

# Strengthening Women's Educational Rights Through Majelis Taklim And Its Impact On Social Dynamics In Indonesia

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of women's educational rights, particularly in the context of religious education, through non-formal educational institutions such as Majelis Taklim and its impact on society in Indonesia. The research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach and applies triangulation techniques, involving the comparison of data from various sources, including observation, interviews, and documentation. The study was conducted at two Majelis Taklim: Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah in Depok, West Java, and Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin in Cilegon, Banten. The findings reveal that Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal educational institution, contributes significantly to supporting the fulfillment of women's educational rights. This contribution is not limited to religious education but also includes broader areas of knowledge, such as psychology, life skills, and social activities.

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penerapan hak pendidikan perempuan, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan agama, melalui lembaga pendidikan non-formal seperti Majelis Taklim serta dampaknya terhadap masyarakat di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis dan menerapkan teknik triangulasi, yang melibatkan perbandingan data dari berbagai sumber, yaitu observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada dua Majelis Taklim, yaitu Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah di Depok, Jawa Barat, dan Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin di Cilegon, Banten. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Majelis Taklim, sebagai lembaga pendidikan non-formal, berkontribusi secara signifikan dalam mendukung pemenuhan hak pendidikan perempuan. Kontribusi tersebut tidak hanya terbatas pada pendidikan agama, tetapi juga mencakup bidang pengetahuan yang lebih luas, seperti psikologi, keterampilan hidup (life skills), dan aktivitas sosial.*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The government officially recognizes and protects Majelis Taklim in Indonesia through Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007. This regulation defines Majelis Taklim as a non-formal religious education institution that plays a multifaceted role in the education system. It functions as a substitute for formal education where necessary, as well as an enhancer and complement to the formal educational framework. This positioning highlights its significance in providing accessible religious education and

fostering moral and spiritual development, particularly for communities that may have limited access to formal educational institutions (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2007). The recognition and legal protection provided by the government for Majelis Taklim are crucial for its legitimacy and effectiveness in meeting educational needs. This regulatory framework promotes Majelis Taklim as both an alternative and a supplement to formal education. Beyond merely recognizing its existence, the legal provisions elevate Majelis Taklim as a vital component of the educational landscape, particularly in addressing the needs of women who may lack access to formal educational opportunities. This underscores its significant role in promoting inclusivity and accessibility within the broader educational system (L. Diab et al., 2021).

This study focuses on non-formal education facilitated through Majelis Taklim, which can serve as a viable solution for women who face constraints in accessing formal education due to work obligations, time limitations, or economic challenges. Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal educational institution, not only fulfills the right to education but also provides a platform for learning that goes beyond religious studies to include general knowledge, practical skills (life skills), and other areas of interest, all without regard for time or location. This adaptable and inclusive strategy demonstrates its potential as a viable alternative to formal education, particularly in underprivileged regions.

Furthermore, the issue of fulfilling women's rights is closely linked to the broader discourse on gender, which has become a significant focus in all aspects of development at both national and global levels. Advancing education is a critical component of this developmental agenda, emphasizing the importance of equitable access to education as a means to promote gender equality and empower women as active participants in societal progress (Afifah, 2021). Numerous factors hinder the promotion of gender equality in education, many of which are deeply rooted in societal traditions. One such belief is the perception that women do not need higher education, as their primary role is assumed to be managing household and family responsibilities. Economic constraints also play a significant role, with many parents unable to afford the costs of their children's education. Additionally, a critical factor lies within women themselves, as some perceive a lack of capacity or confidence to pursue higher education. This self-perception is often reinforced by the stigma that a woman's educational journey ends once she marries and has children. These interconnected

barriers underscore the need for systemic and cultural change to ensure equitable access to education for women (Saeful, 2019).

