

MAJELIS TAKLIM AND ITS ROLE IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Muhammad Ali Ridho¹, Andi Eka Putra², Muhammad Jamil³

¹Universitas Andalas, Indonesia

²Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

³Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Yayasan Tarbiyah Islamiyah Padang, Indonesia

abenqotenk13@gmail.com

Abstract

This research describes the activities of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in empowering women in Bandar Lampung City. Majelis Taklim (Religious Assembly) in the current era is not just a base for the transformation of religious knowledge. But it also carries out the function of social exchange, including through women's empowerment. The focus of this research is How is the role of the Rachmat Hidayat Religious Assembly in empowering women in Bandar Lampung city? The research concluded that Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim has succeeded in encouraging women's participation in religious, economic, and social fields. Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim has become a transformative forum for the women's movement in the city of Bandar Lampung.

Keywords: *Bandar Lampung City; Majelis Taklim; Women*

Empowerment.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan kegiatan Majelis Taklim Rachmat Hidayat dalam pemberdayaan perempuan di kota Bandar Lampung. Majelis Taklim di era sekarang bukannya sebagai base transformasi pengetahuan keagamaan. Tapi juga menjalankan fungsi social exchange di antaranya melalui pemberdayaan perempuan. Fokus penelitian ini adalah Bagaimana peran Majelis Taklim Rachmat Hidayat dalam pemberdayaan perempuan di kota Bandar Lampung? Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa Majelis Taklim

Rachmat Hidayat telah berhasil mendorong partisipasi perempuan di bidang keagamaan, ekonomi, dan sosial. Majelis Taklim Rachmat Hidayat menjadi wadah transformatif bagi gerakan perempuan di kota Bandar Lampung.

Kata Kunci: *Kota Bandar Lampung; Majelis Taklim; Pemberdayaan Perempuan.*

A. Introduction

Majelis Taklim (Religious Assembly), as part of the socio-religious movement, is a modern organization¹. Although it has similarities in the field of activities and issues raised with other mass organizations, the term Majelis Taklim is not found in other countries². In the Middle East, there is also no organization called Majelis Taklim³. Therefore, the existence of Majelis Taklim can be categorized as an organization that only exists, grows, and develops in the archipelago⁴. In various regions, we easily find recitation groups on behalf of certain Majelis Taklim⁵. In mosques, Majelis Taklim generally mobilizes the field of recitation and religious studies regularly⁶.

¹ Abdul Wahid Hasyim, "Majelis Taklim And Socio-Cultural Transformation Of The South Tangerang Society," *Al-Qalam* 27, no. 2 (December 1, 2021): 381, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v27i2.953>.

² Umdatul Hasanah, "Majelis Taklim and the Shifting of Religious Public Role in Urban Areas," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2019): 80–100.

³ Alexander R Arifianto, "Rising Islamism and the Struggle for Islamic Authority in Post-Reformasi Indonesia," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and-National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (2020): 37–50.

⁴ Ibrahim Ibrahim, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasojjo, and S Sulaiman, "Preventing Radicalism: Islamic Moderation and Revitalization in the Border," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 4, no. 1 (2019): 1–15.

⁵ Suriati, Burhanuddin, and Makmur Jaya Nur, "Da'wah in Form of Ukhuwah Islamiyah," in *Proceedings of the 1st Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities, Economics and Social Sciences (BIS-HESS 2019)* (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200529.198>.

⁶ Achmad Muhajir and Rina Kurnia, "Actualization of Meaning from Bale to the Field in the Development of Youth Mushallah Nurul Ikhwan

It is no exaggeration to say that Majelis Taklim has been instrumental in enlivening the spread of Islam and Islamic studies in the archipelago, in addition to other Islamic institutions and organizations⁷. In the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 13/2014 on Majelis Taklim, Article 51 paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) explain that Majelis Taklim can be held by the community, by Pesantren, mosque administrators, Islamic community organizations, and other Islamic social religious institutions⁸. Majelis Taklim can be held in mosques, Mushalas, classrooms, or other learning spaces that meet the requirements⁹.

Furthermore, Majelis Taklim is specifically regulated in Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 29/2019 on Majelis Taklim¹⁰. Article 2 of Permenag 29/2019 reads: Majelis Taklim has the task of increasing the understanding, appreciation, and practice of the teachings of Islam¹¹. Article 5 says that those who can establish Majelis Taklim are individuals, groups of people, community organizations, educational institutions, mosques, and Mushalas¹². Article 6 paragraph 1 says that Majelis Taklim must be

Ulujami's Morals," *International Journal of Economics, Management, Business, And Social Science (IJEMBS)* 2, no. 2 (2022): 357–64.

