

Rethinking women's education from the perspective of Siti Walidah

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of Siti Walidah as a prominent figure in the women's movement in the field of education in Indonesia. It examines the concept of women's education from her perspective, particularly through her founding of the women's organization 'Aisyiyah, which operates in the areas of religion, social affairs, economy, and education. The purpose of this research is twofold: to describe Siti Walidah's perspective on women's education and to outline her contributions in advancing education through 'Aisyiyah. This research employs a library-based approach, utilizing various sources such as books, journals, documents, dictionaries, magazines, encyclopedias, and other relevant materials. The study involves a textual analysis of Siti Walidah's educational thoughts, focusing especially on her approach to women's education. It is analytical descriptive in nature, aiming to objectively present and interpret the actual conditions related to the subject of the study. The findings indicate that Siti Walidah's advocacy for women's education included several significant initiatives: founding a religious study group known as Sopo Tresno, teaching women in Kauman to read the Qur'an, and establishing the Maghribi School, a religious study group specifically for women held during the Maghrib prayer time.

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Introduction

Education is, in essence, an effort to pass down values. It serves as a means and determinant for humanity in navigating life, while also playing a role in improving human destiny and civilization (Fathurrohman & Sulistyorini, 2012). Islamic teachings encompass all aspects of life and human existence, emphasizing and upholding the principles of human rights. Respect and appreciation for human dignity are core and essential teachings in Islam (Husin Muhammad, 2014). Education for women has become one of the crucial issues in the effort to improve the quality of a nation. This is because the first and foremost educational environment is the family (Rohmad Qomari, 2008), where the mother plays a primary role in educating children.

Currently, discussions surrounding women's issues often arise from widespread injustice and improper treatment toward women. These range from their roles in the household, workplace, and social life, to access to education and other areas (Muhibbin, 2007). Women have often faced discrimination and negative stigma throughout history, a consequence of deeply rooted patriarchal cultures that overlook human values and consider such bias to be normal (Maulana Ihsan, 2014). This cultural view has become

even more entrenched over time, legitimized by long-standing societal traditions that place women beneath men. However, since the early 20th century, this perception has been challenged by women themselves (Citra Mustikawati, 2015). One well-known figure of this era is R.A. Kartini, a pioneer of women's emancipation in Indonesia, whose birthday is commemorated annually on April 21. Kartini is remembered for her letters to her Dutch friends, in which she expressed her thoughts on women's rights and emancipation (Dyah Siti Nurini, 1917-1945).

At the same time, another influential figure also emerged – Siti Walidah – who played a vital role in advocating for women's rights, particularly in the realm of education. She was a key figure in promoting women's education within the Kauman community and through the Aisyiyah organization. During her time, education for women was considered highly taboo. Women were not allowed to pursue higher education and were often expected only to perform household duties. Only daughters of nobility were permitted to attend school, and even then, their education was limited to basic levels. Patriarchal culture was deeply embedded in society, perceiving women merely as complements to men and inherently weak (Dian Ardiyani, 2017).

Siti Walidah's conscience was stirred by the harsh realities faced by people in her era. Her movement began by gathering women in the Kauman area to provide them with guidance in religious education, social issues, and practical skills. This initiative was called Sopo Tresno, which later became the foundation for the Aisyiyah movement (Yunan Yusuf et al., 2005). She also focused on younger generations, establishing a boarding house (*internaat*) to nurture Indonesian girls (Suratmin, 1990).

Her educational efforts for women included both religious and general education. Religious education served as a foundational aspect of life, while practical skills training was aimed at developing women who were morally upright and self-reliant. Siti Walidah stands as a model of an exemplary Muslim woman who fought for women's rights, especially in education and social welfare. The continued existence and contributions of the Aisyiyah women's organization today – producing generations of intelligent female scholars – are inseparable from Siti Walidah's legacy in educating Aisyiyah's women.