Throughout human history, women have often been relegated to marginalized positions, particularly during ancient civilizations. In ancient Greek society, for example, women had no autonomy over their lives and were confined to one of three roles: a prostitute, a concubine, or a wife whose sole responsibility was to care for children. Similar injustices were evident in Jewish traditions, where women were treated as commodities, subject to being sold by their fathers without any agency to choose their own path in life. Moreover, women were frequently stereotyped as the source of evil, and blamed for bringing a curse upon Adam and his descendants. During menstruation, they were considered impure and were socially ostracized, further reinforcing their exclusion and dehumanization (Firdaus & Arifin, 2018). This depiction illustrates the profoundly low status of women within the social and religious systems of the past.

Islam emerged as a transformative teaching that fundamentally changed the treatment of women, particularly by abolishing long-standing discriminatory practices such as the cruel tradition of the pre-Islamic Arabian society (Jahiliyah) of burying newborn girls alive. Through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Islam emphasizes that men and women possess equal dignity and rights, including the right to education. Numerous Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions recognize the status of women without discrimination. However, challenges often arise from misinterpretations of these texts, which sometimes create the false impression that Islam does not support women's rights. In reality, Islam strongly advocates for the education of women, whether through formal education in official institutions or non-formal education via family, community initiatives, or institutions such as *Majelis Taklim*. This underscores the importance of an accurate understanding of Islamic teachings to ensure that women can fully realize their rights, particularly in the realm of education (Mufidah et al., 2023).

The existence of *Majelis Taklim* in Indonesian society plays a crucial role in enhancing, advancing, and fulfilling women's educational needs today. Numerous prior studies, particularly within the Indonesian context, have extensively examined topics such as the development of Islamic education in Indonesia, women's rights in education, and the societal role of *Majelis Taklim*. For instance, Daulay's (2007) research provides a comprehensive analysis in his book, tracing the development of

Islamic education in Indonesia across different historical periods, from the colonial era to the post-independence period. He emphasizes the pivotal role of Islamic educational institutions in preserving and advancing Islamic teachings in Indonesia, highlighting their enduring significance in the nation's socio-religious landscape. Saenong (2016) researched the Encyclopedia of Women and Majelis Taklim in Indonesia. In his study, Saenong explores the historical origins of the term Majelis Taklim and its transformation over time from being predominantly attended by men to becoming primarily dominated by women. Helmawati (2018) examined the optimization of Majelis Taklim as a means of enhancing women's education in Indonesia, noting its significant contributions to society, particularly in addressing illiteracy among women. The discourse on women's rights in Islam has also been explored by contemporary scholars and Muslim intellectuals, including Haifa A. Jawad, Zakir Naik dan Ramadhan Al-Buthi (Al-Būty, 2019; Jawad, 1998). Riyadhi dan Asyari (2020) analyzed women's educational rights from the perspective of Fuqaha' Syafi'iyah, integrating a gender-sensitive approach to their discussion. This body of work collectively underscores the multifaceted roles of Majelis Taklim and Islamic perspectives in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through education.

Previous studies have indeed addressed women's educational rights, but none have specifically linked these rights to the role of Majelis Taklim in fulfilling them. This research seeks to fill that gap by focusing on Majelis Taklim as a non-formal educational institution with a strategic function as a complement, supplement, or even substitute for formal education for women. Majelis Taklim serves not only as a platform for religious learning but also as a space for women's empowerment, making significant contributions to the improvement of individual and community quality. Thus, this study not only enriches the literature on women's education but also highlights the unique and essential role of Majelis Taklim in fostering a more inclusive and empowered society in Indonesia.

This study aims to examine the implementation of women's educational rights within the context of religious education provided through non-formal educational institutions such as Majelis Taklim and its impact on community life. Focusing on two specific Majelis Taklim; Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah in Depok, West Java, and Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin in Cilegon, Banten. The research employs a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach to explore the roles of these institutions in providing education for women. The methodology incorporates triangulation techniques to ensure data

validity by comparing findings from various sources, including direct observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This study is expected to offer a deeper understanding of the contributions of Majelis Taklim in supporting the fulfillment of women's educational rights in Indonesia and its broader impact on women's empowerment and social change within the community.

