



FEMINISM AND INDONESIAN WOMEN'S FREEDOM IN PHILOSOPHY

Lulu Andriani Sulasti, Dewi Robiatun Muharomah, Gustini Wulandari, Yoga Mahendra

Universitas Bina Bangsa

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Abstract

Feminism as a social movement and thought has fought for gender equality and women's freedom in various parts of the world. In Indonesia, the feminist movement emerged as a response to the dominant patriarchal social structure and culture that limits women's roles in society. This article aims to examine the role of feminism in fighting for women's freedom in Indonesia through a philosophical study. Using the literature review method, this article explores the views of Indonesian and international feminist thinkers on women's freedom and how the philosophy of feminism is applied in the context of Indonesian culture. Based on this analysis, Indonesian feminism can be understood not only as a social movement, but also as a philosophical foundation that changes the understanding of the role and rights of women in Indonesian society.

Keywords: *Feminism; feminist philosophy; freedom; Indonesian women.*

Abstrak

Feminisme sebagai suatu aliran pemikiran dan gerakan sosial telah memperjuangkan kesetaraan gender dan kebebasan perempuan di berbagai belahan dunia. Di Indonesia, pergerakan feminisme muncul sebagai respons terhadap struktur sosial yang dominan patriarkal dan budaya yang membatasi peran perempuan dalam masyarakat. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran feminisme dalam memperjuangkan kebebasan perempuan di Indonesia melalui kajian filosofis. Dengan menggunakan metode literatur review, artikel ini mengeksplorasi pandangan para pemikir feminis Indonesia dan internasional mengenai kebebasan perempuan dan bagaimana filosofi feminisme tersebut diterapkan dalam konteks budaya Indonesia. Berdasarkan analisis ini, feminisme Indonesia dapat dipahami tidak hanya sebagai suatu gerakan sosial, tetapi juga sebagai suatu landasan filosofis yang mengubah pemahaman terhadap peran dan hak perempuan di masyarakat Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Feminisme; filosofi feminisme; kebebasan; perempuan Indonesia.

I. INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a social movement that seeks to free women from gender oppression and support their equal rights in society. Throughout its history, feminism has played a major role in changing social, political, and cultural structures that traditionally discriminate against women. In Indonesia, feminism has developed through various phases, starting with the struggle for education by figures such as Raden Ajeng Kartini and Dewi Sartika, to the



emergence of broader contemporary feminist movements. However, although Indonesian women have gained many rights through various laws and regulations, in reality many cultural and structural barriers still hinder women's full freedom. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply how feminism, which is also rooted in philosophical thought, plays an important role in redefining women's freedom in Indonesian society. This article will explore the contribution of feminist thought to Indonesian women's freedom using a philosophical approach.

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Feminism is a school of thought and social movement that aims to eliminate gender inequality and free women from various forms of social, economic, cultural, and political oppression. In a philosophical context, feminism is not only understood as a struggle for equal rights, but also as a profound effort to free women from social constructions that limit their roles and existence. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) explains that women have been constructed as "others" by the patriarchal system, and women's freedom begins when they can define themselves independently. John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) also emphasized that gender equality is an integral part of individual freedom, which is the basis for a just social order. In Indonesia, feminist thought has developed since the end of the 19th century through figures such as Raden Ajeng Kartini, Dewi Sartika, and Rohana Kudus. Kartini, through her collection of letters *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*, highlighted the importance of access to education for women as a gateway to freedom. Meanwhile, Dewi Sartika established girls' schools in West Java as a concrete form of resistance against the system that restricts women from public spaces and education. Education, in this case, becomes the main strategy to free women from social and economic backwardness.

In its development, feminism in Indonesia does not follow a single path like Western feminism, but rather adapts to the context of local culture and values, including religion. Emha Ainun Nadjib in her book *Feminism and Religion: Islamic Perspective* (2007) emphasizes that feminism does not have to be contrary to religious teachings, but can be a means to fight for gender justice within a religious framework. This is also in line with the thoughts of Fatima Mernissi, a Muslim feminist figure, who shows that Islamic teachings basically support gender equality, as seen in the Prophet's response to Umm Salamah's question which is immortalized in QS. Ali Imran: 195.

