

The Existence of Women's Da'wah in the Dominance and Marginalization of Patriarchal Culture

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Abstract

This article aims to describe the existence of women's da'wah amidst the dominance of 'Tuan Guru' male religious leaders' preaching in the patriarchal culture of the Sasak community. The research was conducted in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. A qualitative descriptive method was employed for this study, utilizing data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation. This study revealed that patriarchal culture influences various aspects of Sasak society, including the religious sphere. The dominance of male religious leaders (Tuan Guru) in preaching is evident across nearly all preaching contexts. Da'wah occurs regularly and incidentally through religious lectures in prayer rooms, mosques, religious social organizations, governmental and private institutions, and utilizing mass media. Conversely, women's da'wah through lectures has limited access; female preachers tend to engage with female communities. In terms of quantity, the number of female preachers needs to be improved compared to the number of male religious leaders. This study also identified stigmas and stereotypes associated with women in da'wah, leading to the marginalization of women in this field and restricting their emergence as preachers. The few women preachers who do emerge and deliver sermons within the community often do so with the support of their families.

Keywords: *Da'wah, Women, Patriarchy, Dominance, Discrimination.*

Introduction

Da'wah, which conveys the meaning of propagating Islamic teachings, inviting people towards goodness, and preventing wrongdoing, (Al-Syirbini, 2022) is an obligation for both men and women. In Islam, men and women hold equal positions; verses of the Qur'an clarify that they share the same responsibility as servants of Allah (Surah Ad-Dhāriyāt, 51:56). Men and women have an equal standing as caliphs on Earth (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:30). They share an equivalent duty to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong (engage in preaching) (Surah An-Naḥl, 16:125; Surah Āli 'Imrān, 3:104; Surah At-Tawbah, 9:71)

In fact, in societal life, particularly within patriarchal societies, men's and women's positions are neither equal nor equivalent. This patriarchal culture asserts the belief that men are superior to women. Within this patriarchal framework, men are positioned above women and control them. (Henny Yusalia, 2014;195-201)

Biological distinctions are regarded as the foundational basis for the emergence of this cultural phenomenon. (Rakhmansyah, 2016) The perspective that men are more powerful, stronger, and more suitable for significant roles has shaped a cultural structure favouring men. This construction has persisted across generations for centuries, to the extent that society can no longer distinguish between what is referred to as inherent biological sex and gender, which is a human-created product (a cultural construction). (Susanto, 2015)

Regarding these two differentiations, Mansour Fakhri elucidates that biological sex signifies the classification or categorization of human sexes: male and female. Males are individuals who produce sperm and possess

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a penis, testes and an Adam's apple. On the other hand, females produce eggs and have reproductive organs such as ovaries, a uterus, a vagina, and structures for breastfeeding. These biological features are inherent in male and female humans, cannot be interchanged, remain permanently affixed, and are deemed inherent or divinely ordained (Iqbal et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2019). Meanwhile, gender pertains to socially and culturally constructed attributes both males and females adhere to. Traits such as nurturing, gentleness, beauty, and emotionality are associated with females, while rationality, strength, masculinity, and robustness are attributed to males. These characteristics themselves are traits that can be interchangeable between males and females. Males can exhibit emotional and nurturing attributes, just as females can possess strength, rationality, and masculinity. (Fakih, 2013) Gender differences as a social construction impact gender roles; males are considered more suited for the public sphere, while females are associated with the domestic realm. (Mulyadi, 2014; 247-61)

The distribution of these social roles has led to various forms of injustice towards women, particularly in sectors of development that aim to improve the well-being of all individuals, where gender balance is not given due attention. Gender experiences social exclusion, resulting in processes that hinder individuals, families, groups, and resources required for participation in social, economic, and political activities. (Ulfatun, 2019; 250)

Similarly, in the realm of da'wah, gender bias is present throughout the process of da'wah. The content delivered in da'wah is predominantly from a male perspective, and both the practitioners and the audience of da'wah are predominantly male. (Hasibuan, 2022) Therefore, prioritizing gender considerations in the pursuit of gender equality is imperative. There is a viewpoint advocating for the necessity of incorporating da'wah activities within empowerment programs for women. (Uswatun Niswah, 2019; 204) In the field of da'wah, in many regions of Indonesia, women form "majlis ta'lim" (religious study circles and da'wah communities), which offer programs to enhance religious understanding among women, (Ahmad Marzuki, 2016) elevate education levels, (Helmawati, 2018; 65-880) and even serve as platforms for counselling activities. (Azzuhri Rozi, 2022)

This study focuses on female preachers (da'iyahs), identifying gender injustices that occur and pinpointing the factors that give rise to these injustices that impede the emergence of female preachers. Despite the significance of this issue, it has yet to receive substantial attention in research on preaching and remains largely unexplored. This research aims to provide recommendations for achieving gender equality within preaching - *da'wah*.

