

Women and Halaqah “the Yellow Book” in Minangkabau in Post Indonesia Freedom

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Abstract. Halaqah, a teaching and learning process takaplace between by students a teacher in the teacher is the translator. It is started by Minangkabau women in traditional Madrasas after independence. The purpose of this paper is to analyze social phenomena related to women and halaqah of the yellow book in Minangkabau after independence. This study used historical methods. The halaqah system is voluntary done, but women have a dominant role in developing Human Resources and supporting the perfection of Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah's beliefs in Minangkabau. In Halaqah, students sit in cycle formation, teacher sit in the middle of the formation. This process is carried out by women while teaching in additional Madrasas at the Indonesian Post Freedom.

Keywords: Halaqah; Kitab Kuning; Post Freedom; Minangkabau; Yellow Book

1 Introduction

The term Halaqah or halqah is an Arabic word means circle [1]. The term has long been widely known in the world of Islam and known as a system in both the education and teaching method. It has several major elements, teachers, students, setting and teaching materials, available in the books. In term of teaching method, halaqah categorized as the technique and method to transmit the values of Islamic teachings from a kiyai (the prime teacher) to his students by reading a book in a certain time, then the students listen and record the explanation [2]. Hanum Asrohah argues that halaqah as a teaching-learning process that the students perform while circling a teacher. They sit on the floor and create a circle so that they can listen to teacher (kiyai) who responsible to read and explain a certain book [3]. In the same idea, by Haidar Putra Daulay states that halaqah is a learning process, the students who present sit around a kiyai. As a guide, the Kiyai reads the books, the students pay attention while making the lines (Harkat) words meaning, descriptions and understandings [4].

The term halaqah is closely related with the “usrah” and “liqā” which means family and meeting. It may explain why the teaching atmosphere and condition are colored with family characteristics and run in regular way. Pesantren or the traditional Islamic boarding schools in Java use the term halaqah with bandongan (wetonan), one of the most domain method used in teaching “the Yellow Book” is by sitting in a group in which 5 to 500 students listen to a teacher (kiyai) recite, translate, explain and review a book in Arabic. The students fully pay

attention to the readings and make and write the words meaning, the narrations and difficult explanations [5]. Bandungan is also called as wetonan means time in Javanese. The term wetonan was switched with the process of halaqah implementation, with the Kiyai or the pesantren as the time determiner [6].

Halaqah used by people in Minangkabau as *mengaji duduk* (recite the book while sitting) or *adu lutut* (sitting with the knees having a physical contact), run in collective way, the students sit by surrounding a sheikh (the higher level of a *kiayi*), *buya* or master while sitting on the floor, both a house or a mosque [7]. Halaqah is known as the oldest religious method in teaching and was born since the beginning of Islam. Muhammad (PBUH) the Prophet used to run the halaqah method to deliver Islam values to his companions and followers both at houses and mosques. Arqam bin Abi al-Arqam was a companion of the prophet who let his house to be used by Muhammad in doing the Halaqah. Both the Tabi'ins () and the companions use the halaqah method in the next period to transmit Islamic beliefs and teachings [8].

After the period of Islamization in Indonesia, the ulama (Islamic scholar) used halaqah as the main method to teach and preach Islam, especially in teaching the Islam holy book the Qur'an beside delivering the tarekat. This method was used in Minangkabau as the traditional system after Sheikh Burhanuddin built Surau Ulakan, in the 17th century, Pariaman [9]. The halaqah method is still sustainably used in mosques in modernization era since it had a strong influence on Minangkabau at the beginning of the 20th century. Surau (smaller traditional mosques in a single minang Community) that changed into Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (MTI) still use the halaqah method in keeping the inheritance of Kitab Kuning tradition. Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Pasir (name of a place) is part of Perti which still uses halaqah as a method in teaching the book. The method is being maintained because this school was founded by a traditional ulama in order to keep the book existence. The last message of Shaykh Sulaiman al-Rasuli, written on his tomb, states that "it is important to foster Tarbiyah Islamiyah Madrasah in accordance with the lessons I have given [10].

This research used the historical method that applied several procedures, beginning from determining the object to writing the stories. The object was determined based on the selection process with events uniqueness and the level of affordability of the sources. Data was obtained by observation, interview and doing documentation work. Observation means to collect the data through an observation process done by the researcher [11]. There are two types of observations that are usually carried out by scientists: non-participant observation (inparticipant observation) and participant observation (participant observation) [12]. This research used participant-observation because the researcher enrolled as the subject engages in the daily activities of the perpetrators and the events being observed. The use of participant-observation help researchers to obtain the more complete and sharp information (data) in order to let them know the level of meaning of each behavioral phenomenon [13].