Siti Walidah's efforts were not merely symbolic; they brought about structural changes in how education for women was perceived and implemented within Muhammadiyah. She understood that empowering women through education was a key to transforming society as a whole. Her establishment of educational institutions specifically for girls, such as dormitories and the Maghribi School, demonstrated her commitment to creating safe and supportive learning environments. These initiatives served to challenge the prevailing notion that women's education was unnecessary or even harmful. By integrating religious knowledge with practical life skills, Siti Walidah emphasized a holistic educational approach – one that nurtured both the spiritual and intellectual growth of women, enabling them to participate meaningfully in family, religious, and social spheres.

Moreover, her dedication to addressing the literacy gap among elderly women highlighted a broader vision of inclusive education. Siti Walidah believed that the pursuit of knowledge was a lifelong obligation for all Muslims, regardless of age or gender. This belief was rooted in Islamic principles that value knowledge (*'ilm*) as a means of personal and communal advancement. Through programs aimed at eradicating illiteracy among older women, she reinforced the idea that education should not be limited to the youth or to the elite, but should reach all layers of society. Her inclusive approach laid the groundwork for a more egalitarian educational culture, one that not only empowered women individually but also elevated their collective role within the ummah. This spirit of reform and inclusivity continues to define the ethos of Aisyiyah today, reflecting Siti

Walidah's enduring legacy as both a reformer and an educator.

Method

The method used in this research is library research (Zed, 2008). This method involves the study of literature and sources relevant to the theme of women's education from the perspective of Siti Walidah. The researcher will collect and analyze books, articles, journals (Nashihin, 2023), and other sources that discuss education during that period. In library research, the main focus is on the analysis and interpretation of existing secondary sources (Khatibah, 2011). The research also employs a historical approach (Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda, Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022). Through this approach, the researcher investigates the historical context of women's education from Siti Walidah's perspective. This approach allows for an understanding of the role and purpose of education in the society of that era. By analyzing historical factors—such as culture, values, and socio-political challenges—this study aims to reveal the educational perspective on women adopted by Siti Walidah. By using the methods of library research, historical analysis, and comparative approaches, this study will explore Siti Walidah's view on women's education within the context of Islamic education during her time. Through this research, it is expected that valuable insights will be uncovered.

The research method employed in this study is library research, which involves systematically collecting, reviewing, and analyzing written sources related to the theme of women's education from the perspective of Siti Walidah. Operationally, this method includes identifying relevant literature—such as books, journal articles, academic papers, and archival documents—that discuss the historical, cultural, and educational context of early 20th-century Indonesia, particularly within the Muhammadiyah movement. The data collection process focuses on secondary sources that highlight Siti Walidah's educational contributions and thoughts. A historical approach is also integrated to contextualize her efforts within the broader socio-political and religious developments of her time. This involves tracing the chronology of events, examining the influence of patriarchal culture, and understanding the educational policies affecting women. The collected data is then analyzed through content analysis, emphasizing interpretation, comparison, and synthesis of key ideas and values in Siti Walidah's educational activism. This methodological combination allows for a comprehensive understanding of her vision and impact on Islamic women's education.

Results and Discussion

Biography of Siti Walidah

Siti Walidah was born in Yogyakarta in 1872 CE. Her full birth name was Siti Walidah binti Kiai Penghulu Haji Ibrahim bin Kiai Muhammad Hasan Pengkol bin Kiai Muhammad Ali Ngraden Pengkol. Her father was commonly known as Kiai Fadhil, and her mother was known as Nyai Mas. Siti Walidah was raised in a traditional religious environment. At that time, women were not allowed to receive formal education and were only permitted to study religion. Although she came from a family of scholars, Siti Walidah was solely educated by her parents. She was taught various aspects of Islam, including the Arabic language and the Qur'an.

From a young age, her ability to preach (dakwah) began to develop, and she was trusted by her father to assist in teaching at Kiai Fadhil's prayer house (langgar). In 1889, Siti Walidah married Muhammad Darwis, better known as Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan. She actively accompanied her husband in establishing and developing Muhammadiyah, an Islamic reformist organization founded in 1912. Through this experience, she learned a great deal and became acquainted with several national figures who were friends of Kiai

Ahmad Dahlan, such as General Sudirman, Bung Tomo, Bung Karno (Soekarno), and Kiai Haji Mas Mansyur.