Islamic preaching or da'wah in Mataram is conducted in prayer rooms, mosques, religious organizations, governmental and private institutions. A larger number of women attend preaching compared to men. However, when it comes to delivering the content (preacher), men have significant dominance. For example, at Hubbul Wathan Mosque (Islamic Center), an iconic institution for preaching in West Nusa Tenggara society located in Mataram, 23 male religious leaders deliver regular lectures three times daily. On the other hand, female preachers do not have official schedules; they only provide lectures within women's communities incidentally (Jamil et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022).

The influence of religious leaders (*Tuan Guru*) in Lombok has a long history. The rapid spread of Islam on the island of Lombok is closely linked to the role of religious leaders or the Guru. They continued the Islamic propagation initiated by early Islamic spreaders since the 17th century. (Basarudin, 2019; 31-44) Around the 18th century, from 1740 to 1935 CE, the term "*Tuan Guru*" emerged. In the Sasak Muslim community, a *Tuan Guru* is an individual who possesses expertise in religious texts 'the yellow book' (*kitab kuning*), has studied in the Middle East, and is male. (Agus Dedi Putrawan, 2012; 153-92)

In Sasak society, a *Tuan Guru* is not merely a figure providing religious guidance; the Sasak Muslims consult them to solve various problems. From naming newborns to setting wedding dates and even mediating conflicts within the community, the role of a *Tuan Guru* is significant. Suprpto cites Jeremy Kingsley's research findings, which portray religious leaders as crucial mediators in resolving societal tensions and conflicts, including political tensions and conflicts. In conflict management, the role of *Tuan Guru* – as a

religious leader – is found to be even more effective than state institutions such as the police, judiciary, formal leaders, and the like. (Suprpto, 2020)

Within the scope of patriarchal culture and the dominance of the *guru's* influence, several female preachers emerge within society. The presence of women as *da'iyahs* (female preachers) in the context of preaching holds significant meaning. This is particularly important considering various specific issues within Islam related to women, such as marriage (husband-wife relationships), divorce (*talaq*), childcare, menstruation (*haid*), postpartum bleeding (*nifas*), and others, which are more appropriately addressed by fellow women (*da'iyahs*). One determining factor for communication effectiveness in communication is the shared perception and experience between the communicator and the recipient. The more similarities between the two, the more effective the communication will be. (Ahmad S. Rustam, 2019;78–90)

The shared experiences of *da'iyahs* regarding women's issues allow them to explain religious matters in a detailed, comprehensive, and transparent manner, contributing to a more profound understanding.

Discussions about social processes, particularly those related to the relationship between men and women within a patriarchal culture, are inherently linked to discussions about gender. Therefore, theoretical perspectives and gender concepts are employed as approaches in this research. Gender is a concept used to portray the distinctions between males and females due to cultural constructions and expectations for each gender. (Nasution & Saad, 2020) Fundamentally, differences in both biological sex and gender do not become issues within society as long as these differences do not carry implications for each gender group. However, the reality is that the differences in sex and gender that have evolved within patriarchal cultures have given rise to numerous issues, with violence against women being the most critical, manifesting not only in public spaces but more prevalently within domestic spheres. Women often become victims of harassment due to their inferior status. (Linda Mshweshwe, 2020)

In addition to violence against women, gender injustices manifest in several forms: *firstly*, stereotypes, involving negative generalizations and labelling of specific genders; *secondly*, subordination, assigning a lower social status or position to one gender; *thirdly*, marginalization, restricting and distancing access for specific gender groups; and *fourthly*, double burden, assigning an excessive workload to certain groups, exceeding their actual capabilities. (Yusalia, 2014;195-201)

This study aims to address issues related to *First*, the existence of female preaching amidst the dominance of male religious leaders' *da'wah*; *Second*, the stigma and stereotypes prevalent within society concerning men and women in the context of *da'wah*; *Third*, the implications of such societal stigma and stereotypes on women's *da'wah*. The research is set in Mataram, the capital of West Nusa Tenggara province, where the Islamic Center, an iconic institution for preaching or *da'wah* in the West Nusa Tenggara community, is situated. This study employs a qualitative research design. Qualitative research involves describing data in written or spoken words and observing human behaviours. It is a methodology based on understanding and exploring human social phenomena and issues. This approach allows researcher to construct a comprehensive picture, delve into words, report detailed informant perspectives, and study contexts naturally. Qualitative research also produces results not obtained through statistical calculations and procedures. (Masrukhin, 2014) Data collection is conducted through unstructured interviews, non-participant observations, and documentation. Informants consist of: *First*, male religious leaders and female preachers in Mataram, both residing within and outside Mataram, from both Sasak and non-Sasak ethnic backgrounds. *Second*, male and female community members of Sasak ethnicity. Data analysis employs the Miles and Huberman analysis model, involving data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. (Abdul Majid, 2017)

This research aims to identify obstacles to the emergence of female preachers and devise solutions to enable women to assume equal roles with male religious leaders in delivering the message of Islam.