The data collection was done interviews, meeting of two or more people with to find the information and ideas in order to form a meaning of a particular topic [13]. The perpetrators and historical witnesses include leaders of both madrasah, female teachers and students who have participated in halaqah at the female teacher house. The next process was documentation, to study the documents, books, articles, newspapers, magazines and other written sources. The first document to explore was the "Kitab Kuning" which is still being studied at Madrasah Perti which consists of linguistics, fiqh, kalam (tauhid) and tasawuf science. The documentation process was continued with finding the madrasah archives, books and research results that have a thematic interface with this research.

After collecting the data, analyzing the data was a need and run through the source criticism approach which works for the first time as a verification process to obtain historical facts. The source criticism process was done through the study, initiated by choosing the informants as the historical actors and witnesses to the information (data) they convey. Related to Kitab Kuning as the resources source criticism was done to determine the source's authenticity in Madrasah Perti. The degree of credibility related with the information (data) was done by comparing the information from one source to other sources (cross examination) [13]. Data analysis was continued with the synthesis process, sorting (classify) the historical facts (reduce) and arrange them according to certain categories (presentation). Then, the synthesis process was done interpretation as an effort to find the meaning of historical facts. Finally, writing the history as a diachronic and systematic story was done in accordance with scientific writing techniques .

2 Methodology

The research method used is descriptive analysis with a library research approach

3 Result and Discussion

In Post Indonesia independence, the halaqah used to be implemented in mosques and male teachers' houses , shaykhs, buya and tuanku (informal Islamic Leader a certain community) in Minangkabau. The teachers were: Sheikh Sulaiman al-Rasuli, H. Husin Amin, H. Muhammad Dalin and H. Muhamad Adamsar. Female teacher began to be active as mentors of the Kitab Kuning halaqah after after the independence. Ustadzah Zaimar, Husna and Syamsiar were the halaqah mentors at MTI Pasir[14]. Some female teachers at MTI Candung since the mid-1970s have been following the the activities until today. Ustadzah Fakhrati and Ramainas were the halaqah tutors for MTI Candung students to study and study the yellow book. This class was followed by both male and female students[15].

The teaching system of Halaqah held by female teachers in their own homes in an informal learning process, has no similarities with the Madrasah . It was used voluntarily by each female teacher Is there is a request from the students who wanted to Learn the Kitab Kuning . This tradition demanded after considering the objectives of traditional Madrasahs who want to maintain the old classical books Minangkabau, halaqah was held as a respond to various problems being faced by students who do not have opportunities or experience limitation in learning the book because they have to study the Madrasah curriculum as the requirement to follow the national final exam. The adoption of the Three Ministerial Decree No. 6 of 1975 on Improving the Quality of Education in madrasah in Indonesia poses a dilemma faced by almost all Madrasah under Perti in Minangkabau because reduce the hours in learning Kitab Kuning. It does meet the parents demand on what their children to learn more the Kitab [14].

Difficulties arising from the adoption of the Three Ministerial Decree gave birth to initiatives from female teachers to hold halaqah voluntarily in their respective homes to support the teaching process in madrasahs. The initiative grew in tandem with the development of students in traditional Madrasahs which were getting busier from year to year so that new halaqah places were needed to study and explore the tradition of the yellow book [16]. The first initiative emerged in Ustadzah Zaimar since she accepted the students of MTI Pasir to

attend halaqah at his home at night. Students who have desires, both men and women come to Ustadzah Zaimar's home and follow the learning process in the halaqah system. Husna, the ustazah (female preacher) was the second female teacher at MTI Pasir who had been studying with the halaqah system since 1970. Her class was the most among others, attended by students of MTI Pasir in the 1980s and 1990s. Qurratul Aini explained that no less than 50 students of MTI Pasir attended halaqah every night at Ustadzah Husna's house. This condition is most likely supported by Ustadzah Husna's deep knowledge of the kitab kuning and the proximity of the female teacher's house to the madrasa and the boarding school [17].

The third well-known Halaqah for students in MTI Pasir was held by Syamsiar (since 1970). The activities are not as busy as the previous halaqah, led by Ustadzah Husna because the location was far relatively far from the madrasah. The students were the senior students with few numbers. The teachers of MTI, both men and women, used to learn and follow the halaqah system under the Syamsiar. She was considered as an expert to teach nahwu and sharaf, friendly and smart, and has a special uniqueness for students and teachers of MTI Pasir that create a good condition to learn and explore the book at home [16]. Another female teacher who managed the halaqah at her home was Tasliatul Fuad. The teaching process has been lasting since 2012 followed by many MTI students to learn Kitab Kuning and religion [18].

