

COVID-19 and Violence Againsts Women: an Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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The increasing cases of COVID-19 have affected the rapid cases of violence against women in the world. Furthermore, this massive violence has raised a lot of concern in many circles. By using a literature approach that explores the various reading material such as journal articles, books, reports, news, and statistical data, this study is qualitative descriptive research that discusses on what is the position of women during pandemic COVID-19. In addition, this article also examines the issues and the background that drives the increasing violence cases on women in the shadow COVID-19 together with an Islamic analysis on it. The primary finding of this study is the position and the condition of women in the pandemic COVID-19 is still neglected. Hence, women are increasingly facing the risk of violence whatever they are in and based on the Islamic perspective these cases can mitigate by cultivating social care.

ABSTRAK

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Seiring dengan meningkatnya kasus poisitif COVID-19, kekerasan terhadap perempuan diberbagai penjuru dunia juga mengalami peningkatan. Masifnya kekerasan ini menimbulkan banyak kekhawatiran di berbagai kalangan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kepustakaan yang mengeksplorasi berbagai sumber bahan bacaan baik artikel jurnal, buku, laporan, berita dan data statistik penelitian yang merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini akan membahas bagaimana posisi dan kedudukan perempuan ditengah terpaan pandemik COVID-19. Selain itu, artikel ini juga mengkaji persoalan kekerasan terhadap perempuan dan faktor yang mendorong meningkatnya kasus tersebut disertai analisis ke-Islaman. Adapun temuan penelitian ini adalah kedudukan dan keadaan perempuan dimasa pandemik COVID-19 masih terabaikan sehingga perempuan semakin menghadapi resiko kekerasan dimana saja mereka berada dan dalam perspektif Islam kekerasan dapat dimitigasi salah satunya dengan menumbuhkan kepedulian sosial.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the last report of the World Health Organization, the total number of positive cases COVID-19 has increased up to 14.043.176 cases globally (WHO, 2020a). In line with this fact, the other data that also showed drastically increased is the number of people who lost their jobs and decreased the daily income of the community

(Rauhaus et al., 2020). For most people who live under poor health quality and poverty even long before the emergence of the COVID-19, they will face the highest impact on the financial crisis, the risk of injustice, and social exclusion (WHO, 2020c). As well as women who have long suffered from violence until they enter the era of pandemic COVID-19, the sufferings and pains they have to face as if they are increasing (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020).

When most of the people heavily focus on health and economics repair during the COVID-19 period, violence against women as a new case that they are experiencing grows larger and scattered throughout the country as Gruber and Goodmark state "violence against women is also virus" (Rauhaus et al., 2020). Violence occurs due to very various reasons, actually, one of the reasons is a COVID-19 pandemic insistent that uniquely puts women at various jobs and positions so that the difference in this condition is affected by the varying form of violence that women come across (Wenham et al., 2020). McLaren et al. (2020) states in a disaster context where women in productive, reproductive, and social work are constantly shifting patterns. Meanwhile, governments through public policy and health efforts have not been able to address problems relating to women's rights.

Based on the above problems, this study was conducted due to the complication in reviewing cases of violence against women who have not been resolved to the present but experienced a significant increase in the COVID-19 outbreak crisis. Therefore, this study will explore more about factors and causes of violence against women and women in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic shadows accompanied by Islamic responses to analyze the violence against women.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study that uses a library search to find the necessary data references as searching for multiple journal articles, reports, statistical data, books, and news media. This type of research is a descriptive study describing the position and increasing the amount of violence against women during the pandemic COVID-19, accompanied by an Islamic perspective therein (Hennink et al., 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Women position in COVID-19 issue

It is human nature to always interact with other human beings and the natural surroundings (Giddens, 2006). In the course of this interaction, everyone showed their identity that influenced by a collective identity in the social environment. Long before Islam arrived, the identity between women and men has distinguished by their roles and functions (Hall, 1990). As a result of this distinction, a new gap has stood out between women's and men's positions (Triantoro, 2018), for example: among the ancient Greeks, women divided into two different classifications. Firstly, the sacred

woman who got label as honoring women or upper class and secondly, women who are a part of lower-class as prostitutes, concubines, and women in unpaid care work (Magdalena, 2017).

In the pre-Islamic Arab period, women were a disgrace for their families or even could be inherited (Magdalena, 2017). Meanwhile, men are emblems of strength and power that each of their births welcomed in pride and happiness (Muhibbin, 2011). Nevertheless, other historical records also reveal the presence of the honorable woman, Queen Saba, who had the power and the higher position more than the male did (Abbott, 1941). Moreover, the arrival of Islam has raised the degree of women to equate with men. During the dynasty of Abasia, there was a woman who became a political ruler of Delhi in 634 H/1236 M (Muhibbin, 2011). This historical fact led to construct a new form to explain the male and female identity relationship that understood through a result of social construction that could differ in each village, each area, and each country called gender (Petrikowski, 2014). Even though the findings on the term gender identity are a huge step forward, but they still leave a lot of problems.