Result and Discussion

Gender is a set of attributes and behaviours assigned to males and females, resulting from social and cultural constructs. (Siti Rokhimah, 2014; 1–14) In Sasak society, males are constructed as powerful, strong, and rational beings, while females are perceived as emotional, gentle, and maternal. This gender construct has implications for dividing roles between the two sexes, with males occupying the public sphere and females being more suited for domestic responsibilities.

This division of roles becomes apparent within households, where males are constructed as the heads of the family, responsible for earning a livelihood outside the home. On the other hand, females are constructed as those who stay within the household, tasked with serving their husbands, caring for children, cooking, cleaning, and handling other household chores. Despite shifts in recent years where many women now work in the public domain, their recognition is different from that of male workers. Typically, working women are still considered "helping men," reflecting Sasak culture's positioning of men as breadwinners. Furthermore, women who work outside their domestic sphere must align their jobs with their inherent nature as females. (Israpil 2017; 141–50)

In Sasak society, male children hold a significantly crucial position. Many instances can be observed where mothers are expected to give birth to male children, even if they have already borne daughters. Siti Azizah, one of the informants, states:

"...*laek sedemanku bedoe anak mame, mentoakku suruk aku nganak malik andeken sak bedo'e bae anak mame, anak mame erak jari tetunjang unin, namun anak nine jak tekeberan jok balen semamen*" (*dulu sebelum saya punya anak laki-laki, mertua selalu mendorong untuk punya anak lagi, agar melahirkan anak laki-laki. Beliau bilang kalau anak laki-laki itu kelak akan jadi "tongkat", sedangkan anak perempuan akan di terbangkan, dibawa ke rumah suami*). (Wawancara, Siti Azizah, 30 Mei 2023)

"... Before I had a son, my mother-in-law would always urge me to have more children with the hope of giving birth to a son. She used to say that a son would be a "stick" as a support, while a daughter would be "flown away," taken to her husband's home. (Interview with Siti Azizah, May 30, 2023)

In Sasak society, "*Tetunjang*" signifies a staff or support someone holds onto in their old age. There is a parental hope that when they become elderly, no longer economically productive, and physically weak, a son will remain to care for them. Traditionally, this expectation translates into the division of inheritance (*fara'id*), where sons inherit houses and residences upon their parents' passing.

The influence of patriarchal culture is also evident in society's social and cultural aspects, such as marriage, where nearly all processes take place at the groom's house. In customary ceremonies like birth commemorations (*ngurisan*), funerals (*nelung, metu', nyiwa'*), and other rituals, men organise events, collective prayers, slakaran and speeches. At the same time, women typically play roles in preparing feasts.

Regarding education, males receive better educational opportunities compared to females. Literacy serves as a measure to assess educational success in society. Data from Mataram city reveals a significant disparity between females aged ten and above compared to males. The data indicates a higher illiteracy rate among females than males, at 19% compared to 10%. (Arsip Kota Mataram, 2022) Similarly, in other aspects like economics and politics, the dominance of male roles is apparent. Despite the persistence of patriarchal culture in society, shifts in gender roles are observed, particularly in urban areas with relatively higher education levels.

In da'wah, male religious leaders, typically addressed as "*Tuan Guru*," dominate nearly all aspects of da'wah. Preaching by these *Tuan Guru* – males religious leaders in Mataram is not confined to mosques and prayer halls but is also conducted within government institutions, private associations, and social-religious organizations. Da'wah are delivered in mosques and prayer halls after the *Fajr* and *Maghrib* prayers. Each mosque community has its *Tuan Guru*, who regularly provides teachings and is highly regarded. The content of preaching covers Islamic teachings encompassing beliefs (*aqidah*), religious laws (*shari'a*), and ethics-morals (*akhlak*). (Mistarija, 2018; 11–220) Some *tuan gurus* possess their reference texts, which they read aloud to the congregation.

