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ISLAM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) GENDER EQUALITY IN PERSPECTIVE OF NASARUDDIN UMAR AND MUSDAH MULIA

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Abstract:
This research explores the concept of gender equality through the lens of two prominent Indonesian Islamic thinkers—Nasaruddin Umar and Musdah Mulia—framed within the context of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality). Employing a qualitative, comparative literature-based methodology with a hermeneutic approach, the study analyzes primary sources authored by both figures alongside secondary literature on gender and SDGs. Findings indicate both thinkers agree that the Qur'an recognizes distinctions between men and women without condoning discrimination. They both cite foundational verses (e.g., QS 49:13, 16:97) to argue that gender equality is a core Islamic value, supporting the notion that differences should foster harmony, not hierarchy. However, Nasaruddin's work contributes an in-depth analysis of ten interpretive biases rooted in linguistic and cultural factors, while Musdah emphasizes monotheism (tawhid) as the foundation of equality and critiques patriarchal misinterpretations. This study contributes a novel perspective by connecting Islamic gender ethics with the global SDG agenda, particularly within Muslim-majority societies. It argues that contextual reinterpretation of religious texts and alignment with universal development goals can foster inclusive and equitable social transformation. Thus, the research presents a culturally adaptive model to support SDG 5 through Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *Al-Quran, Gender, Perspective, Sustainable*

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of 17 global objectives established by the UN as a developmental agenda aimed at attaining peace and prosperity for humankind and the planet both now and in the future. The SDGs were collectively launched by nations through governments in a UN resolution dated 21 October 2015, serving as a development goal until 2030, which includes; 1. No Poverty; 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and Well-being; 4. Quality Education; 5. Gender Equality; 6. Clean Water and Sanitation; 7. Affordable and Clean Energy; 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth; 9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; 10. Reduced Inequalities; 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities; 12. Responsible Consumption and Production; 13. Climate Action; 14. Life Below Water; 15. Life on Land; 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; and 17. Partnership for the Goals. The 17 SDGs are further subdivided into 169 targets accompanied by 251 indicators used to assess progress towards their achievement. Indonesia has established the "SDGs Roadmap Towards 2030" published by the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional/ Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional) in 2019.

As stated by UN Women, an organization of the United Nations focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women, gender equality is essential for fulfilling the transformative vision of the

2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, and any failure to attain this will impact the success of other SDGs, as illustrated in Figure 1.

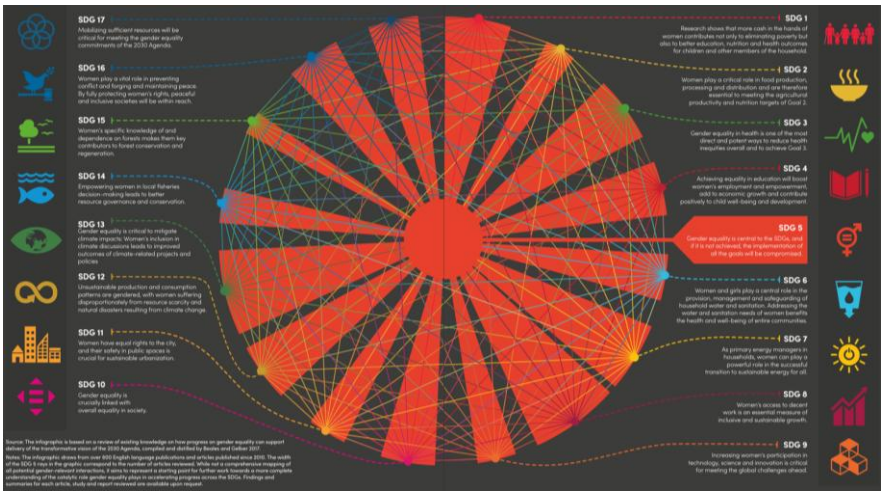


Figure 1. Gender Equality is Key to Realizing the Transformative Vision 2030

SDGs No. 5 Gender Equality establishes 9 targets and 14 indicators to be accomplished by 2030. According to the UN General Assembly Economic and Social Council, the status of gender equality in 2024 indicates 20% on-track, 60% moderate to marginal progress, and 20% stagnation to regression, as illustrated in Figure 2.