⁷ Bahagia Bahagia et al., "The The Role of the Teenage Ta'lim Assembly in Establishing the Morality of Youth," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 4, no. 4 (2022): 959–69.

⁸ Nur Hadi, "Concept of Educational Values for Tauhid Nation Education System Perspective," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 2, no. 1 (July 2, 2019): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v2i1.652>.

⁹ Dila Rukmi Octaviana et al., "The Improving Community Spirituality Through 'Majelis Taklim'" 5, no. 1 (2023): 175–91, <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v5i1.2356>.

¹⁰ Choiriyah Muchtar et al., "Religious Moderation In The Framework Of Life," *International Journal of Islamic Education, Research and Multiculturalism (IJIERM)* 4, no. 2 (November 28, 2022): 135–49, <https://doi.org/10.47006/ijierm.v4i2.142>.

¹¹ Muhammad Suyuti and A Fitriani, "Peningkatan Kapasitas Pengurus Masjid Dan Pengelola Majelis Taklim Terhadap Pelayanan Aktifitas Keagamaan Di Desa Palangka," *Tarjih Journal of Community Empowerment* 2, no. 2 (2022): 13–22.

¹² Yon Machmudi and Putih Kusumah Ardhani, "The Role of Women in Islamic Propagation: A Case Study of Tablighi Jamaat's Nyai of Pesantren Al-

registered with the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs¹³. Registration of Majelis Taklim is done by submitting a written application by the management to the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office or through the Head of the District Religious Affairs Office¹⁴. Azyumardi Azra once asked the Minister of Religious Affairs to immediately revoke the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation on Majelis Taklim, because the state has gone too far in regulating religion¹⁵. Majelis Taklim has been used by mothers to gain religious knowledge, and should not be suspected¹⁶. Regardless of the pros and cons of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs on Majelis Taklim, one thing that is difficult to deny is that the position and existence of Majelis Taklim are currently increasingly strategic and taken into account by many groups, not only the government but also by political elites and political parties in Indonesia¹⁷.

Fatah, East Java, Indonesia,” *Journal of Asian Social Science Research* 2, no. 2 (2020): 175–90.

¹³ Sarifa Halijah, Andi Rasdiyanah, and Amrah Kasim, “Optimizing the Implementation of Religious Development at the Taklim Council in Strengthening Religious Character Education and Social Care for Muslim Women,” *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 18, no. 08 (2021): 4610–20.

¹⁴ Khairiah Khairiah and Sirajuddin Sirajuddin, “The Effects of University Leadership Management: Efforts to Improve the Education Quality of State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) of Bengkulu,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Yogyakarta* 7, no. 2 (2019): 239–66.

¹⁵ Syafiq Hasyim, “New Contestation in Interpreting Religious Texts: Fatwa, Tafsir, and Shariah,” *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*, Edited by Norshabril Saat and Ahmad Najib Burhani, 2020, 48–63.

¹⁶ Syamsuri Syamsuri and Nurwahida Alimuddin, “The Pattern of Anti-Radicalism Education at Majelis Taklim in Kota Palu,” in *Proceedings of The International Conference on Environmental and Technology of Law, Business and Education on Post Covid 19, ICETLAWBE 2020, 26 September 2020, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia*, 2020.

¹⁷ Rahmadianawati et al., “Covid Handling in Aceh; Cultural Communication Perspective,” *Asian Social Science and Humanities Research Journal (ASHREJ)* 2, no. 2 (October 1, 2020): 28–36, <https://doi.org/10.37698/ashrej.v2i2.34>.

In Lampung province alone, there is no exact data on how many Majelis Taklim there are, as most Majelis Taklim do not register themselves with the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs¹⁸. However, the number is estimated to be more than a thousand. For Bandar Lampung City alone, as the capital of Lampung province, the number of Majelis Taklim that have been registered until 2021 is 137 out of 877 existing Majelis Taklim¹⁹.

However, from the results of field observations, not many Majelis Taklim in Bandar Lampung City are widely recognized by the community and carry out empowerment roles in the field, among which Rachmat Hidayat's Majelis Taklim stands out. This Majelis Taklim has shown a new direction in the field of women's empowerment, such as involving women in activities, participation, mobilization, and social action. For example, empowering fishermen, as well as empowering fishermen's wives by helping to open economic businesses by making processed fish balls. Problems related to women's empowerment carried out by this Majelis Taklim need to be seen more specifically²⁰. Its existence is still traditional in the sense of carrying out the role of religious broadcasting, or Dakwah, oriented to the hereafter and private domestic²¹. It rarely touches on strategic issues such as awareness, participation, strengthening the capacity of organizational skills, education, economic strengthening, and issues surrounding social

¹⁸ Heni Ani Nuraeni, "Learning Innovation with Mobile Devices ICT In Majlis Ta'lim Raudhotun Nisa Jakarta, Indonesia," *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (August 19, 2020): 97–122, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2020.14.1.5979>.