"...Kajian di musholla dan masjid ini dihadiri audien laki-laki dan perempuan, namun secara umum kajian lebih banyak dihadiri oleh audien perempuan. Beberapa tuan guru yang merupakan narasumber dalam penelitian ini mengungkapkan hal yang senada tentang keterlibatan mereka dalam da'wah di tengah masyarakat yang dilakukan di masjid secara rutin maupun secara insidental seperti pada perayaan hari besar Islam, Maulid Nabi, peringatan kematian dan lain-lain. Konteks da'wah mereka pun tidak hanya ceramah di depan khalayak masyarakat secara umum tapi juga di lembaga sosial keagamaan seperti Muhammadiyah, Nahdatul Ulama maupun Nahdatul Wathan, lembaga pemerintah seperti pemerintah provinsi, dinas-dinas yang berada di bawah pemerintah propinsi maupun lembaga swasta seperti bank-bank swasta. (Wawancara Fahrurrozi dan Subhan, 9 Juni 2023)

"... Both male and female audiences attend studies conducted in mosques and prayer halls or *musholla*; however, generally, these sessions are attended by a larger number of female participants. Several gurus who were the sources of information in this research expressed similar sentiments regarding their involvement in spreading the message (*da'wah*) within the community. They engage in regular sessions at mosques and occasional ones during significant Islamic celebrations such as the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), commemoration of deaths, and others. Their da'wah activities extend beyond mere public lectures, encompassing engagements within religious social organizations like Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Nahdlatul Wathan, as well as government institutions like the provincial government and its affiliated agencies and even private institutions such as private banks. (Interview with Fahrurrozi and Subhan, June 9, 2023)"

In addition to the da'wah activities conducted in village mosques, the da'wah activities at the Hubbul Wathan Islamic Centre serve as a benchmark for the vitality of da'wah efforts and the development of Islam in Mataram. This mosque has become the focal point of Islamic propagation in West Nusa Tenggara. Like the da'wah in *mushollas*, local mosques and prayer halls across Mataram, the Islamic centre's da'wah activities are primarily led by men. Through documents issued by the Islamic centre, the researcher identified 43 male religious leaders who regularly conduct study sessions at the centre. These sessions encompass routine gatherings after prayers, Ramadan study sessions, and occasional discussions. Among them, 28 religious leaders consistently deliver lectures throughout the day, covering morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. These individuals hail from various religious organizations in West Nusa Tenggara, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Wathan. They also represent several Islamic institutions of higher education in Mataram. Women's da'wah activities at the Islamic centre are organized by the "majlis talim al-Hidayah" once a month. Although the audience and organizers of this majlis ta'lim are women, the preachers remain predominantly male, with few female preachers involved.

Moreover, da'wah efforts are also prominent through mass media channels. Religious leaders or *Tuan Guru* frequently serve as religious lecture presenters on Lombok TV, TVRI NTB, and RRI. Many of their lectures are available on various YouTube channels as well. Some religious leaders professionally manage YouTube channels, often collaborating with other parties.

The absence of an equivalent term to *Tuan Guru* has led women with extensive religious knowledge and involvement in da'wah activities in Mataram to be known as "ustazah" (female religious teachers). The title "*Tuan Guru*" in Sasak society is exclusively reserved for men. Therefore, Sasak society does not recognise the term "*Tuan Guru Perempuan*" (female religious teacher). "*Tuan Guru*" is specifically a term for male religious scholars, similar to "*Kyai*" for Javanese, "*Bendere*" for Madurese, "*Ajengan*" for Sundanese, "*Buya*" for Sumatrans, "*Guru Mursbid*" for Mainland Malays, "*Topanrita*" for South Sulawesi society, "*Anrong Gurunta*" for Makassarese people, and "*Anre Gurutta*" for Bugis people. (Nurul Wathoni, 2021) On the other hand, "Ustaz," meaning teacher, refers to someone who teaches religious knowledge but their authority, expertise, and charisma are subordinate to the "*Tuan Guru*." Therefore, even if a woman possesses a high level of knowledge and has studied in the Middle East, she will never be recognised as a "*Tuan Guru*." For women, attaining the status of a scholar within a patriarchal society is incredibly challenging. (Yayuk Fauziyah, 2010)

"...Secara kuantitas, jumlah pendakwah perempuan tidak sebanding dengan pendakwah laki-laki (tuan guru). Peneliti mencatat hanya ada enam (6) orang pendakwah perempuan yang rutin melakukan kajian-kajian di tengah masyarakat Mataram. Kajian-kajian yang dilakukan perempuan ini lebih terbatas dan dilakukan dalam komunitas perempuan, di

seputar tempat tinggal maupun dalam organisasi keagamaan. Jumlah da'iyah yang sangat minim memperlihatkan dominasi laki-laki atas perempuan dalam bidang ini. Beberapa perempuan yang menjadi ketua majelis ta'lim nampaknya juga tidak bisa memberikan ceramah, mereka hanya bertugas mengelola majelis ta'lim dan mendatangkan penceramah dari luar majelis ta'lim baik laki-laki maupun perempuan..."(Wawancara Sri Lathifa, 20 Mei 2023)