The two Majelis Taklim selected as the subjects of this study due to the diversity of educational programs and studies they offer, reflecting a broad range of activities in two distinct contexts. The activities conducted in these Majelis Taklim extend beyond Islamic education to encompass social, psychological, and life skills development aspects. For instance, the discussion on Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah often discusses differing interpretations among the four schools of thought (madhhab) in women's jurisprudence (fiqh) have had a positive impact by raising participants' awareness and fostering mutual respect for differing views and worship practices among Muslim women adhering to various fiqh traditions. Meanwhile, at Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin, social activities such as visiting sick neighbors not only embody religious values but also highlight the active role of the Majelis Taklim in strengthening solidarity and social engagement within the local community.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study identifies the role of Majelis Taklim in strengthening women's educational rights and its impact on social dynamics in Indonesia. The research employs a qualitative methodology, which generates descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words derived from the observed subjects. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of the contributions of Majelis Taklim to women's education and their broader influence on societal interactions and transformations (Meleong, 1989). This method is employed to explore the social phenomena within the two selected Majelis Taklim as the subjects of the study. The educational programs and studies offered by these Majelis Taklim reflect a diverse range of activities in two distinct settings, encompassing not only Islamic education but also social engagement, psychological support, and life skills development. The two Majelis Taklim named; Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah, located in the urban area of Depok, West Java, and Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin, situated in the rural area of Cilegon, Banten.

Data collection in this study was conducted using various methods to ensure the validity and completeness of the information gathered. The methods employed

included direct observation of activities taking place at both Majelis Taklim, in-depth interviews with the management and participants, as well as the collection of relevant written data and documentation related to the events held. Additionally, supplementary data was obtained through literature reviews and statistical analysis related to the research context. Once the data was collected, analysis was carried out descriptively by organizing the content of the study sessions, the materials presented, and the activities conducted into tables. This approach facilitated the identification of emerging patterns and allowed the researcher to conclude the role and impact of Majelis Taklim in the fulfillment of women's educational rights and its broader effects on the community.

To ensure the credibility of the data, consistency, and validity of the findings, this study adopts a triangulation technique, involving the comparison of data from various sources, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation was conducted to identify the Islamic educational activities delivered by religious teachers (Ustadz/Ustadzah), the materials taught, and the impact of the Majelis Taklim on the social lives of its participants. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with the management and participants of the Majelis Taklim to gather information regarding non-Islamic activities organized to enrich their educational experience. Written data and documentation related to the events held by both Majelis Taklim were also collected and analyzed in the form of data tabulation to provide a more structured overview. This approach is expected to offer comprehensive insights into the contributions of Majelis Taklim in fulfilling women's educational rights and its influence on social change in Indonesia.

### **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study focus on the fulfillment of women's educational rights within the context of non-formal Islamic education through Majelis Taklim in Indonesia. Majelis Taklim is viewed as an educational institution that plays a crucial role in providing access to education for women who may face barriers such as time constraints, economic challenges, or other limitations in participating in formal education. By focusing on women, this study explores how Majelis Taklim serves as a space for them to access religious knowledge while also offering broader insights into various aspects of life, such as psychology, life skills, and social activities. This research aims to illustrate the contribution of Majelis Taklim in fulfilling women's educational

rights, while simultaneously enriching its members' understanding of social and religious life.

