

THE ISLAMIC WOMEN MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL WELFARE IN INDONESIA: A STUDY ON WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION 'AISYIYAH' IN MALANG REGENCY, EAST JAVA - INDONESIA

Oman Sukmana^{1*}

¹ Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Muhammadiyah University of Malang, Jl. Raya Tlogomas No.246, Malang, East Java 65152, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: oman@umm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Aisyiyah is an organization of Islamic women's social movements aimed at improving the social welfare of women in Indonesia. The organization has spread throughout the country at national, provincial, district /city, sub-district, and village levels. This study was undertaken on Aisyiyah of Malang Regency to describe the types of activity performed by the organization and the implementation of the Islamic values in improving the women social welfare. A qualitative research approach was adopted and the data were collected from the interview, documentation, records, and other archival materials available in the organization management office. The results showed that the activities of Aisyiyah organizations at the local level were manifested in the form of various business charities, including (1) Sub-sub-recipient community TB-care; (2) Kindergarten teachers association; (3) Zakat, infaq, and shadaqah institute; (4) Economic Business-Cooperative; and (5) Junior high boarding school. The Islamic values underlying the spirit of the movement were the values contained in the Al-Quran, surah of Al-Maun regarding the obligation of Muslims to care for orphans and the poor.

Keywords: *Islamic women movement, social welfare, healthcare, education, Islamic values*

INTRODUCTION

Aisyiyah is a *Muhammadiyah* women's organization established in response to the importance of women role in the social sphere context. *Muhammadiyah* is a large Islamic organization in Indonesia, which is an organization of Islamic movement that implements *da'wah amarna' rufnahimunkar* with the aim of upholding Islam, so as to realize the true Islamic society. *Muhammadiyah* believes that Islamic religion concerns all aspects of life that includes faith (aqidah), worship, morality, and *muamalah* worldliness which is a unified whole and must be implemented in individual life and collective.

Aisyiyah mission is manifested in the form of business charities, programs, and activities, including (1) Inculcating beliefs, deepening and expanding understanding, enhancing practice and disseminating the principle of Islam in all aspects of life; (2) Increasing the dignity of women in accordance with Islamic principles; (3) Improving the quality and quantity of Islamic studies; (4) Reinforcing the faith, strengthening of worship, and enhancing morals; (5) Increasing the spirit of worship, *jihad*, *zakat*, *infaq*, *shodaqah*, *wakaf*, grants, building and maintaining places of worship and other business charity; (6) Fostering the Muhammadiyah women's youth force to be the pioneer, direct and perfect movement of Aisyiyah movement; (7) Improving education, developing culture, expanding science and technology, as well as stimulating research; (8) Promoting the economy and entrepreneurship towards improved quality of life; (9) Promoting and developing activities in the social, public welfare, health and environmental sectors; (10) Promoting and seeking law enforcement, justice and truth, and fostering the spirit of national unity; (11) Improving communication, *ukhuwah*, cooperation in various fields and society both domestic and foreign; and (12) Other endeavors appropriate to the purpose and objectives of the organization.

Aisyiyah is an autonomous women organization of Muhammadiyah and works in all provinces in Indonesia. It has developed a networking level from the central, regional, branch and sub-branch. Currently, there are 33 regional organization (provincial level), 370 Aisyiyah Sub-regional organization (Regency level), 2,332 Aisyiyah branch organization (Sub-District level) and 6,924 Aisyiyah sub-branch organization (village level). As a women's organization, Aisyiyah has already experienced in contributing to the advancement of Indonesian women in various fields of life, like in the fields of education, health, economics, social welfare, legal awareness, political education, and women's empowerment.

According to Macionis (1999), social movements are organized activities aimed to encourage or discourages social change. From the definition of social movement as proposed Macionis, it can be underlined two main features of the social movement, namely: the existence of organized activities and the purpose associated with a social change. In line with Macionis, Spencer (1982) stated that what is meant by social movement is a collective effort aimed at a change of the new order of life. The main characteristic of Spencer's view is the collective effort is directed to a change in a better order of the existing order.

While Locher (2002) argues that when a group of people organizes themselves in an attempt to encourage or reject some kind of social change, they are creating a social movement. People with little or much political power, join together to get some things, namely a social change. Furthermore, Greene (2002) stated that a social movement is a form of collective behavior that lasts long enough, structured, and rational. Some characteristics of social movements include: (1) a number of people, (2) general aims to support or prevent a social change, (3) the existence of structures with generally recognized leadership, and (4) the existence of activities maintained sufficiently on a long time.