"... In terms of quantity, the number of female preachers is not proportional to male preachers "Tuan Guru". The researcher noted that only six (6) female preachers regularly conduct study sessions within the Mataram community. These women's study sessions are limited in scope and mostly take place within female communities, around residential areas, or within religious organisations. The minimal number of female preachers or da'iyahs highlights the dominance of men over women in this field. Some women who lead study circles 'majlis ta'lim' also seem unable to deliver lectures; their roles are primarily centred on managing the study circles or majlis ta'lim and inviting male and female external preachers to give lectures. (Interview with Sri Lathifa, May 20, 2023)

The significant potential for women's involvement is evident within religious organizations and academic circles. Within religious organizations, the opportunities for expression are boundless. Members of these organizations receive support from their leaders to be active participants. This phenomenon is observed within three prominent religious organizations in Mataram: Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdatul Wathan. Nahdatul Ulama, along with its divisions Muslimat Nahdatul Ulama and Fatayat, Muhammadiyah with Nasiatul Aisyiah, and Nahdatul Wathan with Muslimat Nahdatul Wathan, provide spaces for women to engage in da'wah activities actively. Some female preachers who emerge in the public domain have their basis in religious organizations, such as Ustazah Sri Latifah, a member of Muslimat NU, Ustazah Sofia Rawina, and Ustazah Hj. Alfiatun from the Muhammadiyah organization. These three organizations fundamentally promote gender equality. Muhammadiyah emphasizes a rational and modern Islamic concept, Nahdatul Ulama focuses on women's participation in religious matters, and Nahdatul Wathan highlights female leadership within the organization. (Abdul Nasip, 2017, 37–48)

Similarly to their involvement in religious organizations, women's roles within educational institutions, particularly in higher religious education, are also significant. Some hold higher education qualifications, including doctoral and professorial degrees, and have received education abroad. They are active in seminar spaces where they share their religious thoughts. However, they are only sometimes engaged in da'wah (preaching) conducted within the general community.

This phenomenon becomes intriguing when considering the involvement of women as speakers in religious organizational activities. Several women are engaged in religious higher education institutions, yet their participation in delivering sermons within the community could be more extensive. In truth, given the scholarly capacity of these women, as mentioned above, they should be able to deliver da'wah (preaching) within the community, especially when conveying fundamental teachings like worship rituals, ethics, and other religious teaching material. However, the community they face often needs more extensive religious education and not many of them have higher education. Data from the field indicates the presence of stigma and stereotypes against women, influenced by a patriarchal culture that positions men as superior and of higher status. This, in turn, leads to the marginalization of women by denying them access and opportunities in the field of da'wah.

Stigma and Stereotypes within Society

Society, as the audience of da'wah (*mad'u*), constitutes an essential element in the activities of da'wah, alongside the da'i (preacher), the content of da'wah, methods of da'wah, da'wah media, and the effects of da'wah. The society where da'wah takes place is not static and devoid of values. Within society, cultural values and norms develop and become deeply rooted over generations. From a sociological perspective, the audience of da'wah can be classified into several categories: isolated communities, rural areas, big and small cities, and marginalized areas within big cities. (Aminudin, 2018; 97) When considering this categorization, the research area can be classified as urban (small town) and, in some parts, still regarded as rural communities. The relationships among residents are close-knit, and the population adheres to traditions, customary norms, and religious teachings from religious scholars or the *Tuan Guru*.

The gender roles constructed within Sasak society over time have given rise to various stigmas attached to both women and men. Field data indicates several stigmas that arise within the context of da'wah as follows:

Stigma and Stereotypes of Society towards Women in the Context of Da'wah

Man	Woman
Men are not worthy of listening to lectures/advice from women	-
-	Taboo and against tradition for women to speak in public
As <i>mad'u</i> men must sit in the front	Women should be behind males
-	Women lack expertise in preaching

Customary patriarchal norms and traditions, along with the division of roles between men and women, have persisted for a long time and have been upheld by the Sasak community from generation to generation. This has resulted in limiting opportunities for women who possess potential in religion.