### 1. Women's Rights through Education

The data found at the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik) from 2000 to 2006 shows that the average number of women entering formal educational institutions is lower than men, and as the level of education increases, the proportion of women entering educational institutions continues to decrease (SUSENAS, 2007). However, when examining data from 2019 to 2022, the school participation rate of girls has increased compared to previous years. This trend can be observed in the following graph;



Source: BPS RI – Susenas

Figure 1. Increasing number of women attending school

The graph shows that in the past four years, particularly in 2022, the number of women attending school increased by 74.75%. This indicates that Indonesian society now demonstrates a high level of awareness regarding the continuation of education or sending their children to school, especially for girls. In this regard, government policies play a crucial role in supporting the development of women's education, notably through the zoning system and non-formal education. Furthermore, Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal educational institution protected by the state under government regulations, can serve as a viable solution to supplement or complement formal education, particularly for women of all ages, from young girls to adults and even the elderly.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, women's rights encompass gender equality between men and women in the legal, social, and economic realms (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). However, this study does not delve further into the issue of gender equality

from the perspective of modern Western thought; instead, it examines the issue from an Islamic perspective. Gender equality in the Islamic perspective, particularly in supporting women's rights and their role in building civilization, is a perspective that upholds the honor and dignity of women. In Islam, men and women are considered equal; however, equality does not imply uniformity. This distinction is rooted in the biological, physiological, and physical differences between men and women, which sometimes results in them having different roles in life (Asniah et al., 2023). In Islam, it is clearly stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah that the right to education is a right equally shared by both men and women.

Surah An-Nisa, verse 32, generally highlights the equal rights between men and women (*MUSHAF, 2023a; The Qur'an, 2005, p. 53*):

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُواْ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ

"Men have the portion they have earned, and women the portion they have earned"

In Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is highly valued, and the Qur'an Surah Al-Mujadilah:11 emphasizes appreciation for individuals who pursue knowledge (*MUSHAF, 2023b; The Qur'an, 2005, p. 363*):

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

"God will raise up, by many degrees, those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge"

Allah even praises those who constantly reflect and think in the Qur'an Surah Ali Imran:190 (*MUSHAF, 2023c; The Qur'an, 2005, p. 49*):

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاٰخِثٰفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولٰٓئِىۡ الۡاَلْبٰبِ

"There truly are signs in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of night and day, for those with understanding"

Similarly, the first revelation given to the Prophet Muhammad was the command to read, which is applicable to both men and women. The hadith emphasizing equal educational rights for men and women is mentioned in a narration by Ibn Jarir and Abi Karib from Mu'awiyah, Muhammad bin Umar, and Abi Salman, where Yahya bin Abdurrahman bin Habib recounts from Ummu Salamah, who said;

The narration goes: "O Messenger of Allah, why is it that only men are mentioned in the Qur'an, and women are not?" (Riyadhi & Asyari, 2020).

In response, Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab:35 was revealed (*MUSHAF*, 2023d; *The Qur'an*, 2005, p. 269);

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَلِشَعِينَ وَالْخَلِشَعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"For men and women who are devoted to God– believing men and women, obedient men and women, truthful men and women, steadfast men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, chaste men and women, men and women who remember God often– God has prepared forgiveness and a rich reward."

According to Riyadhi *et al.* (2020), as cited from Al-Khotib in his book of *Uṣūl al-Hadīth*, a woman once came to the Prophet Muhammad and said: "*O Messenger of Allah, we are unable to attend your gatherings that consist of men. Therefore, we have set aside a day for you.*" The Prophet replied, "*The place I promise you is in the house of so-and-so.*" The Prophet then came and instructed them on the appointed day and at the promised place.

The Prophet Muhammad instructed parents to educate their children, particularly daughters. There are numerous examples and role models of educated women from the time of the Prophet, one of whom is Aisha bint Abi Bakr, the Prophet's wife, who narrated many hadiths. She was especially remarkable as she not only heard and witnessed the daily life of the Prophet firsthand but also became a reference for *ṣahābī* (the companion) in resolving many religious issues after her passing. Similarly, there is Ummu Darda, the wife of Abu Darda Al-Anṣārī, whom Imam Bukhari described as *thiqah* (trustworthy) in narrating hadiths (Rochimah, 2023). Another example is Sayyidah Nafisah, a teacher of great scholars, who taught many students, including Imam Shafi'i. These are just a few examples of the many educated and knowledgeable women who served as important figures in Islamic history (Redaksi, 2024).