In 1914, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan founded a women's study group named Sopo Tresno, a religious study circle for educated young women in the Kauman area of Yogyakarta. This group focused not only on religious teachings but also emphasized the importance of education for society. In 1923, the Sopo Tresno study group was renamed 'Aisyiyah, a special organization dedicated to women.

The transformation of Siti Walidah from a young girl educated solely at home into a prominent figure in Islamic education and women's empowerment demonstrates her extraordinary adaptability and leadership. Though limited by the cultural constraints of her era, she utilized her religious education as a stepping stone to gain deeper insights into societal needs, particularly those of women. Her marriage to KH. Ahmad Dahlan became a pivotal turning point that exposed her to broader reformist ideas and networks. Through close interaction with her husband's colleagues, many of whom were national figures, Siti Walidah's vision expanded from local educational concerns to national-level activism.

Her initiative to form the Sopo Tresno study group marked a revolutionary step for Muslim women in the early 20th century. The study group did not merely serve as a platform for religious instruction but also as a space for building intellectual and social awareness among women. The name "Sopo Tresno," meaning "those who love," reflected the group's spirit of compassion and solidarity, emphasizing the role of women not only as caregivers but also as changemakers. In this forum, Siti Walidah instilled a sense of confidence and responsibility in women to participate in public discourse, equipping them with the knowledge to contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

With the formal establishment of 'Aisyiyah in 1923, Siti Walidah institutionalized her vision, creating a structured and sustainable platform for women's education and empowerment. 'Aisyiyah became the first women's organization in Indonesia to be formally affiliated with a national Islamic movement, allowing it to influence education, health, economy, and social welfare. Under her leadership, the organization advocated for women's rights in accordance with Islamic principles while addressing real-life challenges. This balance between religious values and social progress became the hallmark of Siti Walidah's educational philosophy, making her a central figure in the history of women's empowerment in Indonesia.

Women's Education from the Perspective of Siti Walidah

Since 1914, Siti Walidah's contributions to education—particularly women's education—have had a significant impact on the development of education in Indonesia. As previously mentioned, during the Dutch colonial period, access to education was not equitably distributed among the Indonesian population. There was clear discrimination in education and learning opportunities between indigenous people and Europeans. Historical records also note that during Daendels' administration (1808–1811), women were only allowed to attend *ronggeng* schools for four years, and even that was primarily to entertain Dutch political elites (Toto Suharto, 2006).

Motivated by such concerns, Siti Walidah established Sopo Tresno in 1914. It began as a Qur'anic reading course specifically for women and later grew into a women's religious study group in Kauman under the guidance of KH. Ahmad Dahlan. Long before Western nations recognized equal rights for women, Muhammadiyah had already pioneered such efforts while firmly adhering to the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The emancipation movement initiated by Muhammadiyah began in 1913 when KH. Ahmad Dahlan encouraged young women in Kauman to pursue education equal to that of men. Meanwhile, the women's emancipation movement in Europe only started

during the First World War (1914–1918), when women took over men's roles on the battlefield. KH. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, firmly stated: "Household duties should not be an obstacle to fulfilling societal responsibilities."

Before 'Aisyiyah was formally established, Muslim women within Muhammadiyah had already been active in various initiatives led by Siti Walidah, the wife of KH. Ahmad Dahlan. She had long dreamed that Muslim women should not only understand their roles as housewives but also be aware of and engaged in social responsibilities. She even requested that her husband ensure Muhammadiyah gave attention to women by providing them with education and guidance to help them understand organizational life. According to Siti Walidah, women deserved the same attention as men because she believed that without women, any struggle would fail (Junus Salam, 1968).

