

## Reinterpreting Religious Texts on Gender Equality: The Perspective of Ahmad Syafii Maarif

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**Abstract:** This study examines Ahmad Syafii Maarif's (commonly known as Buya Syafii Maarif) views on gender equality, highlighting the distinctive aspects of his interpretation of religious texts, particularly regarding family and societal roles. Using a descriptive-critical methodology, the study reveals that Buya Syafii Maarif's views on gender equality within the family emphasize justice, fairness, and respect for women's rights, all rooted in Islamic principles. He argues that a correct interpretation of Islam supports equality between men and women, including within family relationships. A central aspect of his thinking is the concept of complementary roles between men and women, rejecting the idea of gender-based superiority. He critiques traditional views that confine women's roles to the domestic sphere and advocates for greater female participation in decision-making and social contributions. Buya Syafii Maarif also challenges interpretations of religious texts that have historically justified gender inequality, asserting that the Qur'an promotes respect and cooperation between the genders. Education plays a key role in his vision, as he emphasizes its transformative power in empowering women to make significant contributions to both family and society. He advocates for equal opportunities for women in education and public life to foster a just and prosperous society. This study demonstrates that Buya Syafii Maarif's vision of gender equality reflects a balanced and just understanding of Islam, one that encourages cooperation and equality to achieve harmony in both the family and society.

**Keywords:** Religious Texts; Gender Equality; Ahmad Syafii Maarif.

### Introduction

In 2022, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) released its Annual Note (CATAHU) on gender-based violence (GBV). The report documented 338,496 cases of GBV. These cases were categorized as follows: 3,838 complaints were submitted directly to Komnas Perempuan, 7,029 cases were reported through service institutions, and a staggering 327,629 cases were recorded by the Religious Justice Agency (BADILAG) (Komnasperempuan.go.id, 2022). This alarming data serves as a wake-up call, emphasizing the urgent need for collective attention to the state of equality and humanity. Without tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect, differences in perspectives and interests among the people of this nation risk undermining its unity and the cohesion of all its interconnected elements.

Based on this, various ideas from local scholars, both male and female, have significantly contributed to addressing gender issues in society (Afif et al., 2022; Juliansyahzen et al., 2024). What stands out is the shift in the epistemological approach to interpreting or deriving laws from sources such as the Quran, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts (Fakhria et al., 2023). One of the Indonesian figures engaged in this discourse was Ahmad Syafii Maarif. He is a reformer (*mujadid*) who has significantly influenced in analyzing, understanding, and addressing various issues related to nationality, community (*keumatan*), and humanity. His influence extends to critical issues such as human rights, gender equality, and feminism

(Qibtiyah, 2023). In his book *Islam in the Framework of Indonesia and Humanity*, Buya Syafii outlined four primary concerns that troubled him. *First*, he was deeply concerned about the nation being fragmented by religious politics, narrow interests, and local or primordial sentiments. *Second*, he observed a disconnect between religious teachings and everyday reality, where religious practices do not align with moral improvement. While many individuals are devout in their worship, corruption remains rampant, and violence continues to damage the nation. *Third*, he identified the rise of cultural and mental health issues within society. *Fourth*, he highlighted the persistent issues of poverty and ignorance that continue to afflict the majority of Muslims in Indonesia (Maarif, 2009).

In the academic realm, the exploration of Ahmad Syafii Maarif's thoughts has been extensively researched and discussed by scholars. Several works have used Buya Syafii's ideas as research material, including *Islamic humanism in the thought of Ahmad Syafii Maarif* by Nuraini (Nuraini, 2019), exemplifying the simplicity, tolerance, and integrity of Ahmad Syafii Maarif (Febriantanto & Tokoh, 2019), *political thought of state and religion: Ahmad Syafii Maarif* (Sholikin, 2013), *transmission of Islamic reform from the United States to Indonesia: studying Fazlur Rahman's legacy through the works of Ahmad Syafii Maarif* (Burhani, 2013), and *Ahmad Syafii Maarif's Islamic moderation (his contribution to religious plurality in Indonesia)* (Saputra et al., 2021), among many other studies. As a figure deeply concerned with humanitarian issues, Buya Syafii also addressed gender issues as part of his intellectual discourse. Beyond the general studies mentioned above, several works focus specifically on women and gender issues, such as *Ahmad Syafii Maarif's intertextual interpretation of women's roles in the public sphere in QS. An-Nisa: 34* (Alwi, 2019), *Ahmad Syafii Maarif's thoughts on the position of women in politics* (Fatmawati & Anwar, 2020), *from ego-system to eco-system: thoughts and practices of Buya Syafii Maarif & Amin Abdullah* (Qibtiyah, 2023), and *Mother of Humanity: Women's Notes for 86 Years of Buya Ahmad Syafii Maarif* (Ta'arufi, Aulia, 2021), among others.