Assessing the organization of social movements is very important because social movements are collective behavior that is organized (Sukmana, 2016). As one of the Aisyiyah organizations at the regional level, the Aisyiyah Regional Organization (ARO) of Malang Regency has the same objective as the Aisyiyah organization at the national level, which is to carry out various activities as part of the social welfare movement. Objectives of this study were to describe: (1) the activity of ARO of Malang Regency as an organization of Islamic women social welfare movement; and (2) the spirit of the Islamic values underlying ARO of Malang Regency as an organization of Islamic women's social welfare movement?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was typically a qualitative research. As Denzin and Lincoln (2009) have suggested that qualitative words imply an emphasis on the processes and meanings and not studied strictly or measurable in terms of quantity, intensity, or frequency. Marvasti (2004) noted that qualitative research provides a detailed explanation and analysis of the quality, or substance, of human experience. The data collection was conducted through interview and documentation. The data analysis was performed through the stages of qualitative data process as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (verification), in simultaneous and interactive fashions. The subjects were chosen purposively by the leader of ARO of Malang Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aisyiyah activities as the organization of Islamic women's social welfare movement

Based on the organizational structure, ARO of Malang Regency is part of Aisyiyah central organization for serving the region. Based on historical records, ARO of Malang Regency was founded on 18 October 18 1971, but formally it was approved by the Central Aisyiyah Organization on 9 February 1989 with the Letter of Authentication No. 422 / PPA / A / II / 1989.

Spirit of Islamic values underlying the activities of Aisyiyah Social Movement of Malang Regency

A social movement will be based on values as the spirit of motion action. The value of the spirit of Aisyiyah social movements is to refer to the verses contained in Surah Al-Ma'un of the Holy Qur'an. Surah Al-Ma'un is short, the verse is not much only about seven verses, but its meaning is very deep because it is able to provide inspirations to give birth to a collective consciousness, namely awareness of the social reality that lame.

Surat al-Maun opened with a question, or more precisely a satire, "*Do you know the liars of religion?*" The phrase used by the Qur'an feels very striking, i.e. "the liars of religion". The "*liars of religion*" are addressed to the person who rebukes the orphan and the person who refuses to feed the poor. This means that if a person feels hatred for orphans because of his faith, he denies religion.

Islam respects equality or egalitarianism and rejects socio-economic stratification by marginalizing the poor and orphans in a stratified social system. These concepts imply that the vision of Islam is a vision of humanity to be translated into a real charity. By neglecting the needy poor and prioritizing individualism, a person has violated the vision of humanity. Religion is not only vertical, confined and imprisoned in the mosque. Religion is liberating and enlightening humanity.

The fourth verse of Al-Ma'un says "*Woe to those who pray!*" This verse refers to those who pray physically but they don't care about the spiritual requirements of the prayer. There are three indicators of an unfortunate person, namely: those who are negligent in their prayers, those who do *riya'*, and those who refuse to give help. Those who do *riya'* means to call their sincere intentions to something that is not to Allah. Prayer in this framework is only an image for power or for worldly charity. Moreover, refusing to give help is another form of injustice. People who deny religion will always avoid the help. Giving help is a form of humanity, then refusing to give help and let others in trouble then means against the essence of humanity. *Riya'* is a symbol of lie and falsehood while refusing to give help is a symbol of individualism and tyranny. These two attributes are reflections of religious liars.

The meaning of verses containing in Surah Al-Ma'un symbolizes the encounter between social dimension and religious ritual. This shows that religion is essentially transformative, embodied in all aspects of real life. Practicing the letter of al-Ma'un is not just memorizing or reading the verse but, practicing means the letter of Al-Ma'un in the form of real deeds. So look for the orphans, take them home, give them soap for baths, proper clothes, eat and drink, and give them a decent place to live.

CONCLUSION

Aisyiyah is a Muhammadiyah women's social movement organization founded in response to the importance of women in the social sphere. Aisyiyah is a women's organization of Muhammadiyah organization, is an Islamic movement for *da'wah a marmakrufnahimunkar and tajdid* based on Islam and sourced to the Qur'an and As-Sunnah. Organically, Aisyiyah has the structure and the network of organizational starting from the central, region, district, and branch level. Aisyiyah organization currently has 33 regional organizations (provincial level), 370 Sub-regional organizations (Regency level), 2,332 branch organizations (Sub-District level) and 6,924 sub-branch organizations (village level) The Aisyiyah region organization (ARO) of Malang Regency is part of the central of Aisyiyah organization level. In general, ARO of Malang regency and Aisyiyah central organization, have 3 main characters that give style at every step of its movement. Firstly, as a women's social movement organization, Aisyiyah is engaged in improving the dignity and awareness of Indonesian women in developing countries and nations. Secondly, as an organization of Islamic social movements, Aisyiyah upholds and realizes Islamic values, especially regarding women to create a family and community welfare. Thirdly, taking into account various aspects of life in which the Aisyiyah movement touches and pays attention to various aspects of life in a society which includes religious, educational, health, social, economic, legal and human rights aspects. The business charity activities owned by ARO of Malang regency cover: (1) Aisyiyah Sub-Sub-Recipient Community TB-Care (SSR Community TB-Care); (2) ABA of Kindergarten Teachers Association; (3) the Aisyiyah Institute for Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqah; (4) Aisyiyah Economic Business-Cooperative *AS-Sakinah*; and (5) Junior High School of Aisyiyah Boarding School Malang (ABSM). The value of the spirit of social movement Aisyiyah organization is referring to the verses contained in the surah of Al-Ma'un of Al-Quran. The core value of Surah Al-Maun is a duty for humans to pay attention to orphans and help improve the welfare of the needy poor with sincerity.

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