On April 22, 1917, the organization was officially inaugurated. The inauguration coincided with the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Isra' Mi'raj, which Muhammadiyah commemorated publicly and grandly for the first time. Siti Bariyah served as its first chairwoman. In 1922, 'Aisyiyah became an official part of Muhammadiyah. Nyai Ahmad Dahlan (Siti Walidah) played a central role in building and developing this organization. The struggles of Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah between 1923 and 1946 were largely inspired and driven by Nyai Ahmad Dahlan. Even after the death of KH. Ahmad Dahlan, her spirit did not fade; on the contrary, it grew stronger, driving the rapid development of Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah.

Nyai Ahmad Dahlan (Siti Walidah) was one of the pioneers who awakened and mobilized Indonesian women. Her vision was to build an Indonesian nation rooted in religious values (based on the belief in One Almighty God). Her success in the field of education was not limited to theory but was proven in practice. Among her notable accomplishments:

1. The establishment of dormitories for girls from various regions across Indonesia, where they received quality education. Their parents entrusted their daughters to Nyai Ahmad Dahlan's guidance wholeheartedly.
2. Her active involvement in supporting the smooth operation of girls' schools.
3. The development of women's education through courses and religious study sessions.
4. Initiating literacy programs for the elderly.
5. Establishing homes for children from poor families.
6. Her deep concern for the care and upbringing of orphans. (Koawni, 1978)

Siti Walidah's thought in education is well-known for the concept of "Catur Pusat" (Four Educational Centers), a formula that integrates four educational components: education within the family, education within the school environment, education within society, and education within places of worship. These four centers form an organic unity, which – if implemented consistently – will shape a holistic personality. This idea was later realized in the form of formal education institutions. She initially established the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah in 1912, utilizing the Dutch educational system model. This breakthrough initially sparked controversy within the Kauman village community and among conservative Muslim circles (Halimatussa'diah Nasution & Samsu Nahar, 2017).

Supporters of this innovation argued that such an educational model would be more widely accepted by the public, as it essentially modernized the traditional Islamic pesantren system by maintaining Islamic educational values while adopting modern methods. Positive elements from the West, rather than being rejected, were embraced and infused with Islamic values. Siti Walidah also pioneered the establishment of a girls' boarding school to complete her educational formula. This dormitory was set up in her

own home in 1918 and grew rapidly, accommodating many students from Kauman and beyond. At this dormitory, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan (Siti Walidah) provided religious education, practical skills including public speaking, and women's studies.

Her moral foundation was reflected in her frequently repeated questions: (1) Rejecting the Javanese proverb "wong wadon iku swarga nunut, nerakane katut wong lanang" (a woman goes to heaven or hell depending on her husband), (2) Upholding "Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar" (enjoining good and forbidding evil), and (3) "Sepi ing pamrih" (working without selfish intent). Nyai Ahmad Dahlan was among the first women to engage in the women's movement. She made history by founding the organization "Sopo Tresno" in 1914, the first women's movement in Indonesia, led by her and directly guided by Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan.

Her struggle to elevate the status of women was not easy. She faced resistance from older generations who still adhered to the view that "women belong in the domestic sphere." Despite these challenges, she remained steadfast and patient in advancing 'Aisyiyah and empowering women. The advancement of women's education driven by Nyai Ahmad Dahlan was deeply embedded in a reformist Islamic da'wah movement that encouraged women to understand themselves better, improve their morals, and enhance their lives through an Islamic framework. This aligned with the broader Muhammadiyah mission that emphasized understanding and practicing Islam.

Despite the resistance, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan stood firm in promoting 'Aisyiyah and women's rights. She planted the seeds and became a pioneer for women to break away from outdated beliefs and practices, advocating progress and equal struggle alongside men. Her sacrifices were significant, especially considering the scorn and opposition she received from conservative elements who accused her of violating traditional female decorum. Her intellectual prowess was influenced by her wide-ranging interactions with figures who associated with her husband, including General Sudirman, Bung Tomo, Bung Karno (Soekarno), and K.H. Mas Mansur. She never felt inferior and often gave advice to these figures.