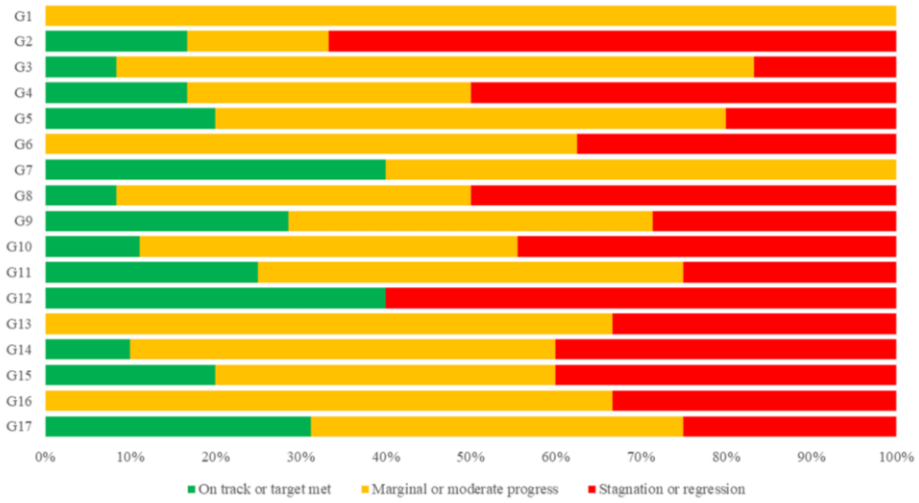


Figure 2. SDGs achievement

The advancement is evidently off-track. While harmful practices like child marriage are decreasing, the pace is insufficient to match population growth; women's involvement in public life and leadership positions remains significantly lacking, many women continue to have minimal control over their sexual and reproductive health, and violence against women persists. At the current pace of advancement, it would require 300 years to eliminate underage marriage, 286 years for legal protection and the eradication of discrimination, and 140 years to reach equality for women's leadership in the workplace. The UN evaluates that immediate action is necessary to confront biased social norms, eradicate harmful practices, and amend discriminatory laws. Promoting women's leadership roles and

investing in gender equality is vital at national, regional, and global scales (Andini et al., 2024; Firdayanti et al., 2024; Islami, 2022; Kodir, 2019; Sudirman & Susilawaty, 2022).

Indonesia is positioned 78th among 166 countries with an SDG Index Score of 69. 43, reflecting a division of 40% on-track, 36% limited progress, and 24% worsening. The situation regarding Gender Equality in Indonesia is viewed as still facing quite serious challenges (significant challenges persist) but exhibits a moderate trend of positive improvement, though it is insufficient to meet the 2030 target. The achievement indicators represented by four (4) parameters demonstrate varying degrees of success:

1. The use of modern methods in family planning, which was initially considered challenging (<80%), is considered to have increased well (on-track, currently >80%).
2. Equality in education for women compared to men is still considered challenging (<90%) and the increase is considered insufficient to achieve the target (marginal progress).
3. Equality of employment opportunities for women is still not good (<60%) and the increase is considered insufficient to achieve the target (marginal progress)
4. Women's representation in parliament is considered very challenging (<10%) and is considered to have not shown any significant improvement (stagnation).

Indonesian Islamic Scientists and Researchers perform studies and communicate ideas and opinions on gender equality, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Gender Equality Research in Indonesia

No	Title	Author	Form	Year
1	The Gender Equality Arguments of Nasaruddin Umar	Neny Muthi'atul Awwaliyah	Article	2020
2	Esoterisme Pemikiran Gender Nasaruddin Umar	Muhammad Rusydi	Article	2019
3	Kesetaraan Gender dalam Pandangan Musdah Mulia	Hisny Fajrussalam, Kana Febriani, Muslimah Apriliya	Article	2023
4	Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab dan Nasaruddin Umar	Shofyan Hadi	Thesis	2023
5	Konsep Nusyuz Dalam Kompilasi Hukum Islam Menurut Siti Musdah Mulia (Perspektif Kesetaraan Gender)	Bella Munita Sary	Thesis	2022
6	Pemikiran Hamka dan Nasaruddin Umar Tentang Perempuan dalam Kesetaraan Gender	Nurhasanah	Article	2020
7	Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Ahmad Syafii Maarif Sebagai Upaya Mengkontekstualisasikan Ajaran Islam di Indonesia (Reintrepretasi atas QS. An-Nisa:34)	Muhammad Alwi HS	Article	2021
8	Upaya Kesetaraan Gender dalam Pemikiran K.H. Husein Muhammad	Mochamad Ziaul Haq, Audrey Diva Azzahra Arief, Lathifah Mumtazah, R.F. Bhanu Viktorahadi	Article	2023
9	Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Fikih Perempuan Perspektid Maqas Id Jasser Auda	Mohammad Lukman Chakim, Muhammad Habib Adi Putra	Article	2022
10	Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDGs) : Suatu Review Literatur Sistematis	Faturachman Alputra Sudirman, Fera Try Susilawaty	Article	2022
11	Konsep Kesetaraan Gender	Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir	Article	2019
12	dalam Islam	Ami Syadila Sipayung	Article	2023
13	Pendidikan Kesetaraan Gender dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Analisis Pendekatan Library Research	Sayyaf Nasrul Islami	Article	2022