¹⁹ Aliyandi Aliyandi, "Dakwah Communication Strategy In Empowering The Labor Community In Panjang District Bandar Lampung City To Improve Their Religious Practice," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 25, no. 2 (2021): 353–64.

²⁰ Muh Shadri Kahar Muang, "Empowering Role Of Family Welfare (Pkk) In Improving The Quality Of Life In The Rinding Allo Village, North Luwu," *Al-Kharaj: Journal of Islamic Economic and Business* 3, no. 2 (2021).

²¹ Agus Riyadi, Saerozi Saerozi, and Fania Mutiara Savitri, "Women and the Da'wah Movement: Historical Analysis of the Khadijah RA's Role in the Time of Rasulullah SAW," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 15, no. 1 (2021): 43–62.

problems²². Majelis Taklim plays an active role in overcoming existing problems so that its role and existence are increasingly felt by the community²³.

Related previous research, namely: Umdatul Hasanah's research entitled, Women's Majelis Taklim and Social Change in Urban Communities. This study found that the Majelis Taklim is not only a religious education institution but also a forum for developing the public role of urban women, especially in the field of social religion and social change²⁴. Amri Almi's research is entitled Community Development Through Majelis Taklim (Study in East Rambah Hilir Village, Rambah District, Rokan Hulu Regency). The focus of this research is on the activities of Majelis Taklim in the Rambah sub-district area of Rokan Hulu district related to local community development, business capital, and social capital of Majelis Taklim, efforts to overcome poverty and improve welfare, and raising the profile of Majelis Taklim in the research area in general²⁵. Hilman Husaini's research at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang with the title Transformation of Majelis Taklim in People Empowerment: Study on Majelis Taklim Al-Madinah Malang in 2016. Hilman Husaini's research in this dissertation focused on the problem of shifting the role of Majelis Taklim from dakwah institutions to social institutions of the people by taking a case study on one of the Majelis Taklim in Malang, namely the Al-Madinah Majelis Taklim.

²² Aini Suzana Ariffin, Shadiya Mohamed Saleh Baqutayan, and Akbariah M Mahdzir, "Enhancing Women Entrepreneurship Development Framework: Policy & Institution Gap and Challenges in the Case of Malaysia," *Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy* 6, no. 2 (2020): 22–33.

²³ Uswatun Hasanah and Nurul Fadilah, "Educative And Consultative Role Of Islamic Counselor In Crime-Prone Area for A Harmony In Community," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Jaubari: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Interdisipliner* 7, no. 1 (2022): 14–26.

²⁴ Umdatul Hasanah, *Majelis Taklim Perempuan Dan Perubahan Sosial Pada Masyarakat Perkotaan* (PKBM "Ngudi Ilmu", 2017).

²⁵ Amri Almi, "Pengembangan Masyarakat Melalui Majelis Ta'lim: Studi Di Desa Hilir Timur Kecamatan Rambah Kabupaten Rokan Hulu" (IPB (Bogor Agricultural University), n.d.).

Mely G Tan's article entitled *Women and Empowerment*. This book raises the meaning of empowerment for women, empowerment strategies and approaches to empowering women, as well as the fundamental reasons why women's empowerment education is needed²⁶. The focus of this research is: What is the role of the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in empowering women in Bandar Lampung City? Based on the previous explanation, this research needs to be carried out to analyze the role of the Rahmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in empowering women in Bandar Lampung City.

B. Method

The research uses three approaches at once, namely case studies, narrative studies, and phenomenological studies. The type of case study used in this research is descriptive field research, in which cases found in the field are described narratively by qualitative research guidelines.

The primary data of this research are the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Supplemented with secondary data. Data collection methods used observation, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, data analysis is carried out inductively to conclude.

C. Discussion

Women's empowerment at Rahmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim is carried out through religious lectures and routine recitation activities, recitation and Qasidah competitions, waste recycling skills, social activities, monthly social gathering, tree planting, and women's entrepreneurship.

Routine recitation or the provision of religious lectures is one of the efforts made by the two Majelis Taklim in improving the religious insight and understanding of the congregation's family. As an Islamic dakwah institution as well as a non-governmental

²⁶ Mely G Tan, "Perempuan Dan Pemberdayaan: Makna Fakta, Dalam Smita Noto Susanto Dan E," *Kristi Poerwandari, Perempuan Dan Pemberdayaan, Jakarta: Obor Dan Harian Kompas*, 1997.

organization, it is very natural that religious orientation is very prominent. Religious activities are carried out periodically by inviting Ustadz or Muballiqh to equip the congregation with religious insight and understanding.

