her own research, female respondent 2 discovered that a considerable number of female academics do not want to pursue management roles. Taking up senior leadership roles at the university would mean dedicating more time at work, taking away their time from their family. This means that they do not conform to typical gender roles to which most Acehnese adhere. However, this does not necessarily mean that female academics do not want to pursue their career. It could be argued that some female academics have to put their career on hold as a strategy to address issues that they face. According to female respondent 2, female academics often postpone their career because of pressures of academic and domestic works. She said:

Female academics need to adapt to the workloads at work and at home. They often feel that their current role and position as a head of unit, for example, is good enough.

The above response clearly indicates that factors such as family commitment also play a significant role in female academics' decision to pursue their careers. It could be argued that the overwhelming workloads that they have to deal with impact their career progression. In a way, they are pushed to a situation where they feel that improving their qualification does not really affect their opportunity to hold leadership roles at the university. This is not to say that there is no improvement in the number of women having post graduate degrees at IAIN Ar-Raniry. The problem is that despite noticeable improvement in the qualification of female academics over the years, the gap between men and women in leadership roles at the university is still an issue.

Although the above statement indicates that some female academics do not want to take on more responsibilities, I think that is their strategy to navigate the challenges they face, the way they negotiate their professional and family responsibilities. This does not mean that they do not have the motivation to improve their academic credentials and positions. Observations I made during field work revealed that the career of female academic with young children who have no or limited supports from their extended families usually have a slow career progression as they often pass the opportunity to take part in professional development programs.

In a strong patriarchal and religious society like Aceh, working women also have to consider that their decision to put their career ahead of family responsibility is often seen negatively as they are considered to be neglecting their family. This is evident in an interview with female respondent

8, who stated:

It is not because we (female lecturers) do not want to improve our qualification. In my case, I am lucky because my children are grown up now, and I am able to take part in academic activities. But for other female colleagues, they have to think many times before deciding to spend more times outside their house. What bothers me is that if women spend more times to work on their profession, sometimes they will be judge negatively. As if they commit a crime. I think if they can manage their time wisely, and they get the support from their husband, it is not a problem.

Her opinion, shared by other female respondents, confirms the common perception towards working women in Acehese society. In the context of Aceh, this perception is closely related to essentialist understanding of religious values emphasizing women's destiny as mother and nurturer. As a result, not many women are able to take part and compete with men for senior leadership roles in the public domain. This is also true in the higher education sector. When we consider the amount of domestic work that female academics have to do in addition to their academic responsibility, it becomes even more complicated for them to juggle all this work and still be able to commit more time to work on their professional development. There are, however, examples of female academics who manage to work around these workloads with the help of their extended families. Those who do not have family support to look after their young ones, have to come up with specific arrangement such as hiring maids or using child care centre, which cost money.

From the above illustration, it is clear that women's career progression is different from that of men's. It is not uncommon for female academics to stop working on their career in order to resolve the issue of WFC. In the context of higher education, most of them are satisfied with their master's degree, a minimum requirement for lecturer. On this note, female respondent 2 asserted that:

In one of my studies, I found out that female lecturers at IAIN Ar-Raniry and Syiah Kuala University often do not see the need to improve their qualification beyond master's degree level. Some of them think that pursuing doctoral degree would jeopardize their family's relation as it would take much of their time away from home.

The above response shows how female academics navigate conflicting interest between work and family. However, I observed during field work that in the case where female academics have the requirement to apply for senior leadership roles, they often do not take the opportunity to do so. When asked about this situation, female respondent 5 said:

Often, women themselves do not want to push for change. There are many female lecturers at IAIN who meet the requirement for leadership roles but choose not to compete in the process. The classic reason for this is because of family matters. Family comes first.

While the above quotation indicates the priority commonly used by women to explain their situation, part of the reason for the trend may be because women do not want to create conflict or competition with their male counterparts. They

also have to observe patriarchal gender norms and religious values that often marginalize their potential. In a male-dominated organisation, it will be very difficult to break men's networking ability. All these factors contribute to existing gender gap in majority public institutions, especially in leadership roles.