No	Title	Author	Form	Year
14	Hermeneutika Feminis Terhadap Wacana Kesetaraan Gender: Sebuah Studi Literatur	Novia Firdayanti, Triono Ali Mustofa1, Nur Saadah Hamisan Khair	Article	2024
15	Gender Equality in the Perspective of the Qur'an	Diong Andini, Nirwan Syafrin1, M. Dahlan R	Article	2024

According to Hadi (2023), Quraish Shihab has a vision in discussing gender by placing women in a concept of gender equality. One of the focuses highlighted is the position of women in obtaining rights in the form of education, political rights, and equal rights to men as a form of humanism. From Nurhasanah's research, it was conveyed that Hamka paid close attention to women's rights and obligations without distinguishing between social statuses, thus changing the understanding of old biased theology into new biased theology that pays attention to women's rights and fate, both in domestic and public spaces. In his research, Muhammad Alwi HS stated that Ahmad Syafii Maarif tried to understand the spirit of equality in Islamic teachings, including for women, which was proven by conducting a re-examination (reinterpretation) of QS An-Nisa: 34. Research by Mochamad Ziaul Haq, Audrey Diva Azzahra Arief, Lathifah Mumtazah, R.F. Bhanu Viktorahadi conveyed that Husein Muhammad tried to make Indonesian society aware of the importance of gender equality based on the teachings of monotheism, and the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith in producing fiqh law as the basis for arguments in building gender equality. In the research of Mohammad Lukman Chakim, Muhammad Habib Adi Putra stated that gender equality in women's jurisprudence is not a counter to the gender bias editorial found in classical jurisprudence. Gender equality in women's jurisprudence in the perspective of the Jasser Auda system is in accordance with Islamic law. Faturachman Alputra Sudirman, Fera Try Susilawaty in her research stated that women's empowerment will help the country achieve UN-SDGs including poverty reduction, economic growth and increasing competitiveness and participation in economic activities. Taufan Anggoro in his research on the book Qirâ'ah Mubâdalah: Progressive Interpretation for Gender Justice in Islam by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, said that the book presents a comprehensive method in interpreting the text of the Qur'an and hadith, especially around the issue of relations between men and women. Based on her research, Ami Syadila Sipayung concluded that gender equality is an Islamic value that applies universally so that discriminatory actions in any form cannot be justified, religion is truly intended for the welfare of all humanity without regard to differences in any form. According to Sayyaf Nasrul Islami, the concept of equality is basically difficult to find in Islamic science, but Islam is more familiar with the term justice. The author finds the inaccuracy of using feminist hermeneutic interpretation in interpreting the Qur'an and hadith. Through research on the book 'Imra'tuna fi'il Shari'a Walmujtama' by Tahar Haddad, Diong Andini, Nirwan Syafrin, M. Dahlan R. convey Tahar Haddad's thoughts which offer solutions to eliminate all inequalities so that women and men are equal in any field. The issues discussed include women's freedom, women's inheritance rights, marriage, polygamy, divorce, hijab and women's education.

This research aims to determine the concept of gender equality thinking from the perspective of Nasaruddin Umar and Musdah Mulia along with their comparison, its similarities and uniqueness of their views, and to understand the correlation between the basic principles of Islam in realizing SDGs. This study presents a distinctive novelty by employing a comparative hermeneutic approach that directly contrasts the views of two contemporary Islamic scholars—Nasaruddin Umar and Musdah Mulia—on gender equality, unlike previous studies that focused on only one Awwaliyah (2020) on Umar or Fajrussalam et al. (2023) on Mulia). It explicitly connects Islamic gender thought with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), an angle not thoroughly explored in prior research such as that by Chakim & Putra (2022), which concentrated on maqashid shariah rather than SDGs.

Furthermore, this study uniquely outlines ten sources of gender bias in Qur'anic interpretation as systematically elaborated by Nasaruddin Umar—details not comprehensively discussed in earlier works like those by Nurhasanah (2020) or Alwi (2021).