Building on previous studies, this research aims to uncover the distinctiveness of Buya Syafii's approach to understanding religious texts. The study seeks to answer two primary questions: first, how does Buya Syafii conceptualize gender within the family sphere? Second, how does he view gender in the social sphere? This research is crucial for addressing contemporary social issues, particularly those arising from conflicting gender interpretations that often deviate from the context and principles of religious texts. By employing Buya Syafii's thought framework, this study endeavors to develop contextual and balanced gender interpretations rooted in his approach.

## Literature Review

### Ahmad Syafii Maarif

Ahmad Syafii Maarif, commonly known as Buya Syafii Maarif, was born on May 31, 1935, in Sumpur Kudus, Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatra. He was the youngest of four children born to Ma'rifah Rauf and Fathiyah. Buya Syafii completed his Bachelor's degree at FKIP Cokroaminoto Solo and then earned another Bachelor's degree at FKIP Yogyakarta. He later pursued a Master's degree in History at Ohio University in the United States, followed by a Doctorate in Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago (Rahmadi, 2019). It was during his time in Chicago that Syafii began studying under Fazlur Rahman, an Egyptian Islamic reformer, who had a significant influence on his thinking, especially regarding the interpretation of the Quran (Damanhuri, 2016). One of the key Quranic teachings that Syafii deeply understood was the principle that there is no compulsion in religion.

Buya is a columnist and also an academic at IAIN Yogyakarta Post-Graduate Program who teaches social studies at IKIP Yogyakarta. He writes articles in *Panji Masyarakat* magazine, *Suara Muhammadiyah*, *Genta*, in addition to the daily *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, Yogyakarta (Sujono, 2023). Buya's track record in the scientific field can be seen from Buya's various writings, of the many works of Buya there are several works that we can list in this paper, such as: *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan Dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, this book was first published in 2009 (Maarif, 2009). This book contains reflective ideas from a Muslim scholar and national teacher, Ahmad Syafii Maarif. The idea was born from a sense of compassion

that Muslims should not question the relationship between Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity given the majority population of the archipelago. Then, *Islam, Humanity, And The Indonesian Identity: Reflections On History*, first published on June 29, 2018 (Maarif, 2018). Buya Syafii Maarif in this book discusses critical contemporary issues such as democracy, human rights, religious freedom, the status of women, and the future of Islam. Furthermore, *Membumikan Islam*, first published in 1995 (Maarif, 2019a). In this book, Buya describes that Islam in the new teaching map must have a non-mazhab and non-sectarian character.

Buya Syafii Maarif once explained that the essence of his spirituality derives from the spirit of Islam rooted in the Qur'an. This spirit seeks to emphasize the universal values present in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Naturally, the transformation of Buya's thought is closely linked to his time at the Chicago hermitage under the mentorship of Fazlur Rahman. In his autobiography, Buya shared that it was Prof. Fazlur Rahman who expanded his understanding of the universal messages found in the Qur'an. Therefore, Buya's spiritual outlook was shaped by an interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, as taught by Fazlur Rahman (Rahmadi, 2019).

### Gender in Religious Texts

Basically, the spirit of the relationship between men and women in Islam is fair (equal) (Qadri & Siregar, 2023). Therefore, subordination of women is a belief that has developed in society that is not in accordance or contrary to the spirit of justice taught by Islam (Napsiah et al., 2024; Rosnaeni, 2021). The formation of Islamic law has largely been shaped by masculine and patriarchal influences. As a result, many religious interpretations and viewpoints are skewed by gender bias (Abdullah et al., 2024). This masculine orientation is also evident in the formal practice of Islam in Indonesia. The patriarchal tendencies in the Indonesian government's religious perspective often result in injustices and the marginalization of women's needs and interests (Mun'im et al., 2024). There are several variables that can be used as benchmarks in analyzing the principles of gender equality in the Qur'an (Huda & Hidayati, 2023; Ridwan, 2022; Umar, 2019). *First*, men and women are both servants, as Allah SWT says in Surah Az-Zariyat verse 56 which means: "And I did not create jinn and humans but that they worship me". This verse implies that there is no difference between men and women in their capacity as servants. Both are equally potential and have the same opportunity to become the best servants, namely servants who have piety. *Second*, men and women as caliphs on earth, as affirmed in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 30 which means: "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I want to make a caliph on earth." They said, "Do you intend to make therein those who destroy and shed blood, while we praise you and sanctify your name?" He said, "Indeed, I know what you do not know". Furthermore, in Surah Al-Anam verse 165, which means: "And it is He who has made you rulers over the earth, and has exalted some of you above others by a few degrees, to test you in what He has given you. Verily, your Lord is swift in His torment and He is Forgiving, Merciful".