Based on the results of an interview with Poppy Yoseva (46 years old), a congregation of Rachmat Hidayat, it is said that this routine recitation is held every month on Monday of the second week. This recitation leads to the development of Islamic teachings for all levels of society, especially mothers who are members of the Majelis Taklim, and aims to foster the morals of mothers to be good and become role models in society.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Surati argues that according to her, the lessons learned while participating in Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim activities are understanding how to educate children so that they become pious and pious children, get halal and blessed sustenance, and certainly for future provision in the afterlife.

Similar to Mrs. Surati, Mrs. Aidawati argues that the material that has been obtained while participating in the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim activities is a lot, including the material on being a pious wife and choosing a good leader according to Islam. Furthermore, she said that hopefully the organization will advance, and the savings and loans will run until now because if the organization advances it will make the spirit of the members of the congregation.

Based on the results of interviews about the routine activities of the two Majelis Taklim in empowering women in the Bumi Waras sub-district of Bandar Lampung city, namely mothers feel happy to be involved in being active in the Majelis Taklim because it can add insight and knowledge, as well as change the social life order to a better life. Through the existence of Majelis Taklim activities in their sub-district, the community, especially mothers, began to have a good understanding of Islam, were able to maintain morals through religious teachings, and an awareness arose in a person to practice the context in everyday life, both about God and with fellow human beings.

In addition to regular recitation activities and board meetings, there are also activities in the form of Religious Tourism which is carried out once a year by the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim. Activities that have Islamic nuances in general are very important to fulfill the needs of the human soul in forming a morally good personality. So that this Majelis Taklim has the opportunity to empower women in solving their problems. Mrs. Susanti as the administrator of the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim had participated in a religious pilgrimage to the tomb of Sunan Kalijaga. In addition to refreshing, the pilgrimage to the graves of the saints is also to strengthen the spirit and remember death and for Wasilah to the Auliya. I have participated in the Religious Tour organized by the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim many times. In addition to knowing the sacred tombs of the saints, I can also find out other areas that have only known the information and have not visited them. He feels happy because there is togetherness and closer communication with fellow Rachmat Hidayat worshipers.

The diversity competition is one of the annual activities in the Majelis Taklim which aims to spread Islam. Hasnia (50 years old), a member of the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim stated, "Members of the Majelis Taklim also actively participate in religious competitions at the sub-district level. The types of competitions at the sub-district level are in the form of recitation and Qosidah tambourine competitions mediated by members of the Majelis Taklim as well as mosque youth who are active in conducting competition activities every Ramadan. The types of competitions that are followed include memorization competitions, Qosidah tambourine, and Tadarus which can be carried out once a year and have been running for 11 years. With this activity, many mothers who are not yet members of the Majelis Taklim are interested and motivated to participate in the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim membership."

Waste recycling skills are one of the activities developed by Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim. Based on the results of an interview with Hajra (49 years old) said, "This waste recycling skill activity is new in the Majelis Taklim and this activity is still being

carried out in one of the assisted Majelis Taklim. The purpose of this activity is to train the creativity and skills of mothers, besides that it is also expected to be able to make a little money to meet their daily needs, by making something that has a selling value such as decorative flowers made from used bottles, or baskets made from the remaining plastic cups. The selling value is not expensive but at least they have something to teach their children.

Furthermore, Putri (48 years old), one of the congregants of the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim, stated that "This waste recycling skill activity is carried out twice a month, every Saturday and Sunday. The women in Sukaraja seaside village have high enthusiasm for learning, especially for this waste recycling skill. What I have taught to the women there is to make a flower display. This handicraft is made from used water bottles, so to produce one fast flower we need approximately 30 used water bottles, then after being washed clean and then painted with attractive colors such as yellow, green, or red. After it is dried in the sun to dry, the resulting flower is usually sold at a price of Rp.60,000.

Social activities in this case are empowerment activities carried out by the Majelis Taklim. This activity is carried out to increase the awareness of members and the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of places of worship such as mosques and the surrounding environment. According to Puji Astuti (48 years old) that "Social activities, in this case, cleaning the mosque and around the complex are indeed scheduled every month, and aim to train the social sensitivity of mothers, especially members of the Majelis Taklim, but the participants who attend this activity rarely meet the expected quota. This is due to their busy schedules. However, it is still endeavored that this activity continues because it is very useful.

Puspita Aulia (52 years old), a congregation of Rachmat Hidayat in Bumi Waras village, said that "The monthly recitation activities have a very positive impact on me because there are many lessons that I get, one of which is that I can overcome existing problems in the family by consulting or asking questions and answers with the speaker who gives the Tausiah. In addition, the

recitation usually mentions dressing. At first, I felt a little uncomfortable because it was not by the recommendations of the Qur'an and hadith, but over time with the various materials provided, I finally became a hobby of collecting Muslim clothing to wear outside the home as well as a real example for my children.

