1. **Preface**

Understanding on the importance of education for women in its development has shifted and limited. Women do not become so important to get education priority. Several causing factors come to be the basic for ignorance to get education rights for women. One surprisingly aspect is more limited education opportunity for women and it is intentionally limited by *fiqh* or *syariah* that is so dominant to Islam education institutions. This article tried to give comparison description of attaining women education rights in the past and for nowadays.

1. **Women In Islamic Education History**

Islam attention toward women is not limited on how the women should be treated, but it is continued on attention toward her advance education. Islam support education for Muslim women.

In education world of first Islam period, especially in Prophet Era, there is similarity in chance to have knowledge; there is no discrimination between men and women. It can be proven from *asbab al-nuzul* a verse or *asbab al-wurud hadist* that is preceded by many problems that is proposed to Rasulullah. Women are not unwilling to directly ask and present their problems to Rasulullah, even in its explanation, the prophet wife had role to explain problems in relation to women that the women would be ashamed if it is explain by Rasulullah. Therefore, women involved actively in the process of teaching learning process, which is at that time there is no formal education.[[1]](#footnote-1)

It is generally known the great role played by wife of Prophet PBUH also women friends in every parts of life, especially in transmitting the Prophet hadist that His name carved in the history of Islam civilization history. At that time, there is no knowledge classification – as what happen in era after that, moreover knowledge dichotomy – therefore, a figure could be a concern for not mentioning to master all fields at once. What can be regarded as example is Ummul Mukminin, Aisyah, Rasulullah’s wife, she is not only master all fields of hadist but also master tafsir and fiqh.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In the next era, it was not found history data that mention the existence of chance and condition to fully support learning process as what happen in the first period. Nevertheless, it doesn’t mean that there is not women figure that exist and master knowledge in several fields. Fields with attention from women figures, they are fiqh, tafsir, hadist, and tassawuf, also other fields like poem, *'ilmu al-thibb* (science of medicine), calligraphy, and so forth.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Nevertheless, it doesn’t mean that women education history, especially in relation with the figures, was not covered at all in history data. There are sources that can give history data; they are biography dictionaries. Ruth Roded[[4]](#footnote-4), for example, in his study he arrange 38 biographic collection books of Islam that includes women names. Studied biography books are works of Ibn Sa'ad (230 H./845 M.).[[5]](#footnote-5) In the book of *Thabagat,* stated 629 women of 4250 entries he arranged. It means only 15 % of all entries he wrote. Ibn Sa'ad was included in figure that had entry a lot of women in his biography collection than other biographic writers. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (463 H./1070 M.), for instance, only stated 31 women name of 7800 entries he arranged. It means that less than 1 % of all number of figures is written. Meanwhile, Ibn 'Asakir (571 H./1176 M.) was only stated 200 names of women in 13.500 entries he arranged. Then, Fariduddin al-Attar (628 H./1230 M.)[[6]](#footnote-6), in his popular work of *Tadzkirah al-Auliya'* only stated a name of 72 philosophers who are written their biography, it is Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah (w. 185 H.). Ibn Khalikan (681 H./1282 M.) includes 6 women figures in 826 entries that he wrote (less than 1%). Jami (898 H./1492 M.) includes 35 women names of 564 entries he arranged. Al-Sakhawi (902 H./ 1497 M.) wrote 1075 women entries of 11.691 of all entries he arranged (9 %) between year of 700 and 1800 in *Daw al-Lami*.[[7]](#footnote-7) Al-Ghazzi (1061 H./1651 M.) was only arranged 12 women names of 1647 name in his biographic collection.[[8]](#footnote-8) Recently, the scholar of Mohammad Akram Nadwi, the researcher of Islamic Center of Oxford, had written 40 volumes on *muḥaddithāt* (woman hadist ulama), and found at least 8.000 of them.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In around 750, during Abbasiyah leadership, women are recognized by their brain and beauty.[[10]](#footnote-10) Specifically, there are famous women at that time because they had training in music, dance and poem since they were a girl. Mahbuba is one of them. The other feminism figure that should be remember for her achievement is Tawaddud, a slave who bought on high price by Harun al-Rasyid because of her proved cleverness by the elder ulama in astronomy, medicine, law, philosophy, music, history, Arab grammar, literary, theology and chess.[[11]](#footnote-11) Moreover, one of outstanding feminism figures is Shuhda who was known as educated smart clever that is being pride for mostly women (*pride of women*) during 12th century in Baghdad although the confession on women talent in Abbasiyah ended in line with the smash of Baghdad by Mongol group in 1258.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Women played important role in founding many Islamic education institutions, as Fatima al-Fihri the founder of Al Karaouine University in 859. It continued to Ayyubiyah dynasty in 12 and 13 century when 160 mosques and Islamic schools built in Damaskus, 26 of them funded by women through *waqf* (*charitable trust*) systems. Half of all kingdom customers for these institutions are also women.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Ulama Sunni, Ibnu Asakir in 12th century stated that there is change for women education in Islam in the middle century; he confirmed that women can study, obtain academic degree and fulfill the requirement as ulama and teachers. It is particularly aimed for family that wants to ensure the probability of their children highest education. Ibnu Asakir himself had studied under 80 different women teachers in his era.[[14]](#footnote-14) It explains the important role of women in education, whether as students or even educators.

