

**The Impact of Religion, Social and Cultural Understanding On Gender Segregation by
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Indonesia is a society in a transition, but still maintains traditional features. Tradition has become the very important element in the development of Indonesian nation since it was known by the name Nusantara or the Malay Archipelago. It is the tradition from the culture as well as the religion being exist in the Malay Archipelago which gives significant influence in their religious, social and cultural life. The relations between community and the leaders either the religious leaders or cultural leaders, have from time to time been giving a perception of gender equity and equality between man and women. Since ethnicity and religion still play important roles in understanding Indonesian equality and equity between man and women, these two factors become determinant factors in the development of the discourse of gender equity and equality between man and women in Indonesia.

At the outset it should be stated clearly that ethnicity and religion are not the only two independent variables to explain the equality and equity between men and women. Their understanding about religion's teachings and their understanding of their own culture is also effecting their position in society. In addition to that the attitude of society or religious community toward the leaders of religion as well as the readers of the tribe has also given a significant impact on the development of the relation between man and women. It is worth noting that these factors give a huge influence in the relation of gender segregation between men and women. As a result of these understanding, gender equality and equity in Indonesia for example varies among the regions. To make this study focus, the paper will take an example from the two biggest religious populations in Indonesia, Islam and Christianity.

This paper will take some examples from the regions which are considered to be representation of the most well known for their religions such as Java, Betawi, (Central Java and East Java), Sundanese (located in West Java), where Islam is a dominant religion and two other regions are Manado and Batak (North Sumatra) (where the Christian becomes a dominant religion .

Basically, the teachings of religion are aimed to be the tools to understand the essence of life fully in relation to the fulfillment of the task and duty of the people in their life. Furthermore, religious teachings also function as the guiding principles for the people for better life in the present time and in the future. Therefore, the understanding of religious teachings will have a very important impact in relations of the people prosperity in life. It is becoming important since the equality and the equity in gaining their rights as human being in say one country or one region will also depend on their attitudes toward their religious leaders.

Religion in essence, gives an equal right and opportunity for both men and women to develop themselves. The equal rights and opportunity given by the religion is based on the principle that God created men and women in equality. To some extent yes it should be admitted there are some differences between men and women. However, these differences do not touch the problem of the rights and opportunity as human being who have the equal rights. The differences lay on the problems of for examples the feeling, body structure, reproduction health, and emotions. Nevertheless, it is those differences that make man complemented women and vice versa.

In the case of religion, the tensions arise in relations between man and women often triggered by the understanding of religious texts. Since some religious texts, what is meant by religious texts here are the interpretation of the holy scripture have in the course of history been written and explained by mostly men, some interpretation often by purpose or not by purpose have given more favor to men. As a result of this, men often enjoy more privilege based on the interpretation of religious teachings being understood from the texts from generation to generation. Moreover, the situation is often justified by the customs or a cultural tradition which often makes the position of women worse to have the equal rights in relations to develop themselves in social, religious and cultural life.

Basing on the above situation, it is necessary to look back and study in depth again to understand the essence of the message of religion. This does not mean that all the interpretations of religious scripture written in the previous books should be corrected. There are perhaps some interpretations that should be reinterpreted. This effort is certainly needs the deep knowledge not only about the understanding of the previous interpretations, but also the condition of social and culture that became the background of those interpretations. New interpretation should also be adapted with the present condition by indeed relating it with the previous interpretations, cause

and effect of the revelation. In short, new interpretation of religious teachings should also not to neglect the historical background of the revelation and the interpretation of the previous scholars.

National asset allowing women and men increased opportunities in life. Information on the distribution of literate population can help health and family planners to better reach their target population with their messages. In the 2002-2003 IDHS, the level of literacy is defined by the respondent's ability to read none, part, or all of a sentence from a card in a language that the respondent is likely to be able to read. The questions assessing literacy were asked only of women and men who have not attended school or have attended only primary school. Respondents who attended at least secondary are considered literate. The opportunity of having education both for men and women is also influenced very much by the understanding of religious teachings.

E. Rights of Women

21. Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Considering that discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare of the family and of society, prevents their participation, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity, Bearing in mind the great contribution made by women to social, political, economic and cultural life and the part they play in the family and particularly in the rearing of children, Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women as well as men in all fields,

Considering that it is necessary to ensure the universal recognition in law and in fact of the principle of equality of men and women .

(pp.145-146, Human Rights A Compilation of International Instruments Volume I (First Part) Universal Instruments, United Nations, New York, 1993.

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