The monthly Arisan (social gathering) activity is one of the activities in the Majelis Taklim which is routinely carried out every month by Rachmat Hidayat. The scheme of this monthly social gathering activity is a place to stay in touch and exchange information. In general, the implementation is well coordinated. Active participants in this activity are members of the Majelis Taklim and this activity is not coercive for members. This activity is in the form of social gathering money, namely by collecting Rp50,000 every month, and 5% of the social gathering results are included in the Majelis Taklim treasury used for urgent activities. For members who get their turn to receive social gathering money, it can be used to cover urgent needs or in everyday life.

Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim once organized mangrove nurseries for the South and West Teluk Betung areas. The distribution of mangrove seedlings was carried out free of charge to the community and fishermen, while those who planted the mangroves were the congregation of the Majelis Taklim assisted by the local community. This program is in collaboration with the Environmental Agency of Bandar Lampung City to implement the greening program for the coastal area of Teluk Betung Beach in Bandar Lampung City. The Bandar Lampung City Environmental Agency has a Climate Resilience and Beach Cleanup program in which the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in particular participated in this activity together with the mayor and related agencies.

Developing women's entrepreneurship to improve family economic resilience through gender-responsive home industry development²⁷. The main efforts of empowering women

²⁷ K P Sudheer, Sreelakshmi K Unni, and Ann Annie Shaju, "Gender Responsive Agribusiness Development: An Indian," in *Engendering Agricultural Development* (CRC Press, 2022), 147–74.

entrepreneurs consist of awareness of entrepreneurial potential through counseling and mentoring for young women, housewives, and home industry players²⁸. In addition, training in opportunity utilization (market expansion) and introduction to home industry business opportunities through socialization and joint business group approaches. As well as opening networks and potential markets for products made by women entrepreneurs through promotions and campaigns for the use of home industry products.

There are several economic business activities carried out by its members on a small scale, namely: the food processing industry. According to Eva Dwiana, since 2019 there have been 20 Home Industries in the Teluk Betung Selatan and Bumi Waras areas, the majority of which are dominated by the food and beverage processing industry from local commodities, one of which is fish processing. Fish is a superior commodity that is the main livelihood for residents on the coast of Teluk Betung, but its current condition has not been able to improve their welfare. The fishermen's catch is generally sold directly through an auction process at the Fish Auction Site (TPI) in Sukaraja and Kangkung villages, and also to buyers (agents) who come to this area. Very rarely is the fish processed into other foods to increase added value. The city government's attention to developing skills in fish processing has begun to be optimized to empower residents in this area. Because the fish on the coast can be processed into various forms of varied and productive food. The role of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim, in this case, is to provide business capital assistance to mothers who process food from fish with the aim that mothers earn income in addition to household needs. The forms of economic activities carried out are oriented towards business assistance (trade, business), business capital loans in the field of sewing (sewing machine assistance), fish business capital assistance, vegetable traders, chicken livestock, and selling necessities.

²⁸ Wendy Ming Yen Teoh and Siong Choy Chong, "Towards Strengthening the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in Malaysia," *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 29, no. 7 (September 30, 2014): 432–53, <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-10-2013-0122>.

Five roles of women's empowerment are relevant to be discussed in more detail and in-depth to see how far the roles of the two Majelis Taklim have gone. The five forms of empowerment that have been carried out by Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim are empowerment in the fields of religion, science, economy, and society.

The presence of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim has contributed to the strengthening of Islamic orientation in Bandar Lampung. Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim is oriented towards the issue of religious empowerment of mothers. Empowerment in this religious field is to play an active role in facilitating various activities oriented towards religious values, such as the value of faith, morals, and so on.

Majelis Taklim is often identified with a group of housewives²⁹. Not only because most of the congregation are housewives, but also because the themes of the recitation whose content is delivered are more about strengthening women as mothers who are responsible for domestic affairs. The consequences of being a mother who takes care of children and also a wife who must serve her husband. Majelis Taklim has a role to empower the existence of women in the private (domestic) and public spheres simultaneously. Because so far the existence of women is often ignored in the public sphere. Their presence in the mosque is also ignored. Whereas the role of women is a benchmark for family success. Even the sustainability of the household itself rests on the shoulders of women; together with the husband.

They are equipped with the knowledge of recitation, worship, sharia, halal, haram, and the problem of heaven and hell. But not only that but also equality with men. So that they are aware of their rights, and are required to have critical religious awareness and adequate skills. Women have the right to leave the house, pray in congregation at the mosque, work in the public and political

²⁹ Joanna Botha and Glancina Mokone, "Gender Equality," *Encyclopedia of Law and Development* 8, no. 2 (2021): 95–98, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788117975.00030>.

spheres, or become a leader. Members of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim are well-dressed Muslim women.