One of Nyai Ahmad Dahlan's most remarkable thoughts was her opposition to forced and underage marriages, which were common at the time. Although controversial at first, her stance was informed by personal experiences—particularly observing her husband's young wives who lacked the maturity to raise children properly. For this reason, she strongly rejected these marriage practices.

The organization later became officially known as 'Aisyiyah and was inaugurated on the occasion of the Isra Mi'raj of Prophet Muhammad SAW, on 12 Rajab 1335 H (19 May 1917 AD), with Siti Bariyah appointed as chairperson. In 1923, 'Aisyiyah was formally integrated as part of Muhammadiyah. Then, in 1927, 'Aisyiyah evolved into Majelis 'Aisyiyah (the 'Aisyiyah Council), reflecting its growing branches and scope across Indonesia.

Under the guidance of Nyai Siti Walidah (Nyai Ahmad Dahlan), Siti Bariyah continued to lead 'Aisyiyah, and by 1927, it became an independent body. From its inception, 'Aisyiyah functioned as a horizontal division of Muhammadiyah, focusing on activities for women. During the 37th Muhammadiyah Congress in 1965, 'Aisyiyah was officially elevated to the status of Central Leadership of 'Aisyiyah (PP 'Aisyiyah), with authority to manage its subordinate branches. Since then, the PP 'Aisyiyah office has been based in Yogyakarta, and the organization was led by Prof. Dra. H. Baroroh Baried.

Addressing topics such as gender equality, women's education, child marriage, the harms of forced marriages, the importance of women's dignity, and Islamic marital law reform in 1928 was highly visionary. These ideas stemmed from deep life experience, understanding, and a strong concern for women's fate. 'Aisyiyah's role within

Muhammadiyah has continued to grow, especially after the 32nd Congress in 1953 in Purwokerto, which further strengthened its autonomy. This was formalized in the 1956 constitution of 'Aisyiyah, which declared in Article 1 that 'Aisyiyah is a special autonomous body within Muhammadiyah.

Over time, the organization founded by Siti Walidah has evolved into Indonesia's largest women's organization. 'Aisyiyah now has branches in all 34 provinces and manages thousands of social and educational institutions. According to Wikipedia, 'Aisyiyah oversees institutions in education, health, social welfare, economy, and community empowerment.

In education, 'Aisyiyah manages 4,560 institutions, including playgroups, early childhood education, kindergartens, daycare centers, elementary and junior high schools, and others. In health, it runs 280 institutions across Indonesia, such as hospitals, maternity clinics, maternal and child health agencies, health centers, and integrated health posts (Posyandu). In social welfare, it has 459 institutions, including shelters for street children, orphanages, social funds, funeral service teams, and Posyandu.

Understanding that women's dignity cannot be elevated without improving their economic capabilities, 'Aisyiyah also operates 503 institutions in the economic empowerment sector, including cooperatives, Baitul Maal wa Tamwil, savings and loans, home industries, skills training, and social gatherings (arisan).

Since its founding more than a century ago, thanks to the dedication of Siti Walidah and her husband, women's education in Indonesia has experienced extraordinary progress, serving as a model for the state to develop modern schools without abandoning core religious teachings. 'Aisyiyah has gained extensive experience in educational management and remains a preferred choice for Indonesian families to educate their children.

Siti Walidah's dedication to women's education went beyond theoretical discourse; she led by example through concrete initiatives that bridged the gap between religious teachings and modern educational needs. Her vision was deeply rooted in Islamic values, yet progressive in nature, challenging the norms of a patriarchal society that limited women's roles to domestic duties. By pioneering the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and social empowerment for women, she redefined the purpose of education for Muslim women—not merely to prepare them for household responsibilities, but to enable them to actively participate in public life. The dormitory she founded in her own home was not just a place of learning but a transformative space that produced generations of women capable of contributing to societal reform.