In Indonesia, efforts to involve women in various sectors of life have been increasingly intensified, one of which is through programs initiated by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KEMENPPPA, 2021). This program adopts a development approach focused on gender equality and justice, to empower women more inclusively. One of the major targets to be achieved in sustainable development is the attainment of gender equality across all sectors of life by 2030. This

reflects the government's commitment to addressing gender disparities and providing equal opportunities for women to participate in development, whether in the economic, social, or political fields.

Furthermore, women's right to education is also guaranteed in Indonesia's constitution, specifically in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, which ensures that every citizen, including women, has the right to receive education. The state is mandated to prioritize the education budget, allocating at least 20% of the national income and expenditure budget to support the implementation of national education. This reflects the importance of education in sustainable and equitable human resource development. With this constitutional guarantee, education should be a right accessible to all segments of society, including women, without any barriers (Bintang et al., 2022).

However, one of the major challenges that Indonesia still faces is the provision of quality education, particularly for girls. Although Indonesia has allocated a significant education budget, in practice, the allocated budget remains relatively low compared to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and China. According to a study by Rina (2017), Indonesia's education budget falls short in terms of proportion and utilization when compared to more advanced neighboring countries. This creates disparities in the provision of quality educational facilities, especially in remote areas, which often act as barriers for girls to accessing education on par with that of boys.

## **2. Majelis Taklim as Non-Formal Religious Education for Women**

### **a. The Education in Indonesia**

According to Mirdad and Rahman (2021), education in Indonesia is categorized into three types: formal education, informal education, and non-formal education. Non-formal education is a type of education conducted outside the formal education system, characterized by its flexibility and lack of constraints regarding time and place. The primary function of non-formal education is to replace, complement, enhance, and develop formal and informal education, all of which support the concept of lifelong learning. Non-formal educational institutions generally do not impose specific requirements on participants, making them more inclusive, and they tend to offer a narrower curriculum with a deeper focus. This allows participants to gain more

specific and practical knowledge tailored to their needs, without the need to follow the rigid structure found in formal education.

Based on Wahyudin (2007), another function of non-formal education is to develop the potential of learners through the mastery of knowledge, functional skills, and the development of attitudes and personality. This includes life skills, early childhood education, youth education, women's empowerment education, literacy education, skills education, and vocational training, as well as equality education.

The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (SISDIKNAS, 2003), Chapter I, Article 12, stipulates that non-formal education is a pathway of education organized outside the formal education system, which can be conducted in a structured and tiered manner. The objectives of non-formal education are aligned with those of formal education. Examples of non-formal education institutions include training centers, courses, study groups, and Majelis Taklim. Non-formal education plays a crucial role in complementing and expanding learning opportunities for the community, particularly for individuals who are unable to access formal education.

#### b. The History and the Development of Majelis Taklim

the term Majelis Taklim is derived from the Arabic root *jālasa, yujālisu, jūlisān*, meaning "to sit" or "to convene," while the word Ta'lim comes from the root *'alima, ya'lamu, 'ilman*, which means "to know something." Terminologically, Majelis Taklim can be understood as a place where Islamic teachings are taught or studied (Nashiruddin & Zulmuqim, 2022). Bakti (2003) identifies Majelis Taklim as the oldest form of educational organization or non-formal educational institution among Muslims, tracing its origins back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. During that era, it took the form of *halaqah* (study circles) conducted by the Prophet and his companions at *Daarul Arqam* (the house of a companion), following their migration to Medina. In Indonesia, Majelis Taklim was first introduced through the spread of Islam by the *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints). They employed *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) methods, where an *ustaz* (religious teacher) would deliver sermons to an audience, followed by a question-and-answer session (Saenong, 2016).