They have roles inside and outside the home. They still have to carry out their main function at home. Carrying out the role at home and taking care of the family, husband, and children is part of worship and reward land. As understood from the recitation materials presented. The Majelis Taklim plays a role in providing enlightenment through religious-oriented recitation for the private sphere as well as the public sphere.

Women's empowerment in religious discourse that developed in this Majelis Taklim then gained a place among women in Bandar Lampung. Along with the increasing development of Majelis Taklim in the last ten years. Strengthening the role of women as mothers and wives is reproduced through government policies with the birth of various women's organizations that position women as husband's companions (Koncowingking). Currently, there is a flourishing organization of wives from various professions, such as Dharma Wanita (wives of civil servants), Persit Kartika Chandra (TNI), Bayangkari (Police), and even an association of engineers' wives and others. The direction of the struggle of the women's movement today is also within the framework of strengthening the role of women in the family. The birth of the PKK (Family Welfare Development) movement with its 10 programs is also within the framework of strengthening the female entity as a companion to the husband who is the main support of the family.

Despite having the main duties and responsibilities at home, women can freely enter the public sphere. The women and the congregation of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in Bandar Lampung City showed their performance that was able to change and dismantle the wall into a curtain. The change is in the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of women themselves. They have the same power and ability as men with such ability and hard work women can penetrate boundaries, space, and professions.

In the end, there is no obstacle for women to take part anywhere, both in the domestic and public spheres. As evidenced by the members of the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim; apart

from being housewives, there are also office employees, lecturers, teachers, traders, and even politicians who serve as members of the council, as well as other professions.

Strengthening the scientific field is not only the task of Pesantren and Madrasah. Currently, the teaching of religious sciences is spread through Majelis Taklim through recitation or a regular agenda of religious studies. Here there is a shift in the role and work of Majelis Taklim before and now. The Majelis Taklim was originally known as a court where the educational process took place in the 18th-19th centuries AD. Now Majelis Taklim is parallel to attending public lectures. The Majelis Taklim is a very functional institution to deepen religious knowledge.

Majelis Taklim are like post-school educational institutions because generally women after marriage stop studying because they are busy taking care of the family. This is the situation faced by Suryani Thahir and Tutty Alawiyah, the initiator of the women's Majelis Taklim in Jakarta, or Eva Dwiana in the city of Bandar Lampung who initiated the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim with thousands of members.

Women are required to know to educate their children as well as provisions for themselves. Religious knowledge is the main provision for human life now and later. Through an understanding of religious sciences, mothers are expected to be able to educate their families and become role models for their children, religious knowledge is the basis for building a pious generation. Piety is the basis of family development as a milestone in community development because women are the main pillars of the family. Tutty Alawiyah in Fauzia stated that this pillar must be supported by the foundation of families and communities that have a religious identity and character³⁰.

The Islamic studies developed by Majelis Taklim strengthen the deepening of practical Islamic religious sciences, namely

³⁰ Syifa Fauzia, Dedi Purwana, and Hamidah Lubis, "Leadership Strategic Role of Tutty Alawiyah in Development of Islamic Da'wah Through the Organization of Badan Kontak Majelis Ta'lim in Indonesia," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 9, no. 4 (2022): 124–36.

religious practice in daily life and provision for the afterlife, which is understood in the form of worship. Themes about households and Sakinah families are also highly favored by the congregation. Simple Islamic themes are easy to understand and practice personally and collectively in everyday life, such as matters of worship, from Taharah, prayer, fasting, Zakat Infaq and alms, hajj, and umrah, educating children and taking care of the family and maintaining morals, as well as daily prayers and other practical practices.

Now the existence of Majelis Taklim is very strategic for urban women. The existence of Majelis Taklim is not only the most accessible place to increase religious knowledge for them but also a place for Muslim women to socialize.

This economic orientation is the leading orientation that makes most of the Majelis Taklim congregation actively participate in various activities organized by the Majelis Taklim. This economic motive is indeed impossible to avoid when most of the congregation of the Majelis Taklim is still in a lower-class economic position.

Economic problems are the main problem felt by most members of the Majelis Taklim. Therefore, as a Majelis Taklim engaged in empowerment, Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim inevitably has to program economic activities. The activity programs formulated are mostly charitable, in the form of food aid, rice, sugar, cooking oil, and business capital assistance in the form of money.