METHODS

This research is a type of qualitative literature research using a comparative approach by comparing the views of 2 (two) Islamic figures in Indonesia, namely Nasaruddin Umar and Mudah Mulia. The data sources in this study are primary data (Nasaruddin Umar's book "Argumen Kesetaraan Jender; Perspektif Al-Quran" and Musdah Mulia's book "Kesetaraan Gender dalam Islam") and secondary data (articles on gender equality and sustainable development/SDGs) with hermeneutic analysis techniques for interpretation and explanation of the principles of text data. By comparing the views of the 2 (two) figures, researchers can find out the similarities, uniqueness and patterns of the two views and draw a conclusion related to the concept of gender equality in Islam which is one of the points in the SDGs (Point 5). The researcher previously explained the perspective of the Qur'an in the concept of gender equality, so that researchers can re-examine the concept of gender equality and the principles in Islam in its role in supporting the SDGs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender Equality in Nasaruddin Umar's View

Nasaruddin was born in Bone on June 23, 1929. He received his education at Ujung Bone State Elementary School (1970), As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Elementary School, Sengkang (1971), As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Religious Teacher Education (1976), Bachelor's Degree in the Faculty of Sharia at Alauddin State Islamic Institute, Ujung Pandang (1980), Bachelor's Degree in the Faculty of Sharia at Alauddin State Islamic Institute, Ujung Pandang (1984), Postgraduate at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic Institute, Jakarta (1992) and Doctorate at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic Institute, Jakarta (1998). Nasaruddin was once a visiting student at McGill University (1993-1994), Leiden University (1994-1995), and the sandwich program of the University of Paris (1995), library research at several universities in Canada, the United States, Japan, England, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Ankara, Istanbul, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Abu Dhabi, Jordan, Palestine, and Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila (1993-197), Lecturer of the Postgraduate Program at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah and Paramadina University. On January 12, 2002, he was confirmed as a professor in the field of interpretation (Hare Mustin & Marecek, 1988) at the Hidayatullah Faculty, Jakarta. He is the Rais of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (2022-2027), General Chairperson of BP4 (2019-2024), General Chairperson of the Central Board of the As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School (2022). As an academic, Nasaruddin is active in writing. Some of his extraordinary writings have been published in various mass media and journals, while some have been published in books. Nasaruddin's works include Introduction to Ulumul Qur'an (1996), "Polygamy" in Bungar to the Schools of Thought of Ali Syariati (1999), and "Comparison Between Humans" in the History of Islamic Thought (1996).

Nasaruddin's research on "Perspektif Jender dalam Al-Quran" and now published in the book "Argumen Kesetaraan Jender; Perspektif Al-Quran" aims to discuss the relationship between men and women through historical-theological studies in the perspective of the Quran and critical studies of the standard assumptions of male supremacy over women by relying on religious arguments.

The research is not limited to textual studies, but rather attempts to pay attention to several variables related to the text, including conducting a study of objective conditions in the Arabian peninsula where the Qur'an was first addressed). The method used for data retrieval is library research with the main object of the Al-Quran manuscript, namely the Al-Quran al-Karim bi al-Rasm al-"Utsmani and the translation using the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, except in some places combined

with the translation in The Holy Qur'an, the original version of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and the version of the Saudi Arabian Government. Tafsir books and reference books are used to support Nasaruddin's research. Given that the object of research is the Al-Quran, the main approach used is the approach of the science of interpretation with the thematic method (mawdlu'i), and other related methods including the historical analysis method, the hermeneutical method.

Gender is defined as the apparent differences between men and women in terms of values and behavior. Gender is a cultural concept that attempts to make distinctions in terms of roles, behavior, mentality and emotional characteristics between men and women that develop in society. In cross-cultural societies, the pattern of determining gender burdens (gender assignment) refers more to biological factors or sex. The differences in biological anatomy of men and women are quite clear, but this is not enough as a standard basis for making classifications or diversifying roles in social life. This fact has given birth to 2 (two) major theories, namely the nature theory (considering the differences between men and women as natural, and being the main factor in determining social roles) and the nurture theory (considering that the differences in gender relations between men and women are not determined by biological factors but rather by social construction, social roles that have been considered standard and are religious doctrines are actually products of social construction). In its development, more sophisticated theories have emerged in accordance with the development of gender issues in society. Nasaruddin conveys several theories that are quite influential in explaining the background of the differences between men and women, namely; Psychoanalytic/Identification Theory (The behavior and personality of men and women from the beginning are determined by the development of sexuality); Structural Functional Theory (The harmony and stability of a society is largely determined by the effectiveness of the consensus of values, which always work and function to create balance. The relationship between men and women is more of a preservation of harmony than a form of competition; Conflict Theory (Gender differences and inequalities between men and women are not caused by biological differences, but are part of the oppression of the ruling class in production relations applied in the concept of the family); Feminist Theory (Challenging the establishment of patriarchy and various other forms of gender stereotypes). Among these theories, none have been agreed upon by all parties, moreover none of these theories involve religious values which are one of the important elements in community life. Nasaruddin reveals the gender perspective in the Quran by focusing on the verses of the Quran that have gender nuances.