Another reason that makes it difficult to change this socially constructed attitude towards women is because women themselves, especially in developing countries, more often than not, are not fully aware of their rights (Oey-Gardiner, 2002, p. 106); not to mention the fact that some male academics who still hold gendered bias views towards women who aspire for a better position on campus. It may be that the reason behind this is linked to the variability of sexist practices in society resulting in women's negative perception towards themselves which makes it difficult for women to break the circle of prescribed roles and status attached to them. This is often referred to as internalized sexism. Female respondent 2, for example, argued that:

Sometimes, despite having the qualifications needed for certain positions, women themselves do not want to take a lead role at the University. Besides the issue of family matters, I think this is caused their perception on gender relations. I think if women apply for leadership roles, many people would consider them as ambitious, which is an inappropriate trait for women.

The above response clearly confirms the common perception on gender relations in Aceh that for women to compete and challenge men's establishment is considered culturally inappropriate as it does not fit with the gender

norms held by most people. Murniati (2012, p. 37), in her work, *Career advancement of women senior academic administrators in Indonesia*, suggests that:

a common understanding in Asian culture is that assertiveness implies impoliteness. While it is acceptable for men to be somewhat assertive, for women administrators who are already in the men's world playing by the men's rules, the pressure to balance their assertiveness and politeness is nevertheless greater.

The above illustration shows a common understanding in Indonesian culture of culturally acceptable manners in the context of career progression in the higher education sector. Owing to this fact, the number of women in high echelon positions is considerably lower compared to that of men. This situation confirms a previous study conducted by Tharenou(2001)whichshows that compared to men, as far as career progression is concerned, women with children are known to progress more slowly in the managerial ranks.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter, several key points of the thesis are presented. The purpose of this study was to investigate gender relations within Islamic higher education in the Aceh province. In particular, it looked at women and leadership and competing factors contributing to the issue. Part of the discussion talked about the cultural, social and historical contexts of women in Acehnese society, the only province in Indonesia that legally formalizes Islamic Law. As such, it discussed the influence of Islamic Law on gender relations in Aceh and how it affected women's opportunity to pursue senior leadership roles in Islamic Higher Education. It looked at factors that impacted women's career progression within Islamic higher education in Aceh.

In the context of Indonesia, gender issues and gender equality has always been intriguing. There are a number of reasons for this, one of which is the perception of Indonesian people towards the gender equality agenda. As discussed in Chapter One, to majority of Indonesian, gender equality has always been considered a Western concept that has its roots in the feminist movement. The concept of feminism is still perceived as a threat, not only to Indonesian values, but also to religious ones. The feminist movement is not only seen as anti-men, but it also promotes the acceptance of lesbianism, same sex marriage, and so on. As such, there has been an overwhelming resistance from Indonesian people, both

women and men, towards feminism. As gender equality is closely related to feminism, it is also regarded as a Western concept that must be carefully scrutinized.

Another reason that makes the gender equality agenda an intriguing one in Indonesia is the influence of patriarchal culture and religious values in society. High profile examples of women's struggle in assuming leadership roles indicates the strong grip of patriarchal culture and religious values in the Indonesian political arena. As the largest Muslim country in the world, it is not surprising that Islam plays a significant role in the life of its people. Although Indonesian Islam has not been considered radical, its influence in the Indonesian political arena cannot be underestimated. This is evident when Megawati was denied her presidency because of religious grounds put forward by her political opponent in 1999. It indicates the gravity of religious influence in Indonesian society.

Chapter One also discusses the formulation of the state gender ideology and its effects on gender equality. The Indonesian government formulates state gender ideology in executing its national development agenda. This state gender ideology, while acknowledging and integrating women's role in national development process, also limits women's role to the domestic area of supporting their spouse and nurturing their children. Wives of civil servants in Indonesia automatically become members of *Dharma Wanita*, an organisation under the government's administration intended to support the government's agenda in the area of household welfare. The recognition that women are an important asset in the national development process can be seen in GBHN and in



the government's effort to improve women's role and status in society, through gender mainstreaming initiatives.