"...Masyarakat kita sangat tertutup terhadap peluang perempuan memiliki potensi. Adat yang berkembang memandang perempuan yang berceramah pada even tertentu atau pengajian umum, itu dianggap tabu dan menyalahi adat bahkan dianggap sebagai satu hal yang tidak baik dan tidak lazim. Tapi kalau dalam event yang bersifat kekotaan seperti yang diadakan oleh perguruan tinggi dan Lembaga-lembaga, maka peluangnya lebih besar. Kalau menurut saya yang setiap hari berinteraksi dengan masyarakat, ada beberapa hal yang membuat itu terjadi pertama, kebiasaan menjadi hukum (al-adat muhakkamah), kedua, bahwa pandangan mereka yang konservatif terhadap pendapat yang menempatkan laki-laki memiliki posisi yang lebih kuat dan dominan dan kurangnya literasi pandangan yang lebih majemuk terhadap perempuan.." (wawancara Fahrurrozi, 26 Juni 2023)

"...Our society is highly closed off to the possibility of women having potential. The prevalent tradition views women preaching at specific events or public lectures as taboo, going against customs, and even considers it inappropriate and uncommon. However, the opportunities are greater if it is within urban events organized by universities and institutions. As someone who interacts with the community daily, I think a couple of factors contribute to this. First, habits become law (al-adat muhakkamah), and second, a conservative outlook places men in a stronger and dominant position, along with a lack of diverse perspectives and literacy regarding women." (Interview with Fahrurrozi, June 26, 2023)

Like other patriarchal societies, Sasak has positioned men as leaders and breadwinners. Therefore, men are expected to be in the public sphere, while women are confined to the home as mothers, responsible for managing all household matters, nurturing, and caregiving. (Aliyudin 2015) From this perspective, giving public speeches in places like mosques, prayer rooms, institutions, or through social media is considered more suitable for men. On the other hand, women, who have their domestic sphere, are expected to stay at home and manage household affairs. Women's role in preaching should be aligned with their inherent nature as caretakers of the domestic realm. Consequently, when a woman delivers a speech in public, stepping beyond her domestic boundaries, it is viewed as taboo, contradicting tradition, and uncommon.

The implications of the cultural construction that positions men as leaders and women as followers lead to the perception that men should not listen to speeches or advice from women in the context of da'wah. As women are seen as individuals who are led and directed, it is deemed more appropriate for men to deliver speeches or advice to women, not the other way around. However, within the realm of da'wah, this stigma contradicts Islamic values, as Islam considers both men and women equal in the eyes of God. Men and women are equally capable of committing mistakes and sins but can also become chosen individuals due to their piety. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) emphasizes that only piety distinguishes them. Islam has also outlined that both men and women should advise each other in goodness and prevent each other from wrongdoing. All terms related to preaching 'da'wah' and commands to preach, as well as enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong '*amar ma'ruf nabi munkar*', are addressed collectively to both men and women.

"...Di tengah masyarakat ada anggapan bahwa laki-laki itu kurang pantas mendengar ilmu dari perempuan, karena mereka adalah yang dipimpin selama ini dalam format kehidupan kita, perempuan berada di bawah kekuasaan laki-laki, ketika saya ngaji lalu ada laki-laki saya katakan kepadanya, pak, anggap tiang papukede atau inakede sang ngebeng nesehat. (Nenek atau ibu yang akan memberikan nasehat). Laki-laki merasa kurang nyaman menerima tausiah dari perempuan. Di beberapa tempat saya ceramah kadang ada dua atau tiga orang laki-laki yang hadir, saya tidak nyaman kalau laki-laki di depan sementara perempuan jauh di belakang, biasanya saya minta yang laki-laki minggir..." (Wawancara Rabi'atul Adawiyah, 27 Juni 2023)

"... Within society, there is a belief that men are less suitable to receive knowledge from women because they have traditionally held positions of authority in our life's framework. Women have been under the dominion of men. During my teaching sessions, there have been instances where I told a man, 'Sir, consider the pillar *papukede* or *inakede*, who imparts wisdom.' (Referring to grandmothers or mothers giving advice.) Men feel uncomfortable receiving guidance or tausiah from women. In some places where I give lectures, two or three men occasionally attend. I feel uneasy when men are upfront while women are seated far behind. I usually request the men to step aside..." (Interview with Rabi'atul Adawiyah, June 27, 2023)

The cultural construct that places men in leadership roles is also evident in seating arrangements during various religious studies. The customary practices of the Sasak community dictate that men should sit in the front and women should sit behind men. This construct is not confined to the context of da'wah but extends to all aspects of life, where women are expected to be behind men.