Nasaruddin conveyed several verses of the Qur'an in analyzing the principles of gender equality.

1. The purpose of human creation is to worship Allah, there is no difference between men and women (QS adz-Dzariyat:51/56).

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ("I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me").

2. Men and women have the same potential and opportunities to become ideal servants, namely to be pious people (QS al-Hujurat:49/13).

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَاۤىِٕلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْاۚ اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ("O people, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant")

3. Men and women will receive awards from Allah according to the level of their devotion (QS an-Nahl:16/97, al-Imran/3:195, an-Nisa:4/124, an-Nahl:16/97, al-Gafr:40/40).

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ ("Whoever does good, whether male or female, while he is a believer, verily, We will surely give him a good life and We will reward him with a reward in proportion to the best of what he used to do").

4. Men and women as caliphs on earth, the word caliph does not refer to a particular gender or ethnic group. Men and women have the same duties as caliphs and will be accountable for the duties of the caliphate (QS al-An'am:6/165 and al-Baqarah:2/30)

Based on his research and study, Nasaruddin presented several findings as follows:

1. The Qur'an does not give explicit support to the nature theory (differences in the roles of men and women are natural) or the nurture theory (differences in gender relations between men and women are not determined by biological factors but rather by societal construction). The Quran tends to leave it to human intelligence to arrange the roles of men and women that are mutually beneficial.
2. The Qur'an consistently uses specific terms in expressing certain phenomena. For example, when expressing men and women in a biological context, it uses al-dzakar (for men) and al-unsta (for women). Meanwhile, when expressing men and women in terms of social burden (gender assignment) or gender aspects, the Quran uses the term ar-rajul (for men) and al-mar'ah or an-nisa (for women).
3. The Qur'an acknowledges the existence of differences between men and women, but these differences are not discrimination that benefits one party and harms the other. These differences are intended to support the creation of harmonious relationships based on affection ("mawaddah warahmah") in the family environment, as the forerunner to the realization of an ideal community of a peaceful land full of forgiveness ("baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur").
4. Nasaruddin reveals in sufficient detail 10 factors that cause gender bias in the interpretation of the Qur'an, namely the standardization of letter signs, punctuation and qira'at, the understanding of vocabulary (mufradad), the determination of pronoun references (dlamir), the determination of exception limits (istitsna), the determination of the meaning of the letter 'Athf, bias in the structure of the Arabic language, bias in the Arabic dictionary, bias in the method of interpretation, the influence of the Isra'iliyyat narration and bias in the recording and standardization of fiqh books.
5. Nasaruddin critically reveals the background and geo-cultural map of the Arabian Peninsula, where the Quran was revealed so that the discussion of his book is more comprehensive.

Gender Equality in the View of Musdah Mulia

Musdah was born in Bone on March 3, 1958. Elementary school education in Surabaya, As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School, South Sulawesi (1973), Bachelor's degree in Da'wah, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Islamic University of Indonesia, Makassar (1980) and Faculty of Adab, Arabic Language and Literature Institute, IAIN Alaudin, Makassar (1982), Postgraduate UIN, Jakarta (1997) and Doctorate, Cairo, Egypt. Musdah attended informal education including; Course on Islam and Civil Society at the University of Melbourne, Australia (1998), Course on Human Rights Education at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (2000), Course on Promoting the Implementation of Human Rights and Democracy (International Visitor Program), USA (2000), Course on Educational Leadership and Management at George Mason University, Virginia, USA (2001), Course on Human Rights Trainers at Lund University, Sweden (2001), Educational Management for Women and Leadership, Course at Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM), Dhaka, Bangladesh (2002). Early in her career, she participated in training as a Permanent Lecturer at IAIN Alaudin and the Islamic University of Indonesia, Makassar (1982-1989), Researcher at the Institute for Religious Literature Research, Makassar (1985-1989), Researcher at the Central Research and Development Agency of the Department of Religion, Jakarta (1990-1999). She continued her career as a Lecturer at the Institute of Al-Qur'an Sciences, Jakarta (1997-1999). Since 1995 she has been Director of the Al-Wathoniyah Central College. In 1999 as Director of the Jakarta Religious Research Center. Musdah is active as a Trainer, especially in the fields of democracy, human rights, women and civil society. She is recorded

as the first woman to earn a degree in Islamic Political Thought from IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta (1997). Her treatise Negara Islam: Pikiran Husain Haikal was published by Paramadina (2000). Musdah received an international award in 2023, namely the 2022 Satupena Award, which was considered a Dedicated Writer. Musdah is a female scholar and activist, active in various Science organizations in Indonesia, the Women Shura Council and as the General Chairperson of ICRP (interfaith organization).