Furthermore, Siti Walidah's strategic insight in developing the concept of "Catur Pusat" education proved revolutionary for its time. She understood that true education occurs through the synergy of four key environments—home, school, society, and places of worship. This framework remains relevant even today, forming the foundation of character-based and holistic education. Her efforts in establishing formal institutions, such as the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah, and in initiating skills training and literacy programs for women and the elderly, show her multifaceted approach to education. For Siti Walidah, education was not only about knowledge transmission but also about social justice, gender equality, and moral development—all rooted in Islamic ethics.

In advancing 'Aisyiyah, she laid the groundwork for what would become the largest women's Islamic organization in Indonesia, with far-reaching influence in education, health, social welfare, and the economy. Her leadership was both inspirational and transformational—equipping women with the tools to uplift themselves and their communities. Despite societal resistance and criticism, Siti Walidah's legacy continues to

shape the educational landscape for Muslim women, not just through institutional success but through a powerful ideological shift that redefined women's roles in Islam. Her enduring influence confirms that education, when championed with vision and sincerity, can become a powerful means for societal reform and spiritual elevation.

Establishing a Women's Religious Study Group, Known as Sopo Tresno

In 1889, at around 17 years of age, Siti Walidah married Mohammad Darwis, who later became known as KH. Ahmad Dahlan. After marrying Darwis, Siti Walidah's knowledge continued to grow. She was fortunate that her husband—founder of the Islamic organization Muhammadiyah (established in 1912)—paid great attention to women, especially concerning educational equality with men. He was concerned with how Islamic values could be effectively transferred, accepted, and understood. This required appropriate methods and contextualized transformation.

Motivated by this need, the idea emerged to form a group or platform for like-minded women. Siti Walidah, known as Nyai Darwis or Nyai Ahmad Dahlan, became involved in Muhammadiyah by initiating a women's religious study group called Sopo Tresno in 1914, meaning "those who love."

This group was not yet a formal organization as it had no official statutes or regulations. The Sopo Tresno activities included religious studies delivered alternately by her husband, Kyai Ahmad Dahlan, and herself. These studies explained Qur'anic verses and hadiths focusing on the rights and obligations of women. Through such sessions, it was hoped that women would develop awareness of their duties as human beings, wives, servants of God, and citizens.

Teaching Kauman Women to Read the Qur'an and Understand Surah Al-Ma'un

In 1914, KH. Ahmad Dahlan and his wife, Siti Walidah, organized special religious courses for women. This gathering was called Wal 'Ashri because the classes were held after the Asr prayer. Activities in this group included teaching women how to read the Qur'an.

A few years after the establishment of Muhammadiyah, KH. Ahmad Dahlan encouraged his neighbors to send their daughters to Neutraal Meisjes School in Ngupasan. Since they promoted girls' education in Dutch schools, they also organized religious courses such as Qur'an reading for the girls of Kauman.

Establishing the Maghribi School

Also in 1914, KH. Ahmad Dahlan and Siti Walidah founded another educational initiative for women, called the Maghribi School, named after the Maghrib prayer, as classes were held afterward. According to Adaby Darban in his book *Sejarah Kauman*, this gathering served as a space for women's activities in Kauman, Yogyakarta.

The religious studies included discussions of Islamic teachings, with Surah Al-Ma'un as the first focus. This gathering was also intended for batik workers from Kauman—a marginalized group with limited access to education. Besides learning about religion, the group also taught reading and writing skills. (Ika Setiawati, 2017)

Establishing Dormitories for Girls in Various Regions

In her efforts to fight for women's rights within Muhammadiyah, Siti Walidah took the path of teaching and educating women, drawing from the knowledge she gained from her parents and husband. To realize her dream of advancing women, she began by gathering women from her family and surroundings, which eventually expanded to include other women in her community.

Her contributions to education were substantial. One of her key ideas was the formulation of the four centers of education: education in the family, education in schools, education in the community, and education in places of worship. She also established dormitories specifically for girls studying at Muhammadiyah schools, such as Madrasah

Ibtidaiyah Diniyah Islamiyah or Volk School Muhammadiyah.