Lectures in the context of communication are known as public communication. This type of communication requires expertise; besides communication skills, mastery of the subject matter is essential. Some scholars assert that mastery of religious knowledge, such as the Quran or its exegesis, hadith, and other religious studies, is a prerequisite to becoming a *da'i* (a preacher). (Aliyudin 2015) Regarding scholarly knowledge or mastery of the subject matter, the stereotype that women are not proficient in preaching seems fundamentally unfounded. This can be observed through several aspects: *firstly*, some women possess extensive religious knowledge and preach within the community, albeit limited to women's groups. *Secondly*, there are women with adequate religious knowledge who are graduates of Islamic boarding schools (mastery of classical texts- the yellow books), have backgrounds in Middle Eastern education, and hold doctoral and professorial degrees, even though they do not engage in verbal preaching in public spaces. They are, however, adept at scholarly communication in seminar settings.

The rooted stigma and stereotypes against women within the customs and culture of the Sasak community cannot be detached from religious matters, particularly the interpretation of religious texts. Discussing Sasak culture inevitably involves discussing Islam. Islam was introduced to Lombok in the 13th century. There are three theories explaining the arrival of Islam in Lombok.

Firstly, during the 13th century, Islam entered Lombok through traders from Gujarat via Perlak and Samudra Pasai. *Secondly*, Islam was brought to Lombok by Sunan Prapen, the son of Sunan Giri from Java. *Thirdly*, Islam reached Lombok through the eastern route, originating from Sumbawa and later propagated by traders and sailors from Makassar in the 16th century. (Basarudin, 2019; 31–44) Several factors support the relatively rapid spread of Islam in Indonesia. *Firstly*, Islam's monotheistic nature adheres to the monotheism principle, emphasizing equality and justice in societal relationships. Thus, embracing Islam aligns an individual with equality, freedom, and justice principles. *Secondly*, Islamic teachings encompass universal values. *Thirdly*, Indonesian people viewed Islam as a robust institution countering Western influence expansion led by the Portuguese and later the Dutch, which fueled colonialism and the spread of Christianity. (Nasrullah, 2019; 274–97) The flexibility and adaptability of Islam have made it easily accepted, allowing it to interact with local religions and cultures.

As a religion, Islam has become internalized within society's values; thus, the term "culture based on *syara'* (Islamic law)," where *syara'* is based on the *Kitabullah*, has become a cultural philosophy. This phenomenon exists not only in broader Indonesian society but also within the context of the Sasak Muslims. Several prevailing stigmas in society are justified or even sourced from religious interpretations rigidly and

fanatically understood by the community. In a patriarchal culture, religious teachings shape, socialise, reinforce, and even construct gender differences. (Rokhimah, 2014; 1–14)

In its verses, the Quran explains the values of equality and equity between men and women, emphasizing that one is not superior to the other. They are created from the same substance, sharing responsibilities and obligations to obey God. However, interpretations of Quranic verses have played a role in legitimizing dominance over women. (Fakih, 2008; 22–37) Some understandings of the Quranic verses about women contribute to the foundation of cultural constructs. *First*, women are perceived to have been created to fulfil the needs of men (Adam) in Paradise. *Second*, women are seen as created from the rib of men. *Third*, women are portrayed as the cause of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. These understandings shape perceptions of women. (Mulyadi dan Achmad, 2014; 247–61) Interpretations of Quranic verse 4:34, often understood as granting men absolute leadership over women in family and societal contexts, say *arrijalu qonmamura 'alammisa*, justify male dominance over women. (Ida Novianti, 2008; 255–61)

From a feminist perspective, Quranic verses and hadiths are static, but their interpretations are dynamic, allowing for gender equality principles to be established by referring to the Quranic verses. These principles can serve as a foundation for gender-based interpretations of equality by emphasizing that the Quran was revealed to establish justice and prevent discrimination. (Karimuddin and Saad, 2020; 14–237)

When religious understanding derived from interpretations of verses and hadiths supports patriarchal customs and culture, it becomes evident that among the general population with conservative mindsets, resistance to change, and a firm adherence to traditions, the opportunities for women to participate significantly in the field of da'wah are limited. On the other hand, intellectuals within educational institutions and religious organizations tend to be more open to change, possessing progressive and advanced thought patterns. This openness allows women to express their Islamic ideas through oral da'wah or preaching.

Marginalization of Women in Da'wah

One of the implications of patriarchal culture is the limited opportunities given to women, not only in education and economics but also in the realm of da'wah conducted in the public sphere. When women take on the role of preachers in incidental events such as *Manlid Nabi* (Prophet's birthday celebration), *Nuzulul Qur'an* (Qur'an revelation day), or routine lectures attended by men and women, they are perceived as violating customs and religious norms. Men are seen as more fitting to "preach" (give advice), leading to the perception that women delivering *tausiah* (religious counsel) to male audiences are inappropriate. Moreover, women are considered less skilled in delivering da'wah.