The Indonesian government has issued Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. However, understanding of the meaning and importance of gender equality and justice is still very minimal, not only among the general public but also in educated circles and even at the government management level. In addition, the slowness of gender mainstreaming efforts in national development is also influenced by narrow understanding and interpretation of religion that is biased towards gender and biased towards patriarchal values, especially related to Islamic teachings which are adhered to by the majority of the Indonesian population. Various religious interpretations that are not accommodating to these humanitarian values are one of the obstacles in realizing gender equality and justice in the life of society, nation and state. The book "Kesetaraan Gender dalam Islam" by Musdah Mulia, published in 2014, aims to support the struggle of Indonesian women in all areas of life and all aspects of national development.

In her research, Musdah uses epistemological sources (the origins of knowledge) from the texts of the Quran and Hadith, and refers to Islamic thinkers, historical sources and empirical experiences with deductive and inductive methods.

History records that since the time of ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient Rome, Hinduism and ancient China, women were not considered as human beings equal to men. Islam came when most humans were under the oppression of other humans who used influence, power, wealth and strength as a tool to oppress the weak (mustadh'afin). Slaves, the poor, the common people, women and children were most vulnerable to the oppression of the strong. Injustice was also created by humans due to wrong beliefs, values and traditions. They were oppressed by their own beliefs when they made idols their gods and the greatness of the tribe as their honor. Ashamed of having a daughter so that the presence of innocent baby girls was buried alive, women were treated like heirlooms.

Islam is believed by its adherents as rahmatan lil alamin (a religion that spreads mercy to the universe). "Tawhid is the essence of Islam. Islam is very firm in carrying the principle of human equality, including equality between men and women" (Musdah Mulia). Tawhid teaches how to have true divinity and true humanity. Tawhid is the main guide that guides and directs human relations with Allah, with fellow human beings, and with the universe. Surah Al-Ikhlas as the core of the teachings of Tawhid provides an understanding of the oneness of Allah and the essence of human equality as fellow creatures of Allah, including no difference between men and women. Tawhid is not just a static religious doctrine. Embodying the meaning of Tawhid not only brings individual welfare and safety, but also gives birth to a moral, polite, humane social order, free from discrimination, injustice, tyranny, fear, oppression of individuals or stronger groups and so on. That is what the Prophet did. Islam is present for liberation from tyranny through 3 (three) ways: First, Simultaneous Liberation (Carried out to uphold the basic principles of Tawhid, liberation from shirk and liberation that directly concerns human life such as the prohibition of killing female children QS. An-Nahl:16/58-59, al-An'am:6/151, al-Isra:17/31; Second, Gradual Liberation (Liberation of an unfair social system for weak groups such as slaves, women and children); Third, Continuous Liberation (That Allah protects humans from the tricks of Satan, according to QS. Shad/38:71-83). Tawhid guarantees justice to protect the mustadh'afin including women.

In the social dimension, monotheism has provided the basis for universal principles of relations between humans, namely:

1. Principle of Equal Rights and Obligations. The relationship between men and women does not differentiate their position, men and women have the same obligations, have the same potential to receive reward or punishment according to their deeds (QS an-Nahl: 16/97, an-Nisa: 4/124 and al-Mu'min: 40/40), the same opportunities to obtain political, educational, inheritance, testimony and other rights.
2. The Principle of Independence or Freedom. The spirit of freedom does not mean free to act, arbitrarily or beyond limits. Freedom in the corridor upholds equality between humans, freedom in family life, society and state.
3. Principle of Fraternity. The spirit of brotherhood strengthens unity (ukhuwwah Islamiyah), men and women are an important unit in human relations.
4. Principle of Justice. Justice is upheld as an Islamic moral in all elements of life. The relationship between men and women must provide fair space for both. With the principle of justice, there is no longer absolute job segregation, men and women can choose jobs according to their capacity and ability.