Moreover, in its contemporary development, Majelis Taklim has become more closely associated with women's religious organizations, even though in the past, these assemblies were predominantly attended by men. At that time, women were often relegated to sitting on the periphery of the assembly or in less conspicuous spaces. The

emergence of *ustazah* (female religious teachers) has created significant opportunities for women to engage more actively in Majelis Taklim. This shift is evidenced by a sharp increase in the number of women-only Majelis Taklim in Jakarta over the past 30 years. According to Saenong (2016), between 2014 and 2016, Majelis Taklim expanded massively into public spaces, penetrating various sectors of society, including office environments, university settings, political parties, and even socialite gatherings. These groups, often organized for social purposes such as *arisan* (rotating savings and credit associations), began incorporating religious lectures (*tausiah*) by inviting renowned Ustaz. One example is the Majelis Musawara, which was founded by celebrities who wanted to improve their understanding of Islam. Additionally, in 2013, the Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded approximately 158,960 Majelis Taklim throughout Indonesia.

Several renowned *da'iyah* (female Islamic preachers) have developed since the formation of Majelis Taklim and the engagement of female religious experts, such as Ustazah Tuti Alawiyah, Ustazah Lutfiah Sungkar, and Ustazah Suryani Thahir. With the rapid advancement of digital technology, a new generation of *ustazah* has gained popularity across diverse age groups, from youth to the elderly. Some notable examples include Mamah Dedeh, Oki Setiana Dewi, Qotrunnada Syathiry, and Syifa Nurfadhilah, among others.

Furthermore, Majelis Taklim as a non-formal educational institution has evolved into an effective platform for women to fulfill their right to education, particularly in the realm of religious studies. Based on observations and in-depth interviews (Inne, personal communication, 18 January 2023), it was discovered that the two Majelis Taklim; Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah in Depok and Majelis Taklim Nurul Yaqin in Cilegon have a specific focus on women, with congregants ranging in age from 25 to 50 years old in Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah and over 40 years old in Majelis Taklim Nurul Yaqin. A wide range of activities are carried out, including charitable endeavors, Islamic festival celebrations, and religious education. In addition to enhancing spiritual elements, these activities help the congregation members become more socially engaged. Majelis Taklim is an essential platform for promoting women's education and empowering local communities, as evidenced by the variety of these activities. Tables 2 and 3 below provide other examples of this dynamic;

Table 1. The activities organized by Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah

| No | Activity  | Participants              | Frequency    |
|----|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Religious Studies,<br>Psychology Studies,<br>and Educational<br>Studies | Members                   | Twice a week |
| 2. | Celebration of the<br>Prophet's Maulid<br>and Islamic<br>Holidays       | Members and<br>Public     | Once a year  |
| 3. | Charity<br>Distribution to<br>Orphans and the<br>Needy                  | Orphans and the<br>Needy  | Once a year  |
| 4. | Smart Camp  | Children and<br>Teenagers | Once a year  |

Table 2. The activities organized by Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin

| No | Activity  | Participants          | Frequency              |
|----|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Religious Studies   | Members and<br>Public | Twice a week           |
| 2. | Celebration of the<br>Prophet's Maulid<br>and Islamic<br>Holidays | Members and<br>Public | Once a year            |
| 3. | Pilgrimage (Ziarah)   | Members               | Incidental             |
| 4. | Social Donations<br>(infaq)                                       | Members               | Every Taklim Gathering |
| 5. | Visiting the Sick   | Members               | Incidental             |
| 6. | Attending Aqiqah,<br>circumcision,<br>wedding parties,            | Members               | Incidental             |

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and other social  
celebrations

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The two tables illustrate the activities conducted by two Majelis Taklim groups: Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah in Depok and Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin in Cilegon. The activities at Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah include religious studies, psychology, and educational sessions held regularly twice a week for members. Additionally, there are annual activities such as the celebration of the Prophet's *mawlid* and Islamic holidays, donations to orphans and the underprivileged, as well as a Smart Camp for children and teens. These programs highlight a focus on the spiritual and social development of members, with a more structured and systematic schedule. Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah also accommodates various age groups, such as children and teenagers, through initiatives like the Smart Camp, reflecting the diversity of educational approaches offered.