Since formal education for women already existed in Muhammadiyah, she sought to complement it with non-formal education through the establishment of girls' dormitories. In 1919, she opened a dormitory located in her own home, which became a center for educating women, especially in religious education and all matters concerning womanhood.

Actively Pioneering Literacy Programs for the Elderly

Siti Walidah was a successful educational reformer not just in theory but in practice. One of her important contributions was pioneering literacy programs for elderly people. According to her, women should not only raise children and manage households but also gather to discuss spiritual needs, women's issues, and societal concerns.

Until the end of 1938, Siti Walidah remained committed to attending every activity, including Aisyiyah congresses. In 1939, she was unable to attend the congress in Medan due to illness. However, in 1940, despite suffering from rheumatism, she insisted on attending the Aisyiyah Congress in Yogyakarta. Siti Walidah passed away in 1946 at the age of 74.

Organizing Homes for the Poor and Orphans

Siti Walidah showed great concern for women's issues and began forming women's religious study groups and other initiatives. One of the recurring topics in her studies—delivered alternately with her husband, KH. Ahmad Dahlan—was the interpretation of Surah Al-Ma'un. This surah was frequently discussed because Siti Walidah and Ahmad Dahlan wanted to cultivate students' awareness of the widespread poverty within the Muslim community. One practical action taken by Siti Walidah to implement the values of Surah Al-Ma'un was establishing and managing homes for the poor and orphans. (Ihlas, Yayuk Kusumawati, Sahrul Ramadhan & Nurul M. I., 2022)

Based on the description of her actions and initiatives, it can be concluded that Siti Walidah was a pioneering figure in the advancement of women's education in Indonesia, particularly through her involvement in Muhammadiyah and the founding of Aisyiyah. Her educational activism began by organizing Qur'an reading groups for Kauman women and introducing the interpretation of Surah Al-Ma'un to raise social awareness. These early efforts, such as the Wal 'Ashri and Maghribi gatherings, served as the foundation for a broader educational movement that empowered marginalized women—especially batik workers and those who previously lacked access to learning opportunities.

Furthermore, Siti Walidah's contributions extended beyond religious education into practical, community-based programs. Her initiative to establish dormitories for female students in various regions, including one within her own home, demonstrated her commitment to both formal and non-formal education. She emphasized a holistic educational model, integrating family, school, society, and places of worship as key centers of learning. This approach not only increased educational access for women but also challenged the patriarchal norms that limited their roles in society.

In addition, her advocacy for adult literacy and social welfare—particularly through literacy programs for the elderly and the establishment of homes for the poor and orphans—illustrates her comprehensive vision of education as a tool for both personal and societal transformation. Inspired by Islamic values and the message of Surah Al-Ma'un, Siti Walidah applied these teachings in practical ways that uplifted the dignity of women and addressed structural injustices. Her legacy lives on in the ongoing work of Aisyiyah and the generations of educated Muslim women who continue to benefit from the foundations she laid.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion and issues examined in this study, it can be concluded that Siti Walidah played a significant role in advocating for women's education through various initiatives. She founded the Sopo Tresno religious study group, taught women in Kauman to read the Qur'an through the Wal 'Ashri program, and established the Maghribi School, a religious study circle for women held after Maghrib prayer. Her practical contributions to education in Aisyiyah were reflected in concrete actions such as establishing dormitories for girls in several regions, pioneering literacy programs for the elderly, and organizing homes for orphans and underprivileged children. The educational development initiated by Siti Walidah, also known as Nyai Ahmad Dahlan, was fundamentally part of a broader Islamic da'wah movement aimed at elevating the dignity of women and promoting gender justice in the social sphere. Her efforts were closely aligned with the reformatory spirit of Islamic propagation, encouraging women to understand themselves, improve their character, and enhance their quality of life in accordance with Islamic values. These efforts reflect the core mission of the Muhammadiyah movement, which emphasizes both the comprehension and practice of Islamic teachings.

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