The selection of preachers for religious lectures (*da'wah*), both routine and incidental, organized especially within the community, is determined through discussions involving the chairperson and members of the *majlis ta'lim*, community leaders, and local congregation figures. They consider the content to be presented and also consider the preferred local scholars (the teachers favored by the local populace) and various other factors, including prevailing customs and traditions. (Interview with Hermansyah, May 10, 2023) Within this framework, women need more opportunities to be invited as preachers.

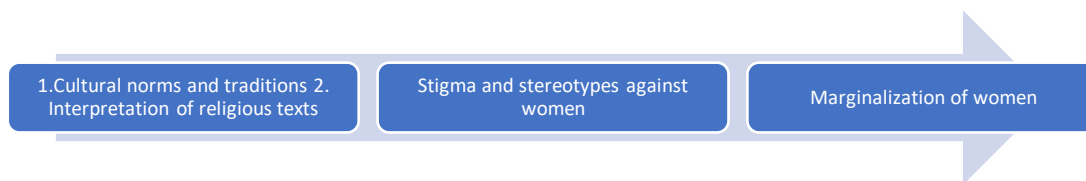
Typically, the study groups 'majlis ta'lim' or the administrators of mosques and prayer rooms (*mushollas*) in Mataram are predominantly composed of local male figures. In this context, it is rare for women to become preachers in these study sessions. This process of marginalization is not only carried out by male community members but also by women themselves. Women provide more opportunities for male teachers to preach than female preachers. (Interview with Warni, May 15, 2023)

The process of marginalization brings detrimental consequences for women. (Siti Zubaedah, 2010; 243–54) The notion that women's activities are unproductive and of low value leads to their marginalization. (Zubaedah, 2010; 243–54) One dimension of women's marginalization is their exclusion from productive wage-earning work. (Nur Aisyah, 2013; 203–24)

In the context of *da'wah*, while financial compensation (honorarium) is not the primary focus and *da'wah* are largely motivated by sincere devotion to Allah SWT, it is undeniable that *da'wah* activities also generate material gains and prestige within the community.

The marginalization of women in *da'wah* within the Mataram community has persisted for a significant duration. Cultural influences and interpretations of religious texts have shaped the community's mindset, resulting in various stigmas and stereotypes that limit opportunities for women in *da'wah*. As a result, there is a noticeable disparity in the number of female preachers (*da'iyah*) compared to male teachers (*Tuan Guru*) in religious study sessions.

The Flow of The Process of Marginalization of Women in Da'wah



The patriarchal cultural norms of Sasak society and the interpretations of religious texts give rise to stigmas and stereotypes within the community, leading to the marginalization of women.

Some female preachers (*da'iyah*) who emerge amidst this marginalization process explain that their presence in the public sphere is often the result of "*opportunities created*" by those close to them. For instance, Ustazah Rabiatul Adawiyah began her public engagement due to the encouragement and opportunity provided by her husband, who is a religious scholar. Similarly, Ustazah Sri Lathifa's debut in public preaching was facilitated by her father, who included her as a speaker on a radio program, RRI.

This pattern is observed in several other *da'iyah* as well, where their emergence in the public sphere is influenced by the support system of their immediate family, which opens doors, motivates, and encourages them, thus instilling the confidence to become preachers.

In contrast, some knowledgeable women who possess the qualifications for preaching feel lacking in confidence to take up the role. (Interview with Sri Latifa, May 20, 2023) However, confidence is an essential prerequisite for effective preaching. It enables speakers to address an audience without nervousness or discomfort.

Confidence allows preachers to convey their message clearly and comprehensively, fostering interaction with the audience to enhance the reception of *da'wah* material and their message; This phenomenon finds greater acceptance among the audience (*mad'u*). Several studies indicate that one's environment significantly influences the development of self-confidence. (Weny SS, 2020) The impact of patriarchal culture on the diminished self-confidence of women in preaching presents an intriguing avenue for further research.

Conclusion

Mataram, situated in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, is a region coloured by Sasak culture with patriarchal undertones, influencing family and community dynamics. With a predominantly Muslim population, Mataram exhibits a commitment to religious life and preaching. In this city, *da'wah* activities are primarily led by expert teachers who serve as resource persons (preachers). Oral *da'wah* is conducted in prayer rooms, mosques, religious organizations, and governmental and private institutions. However, women's participation in preaching is restricted, often confined to women's communities. Quantitatively, the number of female preachers is considerably smaller than 'guru' their male counterparts. Several stigmas and stereotypes stemming from patriarchal culture have implications for *da'wah* practices. One notable

implication is the marginalization of women, evident in their limited inclusion as public speakers. Some women feel uncertain and insecure about appearing in public spaces, yet those who receive support from their closest circles gain the confidence to engage in preaching.

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