The content of the religious studies at Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah includes discussions on women's jurisprudence (*fiqh*) across the four Sunni schools of thought (*mazhab*). These sessions emphasize differences among scholars' *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), emphasizing that such differences should not be viewed as divisions, but rather as sources of blessing and mutual respect, as long as they are based on valid evidence and do not concern fundamental rulings such as the obligation of *fardhu* prayers. The Majelis also discusses marriage in Islam and women's roles in the family, examining them through the framework of Qur'anic psychology. These discussions are not only delivered during gatherings but also visually reinforced with posters and flyers offering motivating messages or brief content summaries. An example of such a visual resource can be seen in Figure 2 below:

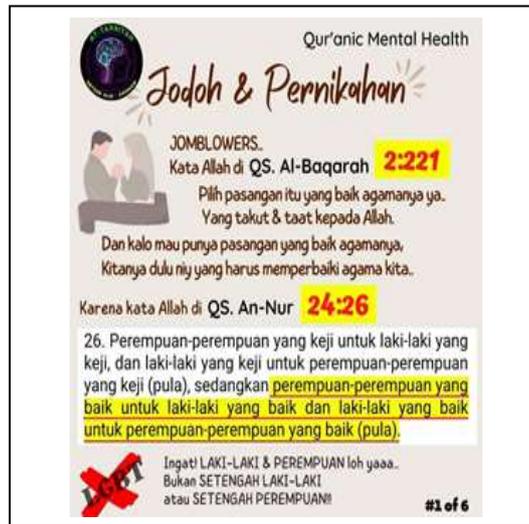


Figure 2. WhatsApp Group of al Ukhuwah Member Congregation

On the other hand, Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin is actively engaged in conducting regular religious studies twice a week for its members and the general public, as well as hosting annual celebrations such as the Prophet's Maulid and other Islamic holidays. The religious content studied at Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin revolves around topics such as *aqidah* (Islamic beliefs), *akhlak* (morals), ethics in seeking knowledge, and related subjects. The *Mu'allim* (teacher) or *Ustaz* teaches by reading classical Islamic texts and providing explanations to the congregation, such as the book of *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Imam Al-Zarnuji. This approach ensures that members not only acquire knowledge but also gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the material conveyed by their teacher. Additionally, activities such as pilgrimage (ziarah), social donations, visiting the sick, and attending social events are carried out on an incidental basis, reflecting the flexibility and social intimacy among members. Notably, social donation activities are conducted during every meeting, emphasizing the values of solidarity and compassion toward others. In contrast to the more structured approach of Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah, Majelis Taklim 'Ainul Yaqin adopts a community-based approach, organizing activities that are tailored to the specific social needs of the local community.

Overall, both Majelis Taklim not only support religious education but also play a significant role in fostering social solidarity and strengthening the role of women within their respective communities. Based on observations, interviews, and the data presented in the activity tables of these two Majelis Taklim, the author argues that although Majelis Taklim does not fully address the educational needs of women, they

can serve as a solution and provide a foundational platform for learning about religion, acquiring life skills, and nurturing social consciousness within society.

### **3. The Role of Women and Majelis Taklim in the Indonesian Community**

The primary role of women in education is to educate their families, particularly their children. This role is crucial as it shapes the growth and development of children into righteous, skilled, and educated individuals who are pleasing to Allah SWT. A mother serves as the primary figure in her child's education (*madrassa al ūla*), particularly as a role model in attitudes, behavior, and social norms for her children (SYAHID, 2015).