In addition, various contemporary academic studies and thoughts in Indonesia show that education remains the main keyword in the feminist movement. Uun Kurnaesih and Teguh Trianton, for example, show that cultural constructions that marginalize women come from low access and quality of education for women. Therefore, education is not only a tool for empowerment, but also a philosophical space to form critical awareness and autonomy of women in society. The feminist movement in Indonesia is also present as a critique of the patriarchal system that is still deeply rooted in various areas of life. As explained by Wafda Vivid Izziyana, patriarchy can be fought through a psychological approach by raising women's awareness of their experiences of oppression and a structural approach by demanding changes in discriminatory laws and policies. Thus, feminism in Indonesia is a multidimensional movement based on philosophical, religious, and cultural foundations in fighting for women's freedom and equal rights.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this article is a literature review, which aims to examine and analyze various reading sources that are relevant to the topic of feminism and women's freedom in Indonesia, especially from a philosophical perspective. The sources analyzed include the works of Indonesian feminist thinkers, such as Raden Ajeng Kartini, Dewi Sartika, and contemporary feminist figures such as Emha Ainun Nadjib and Nani Zulminarni, who have made major contributions to fighting for women's rights in Indonesia.

In addition, this article also uses references from international literature that discusses feminist theory and the relationship between philosophy and women's freedom, such as the works of Simone de Beauvoir, John Stuart Mill, and Betty Friedan. The literature used is taken from books, scientific articles, and research that are relevant to the topic of feminism in the Indonesian context.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Feminism and Women's Freedom in Philosophy

Feminism, in a philosophical perspective, is not only about the struggle for gender equality, but also about the liberation of individual women from various forms of oppression. In the Indonesian context, feminism began to develop in the late 19th century, especially pioneered by Raden Ajeng Kartini, who through her letters in *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang* (1911), expressed her concern about the fate of women who were shackled by patriarchal traditions and norms. For Kartini, women's freedom begins with equal access to education.

She believed that with education, women could change their fate and escape the shackles of powerlessness.

Indonesian feminism promoted by figures such as Dewi Sartika and Rohana Kudus was also greatly influenced by the socio-political conditions of their time. Dewi Sartika, for example, focused on developing education for women in West Java through the schools she founded. This shows that education is an important instrument for fighting for women's freedom, which is not only related to social freedom but also economic freedom.

In contemporary feminist philosophy, women's freedom is seen more as the right to self-determination, both in the personal and social spheres. Feminism in Indonesia also adapts to local cultural and religious values, so it has a different approach compared to the feminist movement in the West. Emha Ainun Nadjib, for example, tries to integrate feminist thought with Islamic teachings in her book *Feminism and Religion: Islamic Perspective* (2007). For Emha, feminism does not have to be in conflict with religion, but can instead be seen as part of the struggle to uphold justice and the dignity of women from a religious perspective.

This feminist thinking is in line with Simone de Beauvoir's views in her work *The Second Sex* (1949), in which she argues that women have been defined and placed in an inferior position by patriarchal culture. Women's freedom, for de Beauvoir, is liberation from social constructions that limit women to traditional roles. Likewise, John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), who emphasized that gender equality is part of individual freedom that must be fought for.

NO	AUTHOR NAME	TITLE	RESULTS
1	Fihris	Women's Education in a Feminist Perspective	Islamic feminism is historically related to western feminism, Islam has its own concept in realizing gender relations. Every human being has basic abilities that are universal and specific. In general, it can be said that the religious views that appear in classical literature on gender verses have been biased towards men.
2	Leon Rohendi, Lilly Suzana	Gender in Islamic Education: Fatima Mernissi's Perspective	Women in Indonesia are no strangers to being the subject of the formation of the nation's history, as well as in the Islamic world. The