The Quran acknowledges the existence of differences (distinction) between men and women, but not discrimination that benefits one party and harms the other. The differences are intended to support the main mission of the Quran, namely creating harmonious relationships based on love ("mawaddah warahmah") in the family environment as the forerunner to the realization of an ideal community in a country ("baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur"). Musdah explains 2 (two) terms that are close together, namely sex and gender, which have different meanings but are sometimes used overlappingly. The term sex is used to indicate gender, namely male and female. While the term gender does not only refer to differences in sex, but also differences in behavior, nature and characteristics possessed by men or women. Furthermore, the term gender refers to the roles and relationships between men and women. Gender differences between men and women occur through a long process and are influenced by various factors such as traditions, customs, cultural patterns, religious teachings and state policies. Gender differences have given rise to differences in social roles. These gender differences are sometimes standardized by society so that there is no opportunity for men or women to change roles (Gao et al., 2019; Schmitt et al., 2017; Song et al., 2020; Zirra et al., 2023). Gender differences can lead to unequal relationships between men and women, women do not develop and men are afraid of being outdone, women are more vulnerable to violence. The concept of gender equality in the Qur'an is shown through the following verses:

1. Men and women have the same duty of monotheism, namely worshiping only Allah, glory depends on the level of piety (QS. Adz-Dzariyat/51:56)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ("And I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me").

2. The glory of men and women is based on their level of piety (QS. al-Hujurat: 49/13)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّاُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَاۤىِٕلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْاۚ اِنَّ اَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَتْقٰىكُمْۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ("O people, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant")

3. Men and women are equal, they receive rewards or punishments according to their deeds (QS. an-Nisa: 4/124 and an-Nahl: 16/97, al-Ahzab: 33/35).

وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰۤىِٕكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ نَقِيْرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ ("Whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, while he is a believer, will enter Paradise and will not be wronged in the slightest").

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ ("Whoever does good, whether male or female, while he is a believer, verily, We will surely give him a good life and We will reward him with a reward in proportion to the best of what he used to do").

4. The relationship between men and women is an equal partnership (QS. at-Taubah/9:71).

وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۘ يَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَيُطِيْعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۗ اُولٰۤىِٕكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ("Believers, men and women, some of them become helpers for others. They ordered to do good deeds and prevent wrongdoing, to enforce prayers, to pay zakat, and to obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be given mercy by Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise").

5. Islam provides women with rights, including inheritance rights (QS. an-Nisa/4:11), witness rights (QS. al-Baqarah/2:282), aqiqah (QS. at-Taubah/9:21 and others).
6. Some other verses of the Quran that strengthen the concept of equality between men and women include: QS. al-Ahzab:33/35 and QS. al-Imran:3/195 about forgiveness and great reward, QS. an-Nahl:16/97 about good reward, QS. Ghafir:40/40 about heaven and sustenance, QS at-Taubah/9:71 about Allah's mercy.

The Women's Awakening Movement ("tahrir al-mar'ah") states that women have been oppressed by a tradition that prioritizes men, one of the roots of injustice stems from stereotypes that tend to be demeaning. This view often stems from and is justified by cultural and religious traditions in society. The sources of injustice against women in Islamic society do not come from the basic teachings of religion (nash), namely the Qur'an and Hadith, but rather from misinterpretations that are greatly influenced by cultural, social factors, political tendencies and psychological factors of the interpreter.

Musdah said that the source of injustice towards women in Islamic society does not come from its basic teachings or texts (the Quran and Hadith), but rather from misinterpretation of religion. Misunderstanding of QS. an-Nisa/4:34 which contains the word nusyuz (resisting) can lead to acts of violence by husbands against wives. Misunderstanding of the term ijbar (the right to force marriage) results in a woman having no choice even if she does not want it. The justification of polygamy based on QS. an-Nisa/4:3, is still widely debated among scholars. The practice of circumcision for women is a debate among scholars. The understanding of women's inheritance rights is half that of men, some Quranic commentators have different opinions. Some understand the hijab as a segregation of women's space from the public world.

Musdah recommended the need to reinterpret religious texts related to gender relations, increase the number of female clerics, publish books and utilize gender-sensitive social media, review legal products and cooperation between institutions.

Comparison of Views on Gender Equality by Nasaruddin Umar and Musdah Mulia

Table 2. Comparison of Gender Equality Research between Nasaruddin and Musdah

Variable	Nasaruddin Umar	Musdah Mulia
Background	Many gender bias values in society are caused by biological factors, even though in reality they are nothing other than cultural constructs.	The slowness of gender optimalization in national development is influenced by the understanding of the meaning of gender equality and justice which is still very minimal, religious interpretations that are gender biased and biased towards patriarchal values.
Research Purpose	Conducting discussions on the relationship between men and women, a critical study of the standard assumptions	Supporting the struggle of Indonesian women in all areas of life and all aspects of national development.