Women hold a strategic role in building society and the nation through the education they provide to their children. Intelligent, righteous, and well-educated children will have a positive impact on community life and contribute to the nation's progress. The phrase "*women are the pillars of the nation*" is highly relevant in this context. If women possess a strong foundation in education and character, society and the nation will become resilient. However, many women face challenges in personally educating their children, whether due to work demands or limited knowledge. Therefore, women must first educate and equip themselves with the knowledge to effectively fulfill their roles within their families and communities (Kanwil, 2014).

Majelis Taklim serves as a solution for women to acquire knowledge, particularly in the field of religion, which may not be accessible through formal education. As a community-based non-formal educational institution, Majelis Taklim offers flexibility for women with busy schedules, allowing them to learn without being constrained by time and space. Beyond expanding religious knowledge, Majelis Taklim plays a significant role in supporting the concept of lifelong learning. This makes Majelis Taklim a strategic platform that not only helps women fulfill their educational needs but also strengthens their role in building quality families and communities (Firdaus & Arifin, 2018).

Majelis Taklim holds a highly significant role in community life, particularly as a community-based religious education institution. This role can be identified in four main dimensions as outlined by Dahlan (2019);

- a. **Religious Education and Spiritual Development:** Majelis Taklim functions as a center for fostering and advancing religious education, aiming to shape a community that is pious and devoted to Allah.

- b. **Respite from Routine Activities:** It serves as a space where individuals can momentarily step away from their busy routines and work obligations by participating in spiritual activities. Its flexible nature, unconstrained by specific time and place, makes it accessible to diverse groups.
- c. **Strengthening Social Bonds:** Majelis Taklim acts as a venue for social gatherings, promoting unity and brotherhood among community members regardless of social status, position, or wealth.
- d. **Sharing and Charity:** It provides a platform for sharing, both in terms of personal experiences and material wealth, by organizing social initiatives such as aid for the underprivileged, including the poor and needy.
- e. **Recreational and Spiritual Tourism:** Majelis Taklim also serves as a means of recreation by facilitating group pilgrimages to visit renowned scholars or significant Islamic historical sites.

Majelis Taklim, as a non-formal religious educational institution, possesses unique characteristics in its role as an inclusive platform for the community. Distinct from other religious institutions, Majelis Taklim is structured by the community, of the community, and for the community, making its presence highly attuned to the needs of the population it serves. Through in-depth religious education and diverse activities, Majelis Taklim provides a space that unites individuals from various social, economic, and cultural backgrounds in harmony. Within this framework, participants not only acquire religious knowledge but also build strong social connections, share experiences, and enhance solidarity. With its flexible and community-based approach, Majelis Taklim serves as a significant hub for religious learning and as a bridge fostering cohesion among different societal groups. This dual role underscores its importance in cultivating both spiritual growth and social integration (Mursyid, 2018).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study highlights the significance of Majelis Taklim as a non-formal educational institution in supporting the fulfillment of women's educational rights in Indonesia, particularly in the context of religious education. It affirms that Majelis Taklim not only provides religious instruction but also addresses social, psychological, and life skills development. With its flexibility unbound by time and place, Majelis Taklim offers a viable solution for women facing challenges in accessing formal education due to employment obligations, family duties, or financial limitations. Its

inclusive role makes Majelis Taklim an effective platform for women's empowerment while simultaneously strengthening social solidarity within communities.

The findings of this study reveal the significant contributions of two Majelis Taklim, which served as the research subjects: Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah in Depok and Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin in Cilegon. Both institutions demonstrate a variety of activities that not only deepen the understanding of religious teachings but also encompass social initiatives such as charitable donations, communal visits, and community development programs. For instance, Majelis Taklim Al-Ukhuwah provides discussions on differing perspectives in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) to foster tolerance among its members, while Majelis Taklim Ainul Yaqin emphasizes social activities that strengthen interpersonal relationships among members. These two institutions exemplify how non-formal religious education can serve as a means to empower individuals and foster harmonious communities.

These findings reinforce that Majelis Taklim plays a crucial role in supporting educational equality for women in Indonesia, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and equitable social development.

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