Furthermore, in the worse spread of the pandemics COVID-19, a lengthy dialogue on gender dimension is more specific to women's issues and invites much attention. In the Islamic perspective, women and men are different in their biological needs, roles, and responsibilities at the same time, both of them are alike in the value of their dignity (Muhibbin, 2011). According to the World Bank Group report on Gender Dimensions of the COVID-19 Pandemic, a gender difference in pandemic affects varied, access, and handling to both them. While the basis of this distinction and equation seems not survived in the public awareness of the COVID-19 crisis. 2.73% of Indonesian women listed as unemployment, 36.67% are housewives, 49.15% of workers in the formal-informal sector, and 2.88% are the remaining unknown. The number of women as a non-formal worker situating women outside of social protection mechanisms. Further, women worker at the forefront of the response of COVID-19 such nurses and health professionals are particularly vulnerable (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020). In the developing country, most of the women have less education, especially in rural areas that have limited access to COVID-19 information.

There are also women from a refugee background, widows, and elderly who have an existing illness live in slum and camp in sub-Saharan fear of losing household income and male mortality. Ramaswamy et al. (2020) in "Criminal Justice-Involved women Navigate COVID-19: Notes from the Field" continued many ex-convict women in the cities of Kansas, Oakland and Birmingham, had no place to stay, lives in halfway home or stays in their car. They are also having trouble implementing the physical distancing rule, government health protocol, and nothing protection for them. Along with this phenomenon, with the lockdown and work from

home policy, women spend their time in a heavier workload. In a discriminatory family, not knowing the division of the domestic role of husband and wife, homework is a taboo for husbands even though he is not working (King et al., 2020).

On the other hand, when men cannot express their gender rules as a breadwinner for a while, the household conflicts more common. Still in this period, pregnant women, girls, women with disabilities, and women with family planning programs are both physically also psychologically hindered in seeking treatment as the health care providers turned away to countermeasures COVID-19. In the end, women increasingly marginalized in the absence of consideration to gender balance in the determination of government decisions nationally and globally in the pandemic era (UNFPA, 2020).

B. Violence against women amid the uncertainty of the end of COVID-19

Violence against women has always become a curious topic to discuss. Indeed, more than two decades earlier, women had suffered a series of violence that overshadow their lives (Crenshaw, 1991). Violence may happen anywhere, including in the family, in the workplace, in an educational environment or social life (Koss et al., 1994). In 1993, under the international conference titled *Human Right and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence*, the international community agreed to classify the violence against women issue as part of a public health emergency agenda, social security, and human rights that are important to be aware (Devries et al., 2013). Therewithal, this attention has led to anxieties due to violence against women experiencing a significant increase in the pandemic COVID -19 (Roesch et al., 2020).

The World Health Organization reported that 1 in 3 women were victims of rising acts of violence during the global pandemic. And in the last 12 months, at least 243 million women, including girls (aged 15-49) been the victims of physical and sexual abuse by their closest relatives (WHO, 2020b). Physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abandonment of women rose sharply in Australia, Brazil, China, and the United States (van Gelder et al., 2020). The Indonesian National Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women (KOMNAS Perempuan) also noted that 15.3% of Indonesian women, including children, widows, and elderly experienced psychological violence, and 10% experienced economic violence. In March 2020, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) explained that 97% of Indonesian violence cases are a case of physical violence, along with rape, sexual assault, sex trafficking, psychological abuse, and online porn followed by 184 domestic violence cases throughout April 2020.

The history of violence against women during the pandemic additionally occurred while the Ebola and Zika epidemic spread. At the same time, half of the world's population was asked to stay at home. This policy has enhanced the risk for

women to experience harassment and violence (Roesch et al., 2020). Telles et al. (2021), with his research "Domestic Violence in the COVID-19 Pandemic," expressed violence against women, come from a wide range of factors, such as feeling isolated from society, losing self-reliance, closing school and business, economic vulnerability and unemployment. Telles also added the lack of security intervention, the difficulty of obtaining legal help, and the limited social assistance to women affect the possibility of violence.

Another problem that also contributes is the social stigma of gender bias and the viscosity of patriarchy culture. People often believe that men dominate roles over women likewise, people tend to tolerate when men use power against women found in films, pornography, music, and otherwise. From all of these backgrounds, it is important to find a quick step to mitigate and deduct violent chains to reduce violence effects (Usher et al., 2020).