			majority of Islamic thinkers in Indonesia have sought to find out about the superior position and status of women in Islam. Gender injustice refers to the inequality and discrimination experienced by women in various aspects of life.
3	Qurrotul Ainiyah	The Role of Women in Islamic Education from a Gender Perspective	Justice and equality are the basic ideas, goals and main missions of human civilization to achieve prosperity, build harmony in community life, state and build quality families. Islamic education is an effort to guide, direct and foster students which is carried out in a planned manner in order to build a life that is primarily in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings.
4	Muhammad Kholil	Feminism and a Critical Review of the Concept of Gender in Islamic Studies	Most Women's Movements stop in the middle and are at the crossroads even though Women also have the right to get space to move in their activities. Feminism has shown a new, pleasant desire as self-criticism as an effort towards theories and concepts related to ideological commitments to universalize perspectives and theories towards concepts that have involved Women through the diversity of identities.
5	Nur Azizah	Madurese Female Cleric: Nyai Aqiqah Usymuni in Fighting for Feminism and Education	Women have always been an interesting topic of discussion and debate in Islam. Women have been viewed and positioned differently from various perspectives throughout Islamic History.
6	Zainal Abidin	Gender Equality and Women's Emancipation in Islamic Education	In the archaeological-historical perspective on the role of women that existed in ancient times, feminist

			<p>theorists consider it a period of progress for women because they had a fairly dominant role.</p>
7	Uun Kurnaesih	<p>Feminism and Islamic Religious Education: A Critical Study of the Interpretation of Classical Texts</p>	<p>Islamic views that are considered to be in conflict with feminist thought brought by the West. Critically analyzing literary sources with a focus on Islamic views on gender roles, women's rights, interpretation of religious texts and the concept of gender equality in Islam.</p>
8	Syayidah Fitria Lulu, Aniqurrohmah	<p>Gender Equality and the Values Contained Therein According to Human Rights</p>	<p>Gender equality and justice are distinguished by the absence of discrimination between women and men. They only have the right to participate in development fairly and evenly.</p>
9	Teguh Trianton	<p>Literature Based Gender Education</p>	<p>This culture is a form or social construct of society that has occurred for years in a process of civilization development. The history of the relationship between women and men, society has considered men to have advantages over women. The low status of women actually occurs due to the low level and quality of their education. Education is the key to unlocking the deadlock of the feminist movement.</p>
10	Wafda Vivid Izziyana	<p>Feminist Approach in Islamic Law Studies</p>	<p>The patriarchal system can be destroyed by changing the attitude of each individual, according to them there are two ways to achieve the goal. First, by taking a psychological approach by raising individual awareness, including through discussions that discuss women's experiences in a society dominated by men.</p>

			Second, by demanding legal reforms that do not benefit women, and changing these laws into new regulations that treat women equally with men.
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V. CONCLUSION

The study of Indonesian feminism and women's freedom from a philosophical perspective shows that women's struggles do not only take place in social and political spaces, but are also part of a profound reflective and intellectual process. Feminism in Indonesia has developed from the early struggles of figures such as R.A. Kartini and Dewi Sartika who emphasized the importance of education as a path to women's emancipation, to contemporary feminist thinking that is more inclusive and considers local and religious values.

Within a philosophical framework, feminism is present as a tool for criticizing patriarchal structures that limit women, as well as an ethical and rational foundation in fighting for equal rights. The views of international feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir and John Stuart Mill have strengthened the argument that women's freedom is part of universal human freedom. On the other hand, local thinkers such as Emha Ainun Nadjib and Fatima Mernissi have shown that feminism can also be in line with religious teachings, especially Islam, as long as it is interpreted contextually and progressively.

In addition, education is understood as the main instrument in freeing women from backwardness and structural discrimination. Through education, women are not only able to improve their capacity, but can also play an important role in social change, both in the public and domestic spheres.

Thus, Indonesian feminism must be seen not only as a resistance movement, but also as a philosophical foundation that strengthens women's awareness, justice, and freedom in national and state life. This struggle is still relevant and needed to create a more equal, just, and inclusive society.

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