1. **Marginalization of women education**

What had been outlined in education history, in fact, contradict with what had happen in the past and in nowadays. The history note that contains educational achievement for women is like ignored in many Islam countries. What we had today is the fact that women education often got no attention.

Cliché statement that what had been mentioned is not generality. For women, study is not more and only limited on attending Islam discussion in mosque, islam school or other places like *majlis ta’lim*. For example, women participations in *majālis al-hikmah* in Fatimiyah leadership as noted by many historian including Ibn al-Tuwayr and al-Muṣabbiḥī.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Even there were no law limitation in women education; several people were disagree on this practice, like Muhammad ibn al-Hajj (w. 1336) who was surprised to see behavior of several women that informally follow lecturer only for being listener in their time:

*"Consider what had been done by women during in gathering with sheikh for listening book discussion. At that time, women also attend to listen. Men sit in a place and women confront them. Moreover, there would be women brought into situation, one of them would be stand up and sit, and shouted. Besides, their aurat will be shown up. In her home, appearance of aurat is forbidden. How it can be allowed in mosque in front of men "?*

The term of aurat often translated as what is impolite which is generally meant by whatever could be seen except women face and palms, even scientific interpretation of aurat and jilbab always tend to be variety with more or less tight than the others.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Yet, the reason of unusual education for women is not withdrawing efforts demand for education reformation. Education reformation continued in line with education expansion a la Western.

The ninth century education reformation is social transition period (*period of sweeping social*), economy and politic transition resulted from hidden occurrence in different level within Ottoman emperor from Mashriq, Suriah to Maghrib, North Afrika. This tendency is mostly caused by the increment of Europe presence and the spread of their secular-modernity ideas. In society level, the arrival of Christian missionary supported by Europe and America government caused the establishment of formal education system for women who had come till this period accepting a little or even none of education. In the beginning, taking private institution recruited rich family and most of Christian. Yet, because these schools is more being accepted in social and affordable, the ideas comes to middle class before finally reach poor society. Thereby, the new norm becomes more general, ideas that women must accepted education that she is able to realize better marriage expectation and more important, to give sufficient education facilities for her children.[[17]](#footnote-17)

In this point, even there are several courses to limited women but women take this opportunity for learning, and shows strong will and amazing conviction. In the middle of this century, awareness and obligation toward intellectual and social awareness, especially appreciation to women suffering and struggle to participate in society is being more real.[[18]](#footnote-18) An important example of Western missionary contribution to increase educational opportunity for women is the work of Daniel and Abby Maria Bliss, American couple who moved to Beirut in 1866 and then they built Suriah Protestan College, which furthermore became American University of Beirut. In 1905, nursing program that its application accepted by women founded and in 1924, Faculty of Art and Science open its door for women.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Sound of reformation occurred in Ottoman society to sultanate, and finally echoed in institution level. Ottoman regime, to avoid politic and religious influence threat from Christian missionary schools and because of awareness that imperium cannot expect to live without learning modern natural sciences begin to conduct its own reformation (*tanzhimat*).[[20]](#footnote-20) Yet, even introduced information by sultanate have no influence on emperor courses, in 1850s and 1860s, result of reformation reflected in daily life.[[21]](#footnote-21)

The third flow, it can be regarded as the most important that directs to the existence and the increment of women education in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century because of Europe colonialism and its legacy. Short occupation of Napoleon on Egypt (1798-1801) is relatively unsuccessful. Yet, revolutionary and import ideas in technology and education proves the power of France more durable in Egypt and all North Africa.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Under Muhammad Ali leadership, a fan of France innovation and technology, during his governance interaction and exchange between Egypt and France in culture, academic and scientific was increased.[[23]](#footnote-23) Reformation idea of education and feminism also occur in other place of Arab world. Suriah write and scholar of Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883) in included the first who is advocating women education rights in 1847.[[24]](#footnote-24)

The next two decades in Tunisia, reformist, Ahmed Kheireddine, emphasized the importance of women education in performing household and children nursery.[[25]](#footnote-25) It is small step, but important in women emancipation within society. Advanced in Egypt, after British took over France in Egypt civilization mission[[26]](#footnote-26) they were also give contribution for education reformation of women education. In his work entitle, *Modern Mesir*, Lord Cromer who occupied during almost three years as High Commissioner of Egypt, "*By limiting scope of women interest to very limited world, the sick of intellectuality and the wizened of mental development occurs in one and a half of Muslim countries population*.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

In 1924, when Faculty of Art and Science in American University of Beirut begin to accept application from women,[[28]](#footnote-28) Norm that knowledge is not unconsciousness to defend women and morality[[29]](#footnote-29) that had been implemented. In facing detention and excision from formal education, middle class women handled exclusion and their marginalization from society, and informal learning in literary or learning scope in their family.[[30]](#footnote-30) Besides, women like Mayy Ziyadah and Mary 'Ajami went to continue higher education in Europe, back to found famous review and give unlimited contribution to literary, printed and production scope in Arab world.