Chapter Two provides discussion on the government's efforts to improve gender equality. Realization of the poor condition and discrimination experienced by women around the world has been major factor leading to coordinated efforts championed by the UN. Working to achieve these common goals, Indonesian government has been working to meet the demand of international community to improve the state of gender equality. This can be seen in the issuance of a number of Laws aimed at improving women's role and status. The government also established the Ministry for Women Empowerment to address gender inequality in Indonesia.

Besides improving the country's economy, the government, in addressing the gender equality problem, works to improve education sector. This sector has been considered as one of the areas that has a significant impact on women's role and status. With better education, everybody, men and women, has the same opportunity to compete in finding jobs. The government's effort to improve access and quality of education has had positive effects on the status of women in general. More and more women are now involved in the public domain, working in both public and private institutions. This is a promising sign of changing attitudes towards women's role and status. The same is true in Aceh. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of women entering the workforce in the public domain, This change, however, does not necessarily mean improvement in the number of women assuming leadership roles. Majority of working women, including those working in higher education

sector, continue to occupy low level management positions.

Like the rest of Indonesia, Aceh is also known for its patriarchal society. In addition, Acehnese society is well known for its strong Islamic identity as Islam has been the way of life for Acehnese people for hundreds of years. Historical fact indicates that Aceh was the first region in the archipelago that embraced Islam. In fact, Islam reached its pinnacle in the archipelago when *Sultan Iskandar Muda* reigned in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (1607-1637). During this period, the Aceh Islamic Kingdom was also known as the *Veranda of Mecca* for its excellence in Islamic teachings. Understandably, Islamic values are ingrained within Acehnese cultures. An important phenomenon in relation to women's role and status within Acehnese society at the time was the appointment of three successive *Sultanah* (Queens) from 1641 to 1699 to the throne of the Aceh Islamic Kingdom. This is still referred to today to show the extent of gender equality existing during this period.

The important roles that Islam plays in Acehnese society have been used by the central government as a means to end years of political struggle in Aceh. This can be observed in the effort taken by the central government to win over the Acehnese people through the issuance of Law Number 44/1999 granting the status of special autonomy to Aceh province, giving Aceh the right to implement Islamic Law. The formalization of Islamic Law in Aceh has attracted worldwide attention for a number of reasons. Some segments of Acehnese society are concerned with the institutionalization of Islamic Law. They argue that formalization of Islamic Law would further impede and marginalize vulnerable groups in

society such as women and non-Muslims. They argue that the implementation of Islamic Law has worsened women's status in society. Although they are critical of the Law, in principle, they do not reject it. This is because, as Muslims, rejecting Islamic Law is considered apostate. Instead, they want those responsible for the implementation of Islamic Law to consider the interests of men and women as well as those of marginal groups in society.

Within a patriarchal society like Aceh, discussion about gender equality has always been divisive. This is partly because the Acehnese believe that men and women have their own roles to play, either in the private or public domains. In the context of Acehnese society, this belief is largely influenced by patriarchal cultures and religious values. Furthermore, the gender equality initiative is often seen as a threat to male establishments, whether in private or public domains. This study examined how women's careers are affected by these factors, especially in Islamic higher education.

The findings of this study revealed that Islamic values play a role in women's career development. For example, at the personal level, when confronted with choices between advancing their career or taking care of the family's interest, female academics at IAIN Ar-Raniry are more inclined to choose family's interest, contributing to the lack of women in leadership roles in Islamic higher education in Aceh. These findings indicate that there is little evidence that Islamic Law is diminishing the opportunity for female academics to pursue leadership roles. It is the degree of people's religious conviction that affects their worldview on gender relations.