Variable	Nasaruddin Umar	Musdah Mulia
	regarding male supremacy over women based on religious arguments.	
Research Methods	- Qualitative research of library research with the main object of the Quran equipped with interpretation books and other reference books. - The main approach uses the interpretation science approach with thematic methods (mawdlu'i) and other related methods including historical analysis methods.	- Qualitative research with deductive-inductive methods - Sources of epistemology (origin of knowledge) from the texts of the Quran and Hadith, and referring to Islamic thinkers, historical sources and empirical experiences.
Research Coverage (Main Chapter)	- A brief look at gender theory - The Arabian Peninsula before the Qur'an was revealed - Gender identity in the Qur'an - A critical review of gender perspective in the Qur'an	- Islam as a monotheistic religion - Human's concept in Islam - Gender's concept in Islam - The reality of gender injustice - Islamic moral messages related to gender equality & justice
Research Findings	- The Quran does not provide explicit support for the theory of nature or the theory of nurture. The Quran tends to allow human to organize the roles of men and women that are mutually beneficial. - The Quran consistently uses specific terms in the meaning of men and women. In the biological context, it uses al-dzakar (for men) and al-unsta (for women), while in terms of social burden (gender assignment) or gender aspects, it uses the term ar-rajul (for men) and al-mar'ah or an-nisa (for women). - The Quran acknowledges the existence of differences (distinction) between men and women, but not discrimination. - Nasaruddin reveals in sufficient detail 10 factors that cause gender bias in the interpretation of the Quran	- Tawhid is the essence of Islam, the embodiment of the meaning of Tawhid brings the welfare and salvation of the individual community. - The Qur'an recognizes the differences between men and women, but not discrimination. - Explains the terms sex and gender. The term sex indicates gender (male and female). The term gender refers to the role and relationship between men and women. - The source of injustice against women in Islamic society does not come from its basic teachings or texts (the Qur'an and Hadith), but rather from misinterpretation of religion. - Conveys verses of the Qur'an that support gender equality

Based on the comparison of Nasaruddin and Musdah's research above, some of the main similarities and uniqueness of their views are as follows:

Similarity of views:

1. Nasaruddin and Musdah are of the opinion that to understand the existence and role of Islam, including understanding gender verses, a deep understanding of the history and socio-cultural stratification of the Arab nation is required before and when the Qur'an was revealed.
2. Nasaruddin and Musdah use the similar verses from the Qur'an as a basis for thinking about gender equality, including; QS. adz-Dzariyat:51/56 (Human obligation to worship only Allah), al-Hujurat:49/13 (The degree of human glory before Allah is not determined by male or female gender, but depends on the level of piety), an-Nahl:16/(A good life and rewards are given to humans who do good deeds, both men and women), an-Nisa:4/124 and al-Gafr:40/40 (Paradise is given to humans, both men and women, who do good deeds and believe).

3. Nasaruddin and Musdah share comparable perspectives on the concepts of sex and gender. The term sex denotes gender (male and female), whereas the term gender pertains to the roles and relationships that exist between men and women.
4. Nasaruddin and Musdah contend that the Qur'an recognizes the existence of distinctions between men and women, but does not view this as discrimination. The Quran generally permits the organization of men's and women's roles that are mutually advantageous to foster a harmonious relationship founded on affection (mawaddah warahmah) as a precursor to achieving a baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur community.

Uniqueness of view:

Nasaruddin describes in ample detail 10 factors that contribute to gender bias in the interpretation of the Qur'an, namely the standardization of letter signs, punctuation and qira'at, the comprehension of vocabulary (mufradad), the identification of pronoun references (dlamir), the specification of exception limits (istitsna), the establishment of the meaning of the letter 'Athf, biases in Arabic language structure, biases in Arabic dictionaries, biases in interpretation methods, the impact of Isra'iliyyat narrations, and biases in the recording and standardization of fiqh books. In contrast, Musdah presents the reasons for gender bias more succinctly, emphasizing interpretation bias.

CONCLUSION

The UN's SDGs highlight gender equality (SDG 5) as pivotal for the 2030 agenda, yet progress remains uneven—only 20% on-track, 60% marginal, and 20% regressing—necessitating urgent action against discriminatory norms and laws. Islamic scholars like Nasaruddin and Musdah argue that the Qur'an promotes gender equity (e.g., *mawaddah warahmah*) without discrimination, suggesting that culturally sensitive policies aligned with Islamic principles could enhance SDG 5 adoption in Muslim-majority nations. Proposed research explores this synergy through comparative analysis of policy effectiveness (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Indonesia), barriers (e.g., patriarchal laws), and faith-based solutions (e.g., leveraging *waqf* funds), aiming to develop a culturally adaptive model that bridges Islamic ethics with global goals while empowering women's leadership and funding.

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