Fakhrati and Ramaisa were two well-known halaqah teachers at MTI Canduang beside becoming the leaders. Fakhrati was the granddaughter of Syaikh Sulaiman al-Rasuli and the first teacher who taught Kitab Kuning in that school. In the end of 1970s she began to teach halaqah in her house in the attempt of helping the students to cover and get deeper understanding on the book. The previous halaqah were only followed by students and managed by a male teacher those who came from MTI Canduang and other places. Fakhrati said that before 1990s there were still many preachers kept the tradition of teaching the Kitab Kuning. Another female teacher at MTI Canduang who followed in the footsteps of Ustadzah Fakhrati was Ustadzah Ramainas who started leading halaqah in her home in 2015 [15].

The process of learning the yellow book in the halaqah system led by Madrasah Perti female teachers has the same model and presentation method. They both apply certain methods in dealing with students according to different levels and knowledge. For beginner The process of learning the yellow book in the halaqah system led by Madrasah Perti female teachers has the same model and presentation method. They both apply certain methods in dealing with students according to different levels and knowledge. For beginner students (preparatory classes), halaqah starts with the reading of texts (matan) from certain books which are then translated into Minangkabau and Indonesian languages. After this process is completed, a limited number of students (two or three people) are instructed to repeat the readings and translations that have been explained by the halaqah advisers. While other students pay attention and correct repetition of reading and translation of friends who experience errors. Students are also given the opportunity to raise questions about the texts (matan) that were learned at that time if there were still those who could not understand them. Then the halaqah adviser explains and concludes the contents of the text followed by students to take notes. In closing, the guidance teacher of the halaqah invites students in one command to read Surah al-Fatihah, the reward of which is sent to those who contributed, madrasah teachers and writers of the yellow book [19].

The mentor of halaqah often appoints assistive teachers usually the senior students who have the competences to guide their lower grade students. They were badly needed by the teachers if students in the class were followed by too many students. The assistants who guide students who are at a lower level before they learn with a real halaqah guide. The application

of this kind of model aims to increase the knowledge and skills of teachers to help in understanding the various types of the yellow book before they complete their education at Madrasah Perti [16]. Allocation of time available for students in lower classes (tsanawiyah level) is after Magrib to Isha prayer. Students at the Aliyah level start following the learning process after the Isha prayer until 22.00 WIB. If they study books that are outside the madrasa curriculum, the supervising teacher combines them and learns together. If students study the books that constitute the madrasa curriculum, they will be grouped according to the level of each class. The method used by the halaqah teacher in guiding Aliyah level students is very different from that of tsanawiyah level students. At the tsanawiyah level, the process of learning the yellow book is still centered on a teacher (mentor) starting from reading a text (matan), translation and understanding. But in a certain time, they are often also asked in advance to read, translate and understand the contents of a text before the halaqah guide corrects it [20].

Halaqah for Aliyah (The Islamic senior high school) students uses student centered started with reading the text, deciphering words (i'rāb), translation and understanding of content [19]. It is The task of a halaqah mentors to determine the reader at the night and instruct other students to pay attention and correct the readings, word descriptions, translations and conclusions. The errors in reading, translation and explanation, the other students will Be directly corrected and refute them. Students who are reading the book entailed with tight to defend their readings If they have strong idea wivh based on nahwu and sharaf. At the last session, The teacher corrects the Wrong parts and justifies all the readings, word descriptions, translations, discussions and conclusions of a text [17].

The Halaqah of Aliyah(Islamic Senior High School) students May start the lesson by reading of a tutor because of time constraints. This method leads them to pay more attention to a teacher's reading because the counselor may deliberately blame his own reading to test students who are serious or not paying attention to the book they are reading. Serious students will spontaneously correct and argue even if the one reading the text is a halaqah guide whom they respect. Such an atmosphere often occurs in halaqah yellow book held by Madrasah Perti female teachers in their respective homes. In closing the halaqah, the guidance teacher and students recited Surah al-Fatihah together with the reward sent to the scholars, especially the writers of the book, the founders and teachers of the Madrasah Perti [15].

4 Conclusion

Historically,the women contraction in traditional Madrasah in Minangkabau after independence put them as teachers, but also as the mentor of halaqah at their homes. That position in the period Before the period of independence this position was was dominated by men. The system and method applied by female teachers is in the form of an informal learning process that madrasah program. The system was implemented voluntarily by each female teacher as the students wanted to explore the yellow book. The halaqah system has a strategic role in term developing Human Resources and maintaining the continuity of Ahlu al-Sunnahwa al-Jama'ah's beliefs in Minangkabau.

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