The implementation of Islamic Law, according to women's

right activists, is responsible for increasing incidents violating women's right. Media exposures on these incidents have highlighted the discrimination against women in Aceh. Those responsible for implementing the *Qanun* are accused of being unprofessional. This is obviously a setback in the efforts to promote gender equality in Aceh. However, proponent of Islamic Law argue that before Islamic Law was formalized, the same incidents also took place

While there have been incidents in society considered to disadvantage and discriminate against, this thesis argues that it does not entirely restrict women from getting involved in the public arena. This can be seen in the number of women entering paid work in the public domain which has increased over the years. In some cases, women in Aceh manage to land senior decision-making positions in government departments and other public institutions. At IAIN Ar-Raniry, for example, the appointment of Dr. Arbiyah Lubis as the Dean of Dakwah Faculty in 2004 indicated that female academics do have the opportunity to progress their careers. This example, however, does not mean that women are now able to break the cycle of male domination in public arena, as men still dominate senior leadership roles in public domain, especially in Islamic higher education like IAIN Ar-Raniry.

Since the inception of Islamic Law in Aceh, public discussion on gender issues have increased. The coming of national and international NGOs as well as development agencies in post-tsunami Aceh has helped mainstream gender equality agenda in society. Public awareness on gender equality can be seen in increasing number of debate on the role and status of women covered by media, both local and national. Criticism towards

unprofessional attitude in implementing Islamic Law is not uncommon. Demand for a more contextual approach to understanding and interpreting the *Qur'an* have also been voiced by women's right activists and Muslim intellectuals in order to address social issues. Several respondents in this study have implicitly argued that traditional interpretation of the *Qur'an* which influenced people's word view on gender relations has contributed to gender inequality at IAIN Ar-Raniry.

The lack of education qualifications is one of the factors that has been preventing women from gaining leadership roles at IAIN Ar-Raniry. This is why improving access to education has been considered as one of the most important things that must be carried out by the government.

The issue of gender division of labour and WFC have been considered as the main contributing factors impeding women's career progression. As illustrated in chapter Six, the amount of domestic work that working women have to do at home results in limited time to commit to their professional work. This, in turn, prevents them from participating in professional development programs.

Although this WFC can be resolved with better time management between couples, the bulk of household work still falls to women. It is true that having extended families and caretakers can help ease the problem, but it is not a long term sustainable solution. Interviews with research participants confirm that for the majority of female academics, WFC or double burden has crippled their opportunity to develop their potential. What makes it even more complicated is that the culture of obedience within Acehnese society also

plays a significant role in this matter. Working women, while financially independent, are still very much reliant on their husbands. The majority of Muslim women believe that their happiness in the world and in the hereafter depends on their husbands' inclination. Not surprisingly, most female academics would prefer to take care of the family's interest than to pursue their professional career in the hope of getting a good reward in the hereafter.

It is clear that there is no easy fix to address the problem of gender equality in Indonesia, especially in Aceh. This study reveals that gender inequality in Islamic higher education still exists. Factors such as practices of patriarchal cultures, gendered organizational cultures influenced by state gender ideology, and influence of Islamic religious values, have been argued as reasons behind this situation. Despite continuous efforts on the part of the government to improve women's role and status, when it comes to leadership roles, women still lack behind men.

In the context of Aceh, the issue of gender equality must be carefully addressed. Inclusion of *ulamain* efforts to influence people's perception on gender relations has been argued as one of the most effective ways. *Ulama's* strategic roles are certainly significant to promote a more holistic approach to gender issues in Aceh.

For further research, it is important to review the implementation of gender mainstreaming as one of gender equality strategies. Institutions assigned to implement gender mainstreaming efforts often exist in isolation within an organization. As a result, gender equality agenda does not bring desired outcomes. In addition, perception among

majority of Indonesian that gender issues are women's issue is reflected in the exclusion of men in gender related programs. Therefore, it is important to create awareness among people that gender issues are issues of men and women.

Another area that needs further investigation is the impacts of rule and regulation related to the way public organization is run, including higher education. Regulations that seem to be neutral such as equal opportunity may have very different impacts on men's and women's career. Regulations often represent unseen character of gender preference. This is why, in the context of developing country like Indonesia, future research on how public policy affects men and women is needed.

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