C. Islamic perspective on violence against women in the pandemic situation

Only in a short time, the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak has covered all countries with no exceptions. Global health emergencies were already declared and the international world has announced a national emergency in each region. Those resulted in a pile of new problems in many aspects such as economics, politics, food supply (Diwangkara, 2020) and education (Purwanto et al., 2020). Not only that but also on the social side of the community arises indications of deviation at the individual behavior such as the likelihood of violence, panic buying (Shadiqi et al., 2020), symptoms of mild to severe depression, anxiety, stress, and paranoid disorders (Ho et al., 2020).

Naturally, violence against women is a small piece of the COVID-19 pandemic blacklisting. It has been appropriate to use the Islamic approach to find new directions to see the issue. Indonesian Islamic scholar, Muhammad Quraish Shihab mentions Allah Almighty creates the plague as a test or trial that fall on the whole human. Shihab also said these ultimate tests are the consequences of life that must get through so that people recall, permeate, take wisdom, improve their lives and behavior (Shihab, 2020). In fact, whether consciously or not, Islam has greatly proclaimed gender equality. farther, the Islamic feminism movement that appeared in the 1990s reinforces the fact that Islam guarantees the alignments of the integrity and the justice of human authority (Muqoyyidin, 2013). In the end, Islam will never be expecting that violence happened to somebody including women.

Sachiko Murata, a Muslim feminist emphasizing violence is the impact of the masculinity domination shown to be excessive. In this context, it is not ordinary masculinity, but rather the negative masculinity that is rooted in the directed soul of the Earth attributes, such fire as the symbol of lust, ambition, arrogance, and pride. It is not from the spirit of heaven that possesses great and glorious nature (Kumari,

2013). Still, it is not enough, violence is a reflection of the void of moral value and spirituality that is lost from his *fitrah* as a human being (Abedin, 1996). When the pandemic test approached, human nature would direct it to the purpose of his life in both the happiness (*sa'dah*) or tribulation (*syaqawah*) (Kumari, 2013).

Ahmed Al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, revealed that it is difficult to predict when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will end (Daily News Egypt, 2020). In the meantime, introducing the concept of Islamic psychology such as optimism (*Husn al-zhann*) and surrender (*tawakkal*) is useful to build mental health as prevention strategies to minimize violence. This optimistic attitude will exist as a source of strength to encourages the realization of a better person. While self-surrender helps to eliminate worries, fears, and concerns in the process of self-development and potential in the future (Rusydi, 2012). More explicitly, Islamic psychotherapy is necessary applied in treating women with violent victims. Isgandarova (2018) noted the use of an Islamic psychotherapy approach combines the theories and practices of theological and social sciences have contributed positively. Islamic psychotherapy was able to help victims to express their solitudes and hopes, their identities, and their understanding of the existence of God. Lastly, guide them to understand themselves and to find solutions to issues that invented them helpless and unprotected.

Finally, Islam encourages us to build social care in social life (Purba, 2020). Social care is the initial foundation of building resilience in caring and love together with pray and the power of belief (Buana, 2020). The point of this social care is "putting others first before yourself" (*iitsar*) that is the most formulation of Islamic social care offer. Meanwhile, the effort for removing violence against women in the pandemic period even if because of economic pressure, mental stress and other factors, social care become an urgent care to do by promoting the rejection of violence against women on social media/mass, creating cooperation between government instantiation, women, and human rights organization.

CONCLUSION

Lately, various problems have emerged in line with the emergence of the COVID-19. As unintended negative effects that raised, women's vulnerability to violence has increased. A lot of evidence such reports, data, statistics, and social media news continuously exist until nowadays. Farther, women frequently marginalized by the number of policies that have not to include women's inclusivity, limited access to counseling, treatment, legal assistant, and the difficulty of information and technology access during the pandemic. In fact, because of the COVID-19 pressure raised expression of negative masculinity then affects women as violence victims in the very highest percentage. In response to these problems, Islam, through Islamic

psychotherapy, sees the COVID-19 pandemic as a form of life-test. It must be passed with an optimistic attitude, the totality trusted in the plans of Allah Almighty's, and accompanied by the endeavor in the form of social care to mitigate a variety of feelings of despair, anxiety, and fear of various uncertainties of the pandemic era. Hopefully, every researcher who is interested in and planning to continue this study can examine the factor that influence the government and civil society have not ready to prepare plans to handle possible pandemic caused by new plague. As well, the factor that stimulus strengthening the patriarchy value during the pandemic COVID-19.

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