With economic assistance, according to Eva Dwiana when interviewed, members gain income and can have an economic impact on the surrounding community. Eva said that the success of the economic program was also widely reported in meetings. She revealed that members of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in several areas of Bandar Lampung city operate cooperatives. There are several forms of cooperatives, both sales and savings and loans. This cooperative, she said, provides benefits for its members. Thus, the cooperative can improve the economic conditions of its members. In addition, said Eva, her party has succeeded in

renovating 36 houses in the Teluk Betung Selatan and Bumi Waras sub-districts and dispatching Umrah pilgrims. According to her, the house renovations were carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Housing. We repaired the unfit houses of Majelis Taklim worshipers by dismantling them and replacing them with new ones through financial assistance of 15 million per unit. Now they can live in a better house than before.

Eva Dwiana said that her party fights for the fate of congregations who need help. On the other hand, they often attend the Quran recitation. Thus, Eva explained, their spiritual development and assistance went hand in hand. Eva also emphasizes to her members to foster family resilience. Members of the Rachmat Hidayat Islamic study group are mothers who can always be an example and can protect their families. She also explained that Rachmat Hidayat members are national assets that need to be developed. They exist in the community and carry out activities for the community as well. According to him, members of the Majelis Taklim hold a lot of potential that can be mobilized to build the nation. This can start from small things, namely educating their families.

Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim also carries out activities in the field of MSMEs. Eva Dwiana said in an interview that the problem of MSMEs in the city of Bandar Lampung, Rachmat Hidayat plays a role in opening access to them, not contributing funds. Because they have their cash, so Rachmat Hidayat does not help them with funds. They have an association or union. Rachmat Hidayat facilitates information and training.

Social orientation such as social services, social visits, and free medical check-ups are common activities carried out by Rachmat Hidayat's Majelis Taklim in Bumi Waras sub-district. Social orientation goes very far into the realm of social participation, and this realm of social participation will in turn give birth to social justice. The main mission of this Majelis Taklim is to realize social justice for its members. Because their programs - even though they still involve a small part of all the citizens of Bandar Lampung - are seen to lead to the realization of social justice.

There has been a major transformation in the meaning and strategic role of Majelis Taklim today. In other words, Rachmat Hidayat's Majelis Taklim is no longer concerned with recitation programs and religious ceremonies. But it has shown a gradual shift towards public activities, namely involving the participation of Muslim women in public spaces and social activities. Its existence in Bandar Lampung City can be said to be a phenomenon that moves simultaneously between two main currents, namely between the domestic space and the public space. The Dakwah and religious recitation activities organized so far are still traditional with the aim of balancing private piety and public piety among the congregation or members of the Majelis Taklim. The profile picture of the Majelis Taklim shows that many of the activities carried out are still traditional, in the sense that they are still dominated by religious ceremonies to strengthen private piety. While public piety is formulated with a variety of activities and activities, such as social activities, distribution of necessities, tree planting, house renovation, mobilization of zakat and Infaq, and women's participation in the public sphere.

The opening of access to information and access to participation for urban women in education and religion so far cannot be separated from the role of Majelis Taklim, both personal and institutional. The role of ulama, religious leaders, and Ustadz through Islamic boarding schools, Madrasahs, recitations, and routine studies in mosques, are all behind the success of the soaring name of Majelis Taklim as one of the most active institutions in proselytizing Islam with a variety of activities. Majelis Taklim is increasingly functional in the eyes of women because it is in these assemblies that women actualize themselves and establish friendships and communication between residents. Not infrequently among the women are different tribes, different regional origins, different economic positions, and different characters and behaviors, but they seem to be united in the forum of Majelis Taklim so that differences do not make them distant but instead get to know each other, greet and be in intimacy (QS al-Hujurat verse 13).

Now the Majelis Taklim has gone further than just a recitation routine to become an institution as desired by Tuty Alawiyah so that the Majelis Taklim becomes a pure community self-help organization. The transformation of the role of Majelis Taklim, which was originally only traditional, is now starting to be more modern and looks very advanced in terms of readiness to carry out long-term socio-economic activities.

The existence of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim is very open, not exclusive, and can be a countervailing force for formal educational institutions and militant Islamic social movements. Rachmat Hidayat is also a vehicle for interaction and communication among city residents, both among members of the recitation congregation and those who are not bound as members of the congregation or sympathizers.

The important thing that is interesting about the phenomenon of Majelis Taklim is their contribution to social empowerment that involves the participation of women at the forefront. Women's groups in Majelis Taklim play an important role not only in broader social movements but also in shaping the social consciousness of the people, especially among middle-class women in Bandar Lampung.

However, some concerns arise. Because the basis and political language used are sourced from the norms of Muslim women, it is not uncommon for the movements and activities carried out by Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim to have conspicuous identity politics. Identity politics is legitimate in the treasures of social sciences, as long as identity politics does not disturb public order and other parties. Eliminating identity politics is not an easy matter, especially for a recent social movement where identity becomes very important in a social organization.