Unsupported education for women is not ceased in line with the development of education world, especially in Islam-based countries. In a statement in 2013, [*Organization of Islamic Cooperation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation)note that there are Islam countries limits education opportunity for women[[31]](#footnote-31). UNICEF noted from 24 countries, the number of women participation is less than 60%, 17 of them is Islam countries; more than half of adult population is illiterate in many Islam countries and proportion reach 70% di within Moslem women.[[32]](#footnote-32) The other Ulama claim that Islam countries have gender gap in highest education.[[33]](#footnote-33) In 2012 World Economic Forum, a study on gender gap find 17 of 18 countries have worst performance from total of 135 countries, it is the member of [*Organization of Islamic Cooperation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation)*:* Aljazair, Yordania, Lebanon, Turki, Oman, Mesir, Iran, Mali, Maroko, Pantai Gading, Arab Saudi, Suriah, Chednya, Pakistan and Yaman.[[34]](#footnote-34)

This worst fact should be reference for the important review of education for women. It is recalling Islam education history is never apart from the participation of women figures.

It needs to be recognized that history of women education in Islam is actually inspired by the Prophet wife, Khadijah. Meanwhile, the role of Aisyah and Hafsah who are also other wives explained the same things. The questions are why women education shifted from the beginning which is prioritized and furthermore ignored. Whereas, it is clear mentioned in a hadist how the prophet Muhammad saw praise Madinah women more because of their curiosity on religious knowledge.[[35]](#footnote-35) Then, why does those who understand religious (*fuqahā’*) try to be hypocrite on women education because of innate character problem and aurat appearance.

1. **Women in Islamic Education Problem**

If it is compared with women education listed in history data, women involvement in education in Islam countries seems not as phenomenal as women education achievement in the past. More opinion or considering most important of men than women indicates that there is specialty.

The specialty may be the result of aware knowledge or from social pattern that makes the correlation between Islamic scholar: men and women is more problematic. It is in line with what is stated by Laila that conservation of Sassan Persia tradition in Abbasiyah society creates limited situation for women movement.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Family bound also has influence on women education, especially on the history of the women. Blood relation makes women had opportunity for learning. According to al-Sakhawi, as it is restudied and re-explained by Ruth Roded, that 20 % of women learn from male teachers that is the family member, 15 % of them study from female teachers who also have family relation. On the other part, it is mentioned that 35 % of women learning only from male teachers that is their family, and there is 88 % of women educated specially by their own family.[[37]](#footnote-37)

It explained the limitation of education achievement for women that is not as free as men to have education. The limitation on having education goes on in line with the opinion of unusual education for women that is limited by sexism problem in women.

Without mentioning interpretation of Ulama toward verses in al-Qur'an which said that men are women leaders (Q.S. al-Nisa': 38) is more making women position marginalized. Language used in Al-Qur'an verses in textual is more support men than women that it causes women have no profit, especially in educational scope.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Women marginalization in Islam history created because of two things. First, tribalism spirit of Arab that regrowth after the prophet passed away. Second, the comprehension of religious tenet that is in line with women far from its historical correlation. By tighter language, Mernissi regarded that backwardness of Islam women is historical deviation conducted by Islam masters after the Prophet passed away.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Economy problem is also being the factor of women education is only limited on middle to high classes. To obtain education with specific mastery, it is needed high price to have long journey to several areas that are regarded as the center of knowledge. Having study to many sheikhs also needed financial in not few numbers. It is harder because there is fiqh understanding that obligates women accompanied by her muhrim when they go everywhere which is of course adding the educational fee itself.[[40]](#footnote-40)

1. **Conclusion**

Education and women are being inseparable factors. Adagium of *al-um madrasatun* support the important role of women in education. The involvement of the Prophet wives whether as inspiratory or educators show the truth of the important role.

Not in the same manner as women education in the beginning of Islam era, in the Prophet era, it is clear listed in Islam history where the same opportunity in education between women and men is facilitated and obtain justification from the Prophet. Along with the end of Islam glory era till nowadays, the opportunity of women education is more limited and intentionally limited by *fiqh* or *syariah* legality that is very dominant toward Islam education institutions. Meanwhile, fiqh understanding toward women at that time and in the present is still practiced to nowadays; it makes women movement in obtaining education to be less and limited.

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