The social capital that has been owned by the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim is seen as social capital that has the potential to empower the Ummah or the development of Islamic society in general. This research emphasizes the role of Majelis Taklim in empowering urban Muslim women, especially in the city of Bandar Lampung. This Majelis Taklim is most active in

socializing and implementing activity programs, both charitable programs (basic food assistance, mask distribution, and business capital assistance) and political activities (women's political education, women's participation, women's political rights, women's reproductive health) and so on.

Using this perspective, sociologically it can be stated that the community in Bandar Lampung city can generally be called a community that is slowly finding its identity and starting to be empowered. They are civil society groups that are organized and have good social communication with fellow worshipers. This is especially true for the majority of women.

The heterogeneous condition of the community is a challenge for Majelis Taklim in carrying out the role of empowering Muslim women. The results of field observations show that the focus of the activities of these two Majelis Taklim is to solve women's empowerment problems and open social and economic spaces for the women of Bandar Lampung city to be empowered and have a bargaining position before the government and entrepreneurs.

The greatest contribution of these two Majelis Taklim lies in their role as developers of the public role of Muslim women in urban areas, involving women in various domains, both social, economic, and access to non-formal education. The involvement of women in the public sphere can no longer be avoided and rejected because the demands of the times also require women to be involved in an equal manner with men. Including activities to prosper or enliven the mosque, where so far there is an assumption that only men deserve to enliven and prosper the mosque. The al-Furqon mosque in Bandar Lampung is always crowded with women's activities coordinated by Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in a monthly grand recitation involving thousands of women. The al-Furqon mosque is a strong symbol of women's presence in the mosque. This is referred to by one of the congregants of Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim as women prospering the mosque; namely praying in congregation at the mosque and attending lectures or recitations, where so far most mosques are limited to congregational prayers for men.

This field finding rejects the dichotomy that women's Majelis Taklim are usually based in Madrasahs, while men's are based in Mosques. This dichotomy reinforces stereotypes by perpetuating the understanding that women are not free to enter the mosque due to their menstrual period where there is an assumption that menstruating women cannot enter the mosque. The mosque is still identified as a place for men to pray in congregation, while women pray at home.

In addition to this reason, another reason is to follow the example of some women who have become national leaders. The phenomenon of more and more female regional leaders in Indonesia indicates that the relationship between women and politics is increasingly difficult to reject. Rejecting the existence of women as political leaders on religious grounds is no longer relevant because reality shows otherwise. In fact, according to Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Muslim women can become leaders of anything, including becoming president, and this is legal and not haram.

Furthermore, Eva Diwana emphasized in an interview that the duties and responsibilities of the administrators of the Rachmat Hidayat Islamic gathering in Bandar Lampung city are quite heavy, namely how the members of the congregation are empowered, participate, and can access the budget that is intended for the community. Social access means that women can participate in the development process of Bandar Lampung city. Economically, women will be able to enjoy the cake of economic development, mental-spiritual development, and social and cultural development. Currently, there is a strong participation of women in the religious, social, and economic fields.

One of the goals of women's empowerment is to build a community structure that facilitates the democratic participation of women in decision-making. This requires the establishment of processes that enable women to have access to resources and control resources and power structures in society.

Meanwhile, the essence of women's empowerment means providing resources, opportunities, knowledge, and skills to

improve women's ability to determine their future and participate fully in the life of their community. Women's empowerment is a development process where the community takes the initiative to start a process of social activities to improve their situation and conditions. Empowerment can only happen if the people are empowered.

The principle of empowering Muslim women has always been an effort to free Muslims from shackles, poverty, ignorance, from weakness, to become strong and resilient Muslims. Khadijah has proven that if women are active and try hard, then they can become economically and business-empowered women. Women's economic empowerment in Islam has started since the time of the Prophet's wife. Khadijah became a role model for many in the field of women's economic management and empowerment. So, women can become successful and empowered if given the opportunity and freedom to manage resources. Khadijah has proven that when she has the opportunity to trade, there is access in the economic field she manages, there is opportunity and time and is not hindered by society, then women can play an active role in mobilizing the people's economy. This has been done by Khadijah and the Prophet Muhammad so that his family is known to be successful in managing the Islamic economy.

This research seeks to identify that the changes that have taken place at the Majelis Taklim level have had major implications, namely an increase in the bargaining position of women within the family, within the community, and with the government at the sub-district and district levels. Members of the Majelis Taklim are not underestimated by people in the community, nor are they respected and served when taking care of needs at the sub-district and even district levels. This is the result of the empowerment role carried out by the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim in Bandar Lampung city.

D. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the researcher can conclude that the Rachmat Hidayat Majelis Taklim has succeeded in encouraging women's participation in religious, economic, and

social fields. Majelis Taklim Racmat Hidayat has become a transformative forum for the women's movement in Bandar Lampung city.

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