*Third*, both men and women accept the primordial covenant, pledging to the existence of Allah SWT. They share the same responsibility in holding the mandate and accepting this covenant with God. As is well-known, before a child is born from their mother's womb, they must first agree to a covenant with God (Ma'ruf, 2016). This is mentioned in Surah Al-A'raf, verse 172: "And (remember), when your Lord brought forth the sons of Adam from their foreskins, and Allah bore witness to their souls (and said): "Am I not your Lord?" they answered: "Yes (You are our Lord), we bear witness". (We do this) so that on the Day of Resurrection you will not say: "We (the Children of Adam) were ignorant of this (the oneness of God). *Fourth*, Adam and Eve were actively involved in the cosmic drama. All the verses that recount the story of Adam and his spouse in heaven, up until their expulsion to earth, consistently highlight the active participation of both parties by using the pronoun for two people (هما, *huma*), referring to Adam and Eve. This can be seen in several examples. For instance, Adam and Eve were created in Paradise and enjoyed all the blessings and facilities of Paradise, as stated in QS. Al-Baqarah, verse 35, as follows: "And We said: 'O Adam, inhabit by you and your wife this paradise, and eat of its abundant and good food wherever you please, and do not approach this tree<sup>10</sup>, which causes you to be among the wrongdoers'. *Fifth*, men and women possess the same potential for achievement. The ideal concept of gender awareness emphasizes

that individual success, whether in spiritual matters or professional careers, should not be monopolized by either gender. Both men and women are equally capable of achieving the highest accomplishments. As affirmed in Surah An-Nisa verse 124: "Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer, they shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be wronged in the least" (Umar, 2019).

## Method

This research employs a descriptive-critical method, with a particular focus on the analytical examination of existing sources and data. The study relies on established theories and concepts, interpreting them through relevant writings that inform the discussion. As a library-based study, data is primarily collected through books and journal articles pertinent to the research topic. The data collection techniques utilized in this study include interviews and documentary analysis. The collected data are then analyzed using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which involves three key stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This approach allows for a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the data, ensuring a well-rounded interpretation of the research subject.

## Results and Discussion

### Buya Syafii Maarif's Perspectives on Gender Equality within the Family

Buya Syafii Maarif's thought is extraordinary and is known to challenge stagnation in various aspects, such as social, political, religious, and cultural that tend to be narrow, fanatical, and divide the unity of the nation. Therefore, many compare Buya Syafii's national thought with Gus Dur's, as both have tolerant, pluralist views and oppose identity politics that arise due to the inability to understand the root of the problem. Buya's character emerged because he always prioritized the integrity of the nation. Buya is a West Sumatran figure who once served as Chairman of PP Muhammadiyah and has made great contributions in the fields of religion, nationality and society. Therefore, the Maarif Institute that he founded is a manifestation of how Buya plays a role in advancing and educating the nation.

Buya's support for gender equality and justice is unquestionable, which is reflected in his written works. One of his books, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan*, expresses his views on the essence of women's equal position and rights in Islam. Buya is known as a national figure who emphasizes the values of humanism and nationalism. In terms of humanism, Buya's attention and thoughts on gender justice are very clear. In fact, Buya emphasized that family and education are two very important elements in achieving gender equality and justice. His thoughts on the role of women in politics are also very clear and firm. For Buya, women have the same right to become political leaders, as long as they have good abilities, are moral, and get permission from their husbands. This is certainly encouraging for women activists, because his alignment is consistent in promoting the noble ideals of the nation in accordance with the rails of the constitution. Buya's thoughts can be seen when browsing through his books, as well as his autobiography entitled *Titik-Titik Kisar di Perjalananku: The Autobiography of Ahmad Syafii Maarif*. Although his views and writings do not specifically highlight gender issues, it can be clearly seen that his stance in supporting the role of women in politics, anti-violence against women, and not supporting the practice of polygamy, is clear evidence of how he understands and fights for gender equality as a whole.

In the context of domestic relations, Buya Syafii challenged the traditional view that confines a wife's role to being merely a companion or caretaker of household affairs. He believed that wives should engage in broader societal and personal issues, not just tasks like organizing food supplies or focusing solely on domestic and private matters such as managing meals or fulfilling spousal duties (Adriyanti, 2021). For many men, there may still be a tendency to perpetuate gender biases by assuming that household chores such as cleaning, sweeping, shopping for daily necessities, and ironing are exclusively the wife's responsibilities. Buya Syafii, however, rejected this notion and exemplified an alternative approach by serving as a role model to challenge and reduce such biases (Al-Krienciehie, 2021). Furthermore, he was critical of polygamy, articulating his criticism in a reflective and nuanced manner. He raised questions

about the motivations behind women accepting polygamous relationships, the emotional impact of being a second or third wife, and the jealousy experienced by existing wives when their husbands take additional spouses (Adriyanti, 2021).

Buya Ahmad Syafii Maarif, one of Indonesia's most prominent Muslim intellectuals, offers a profound and progressive perspective on gender equality within the household (Sofiana et al., 2024). For him, the family represents the smallest social unit, playing a strategic role in shaping a just and prosperous society. Therefore, relationships within the household must reflect the values of justice, compassion, mutual respect, and reciprocity between husband and wife. This perspective is grounded in his progressive interpretation of religious texts and his commitment to social justice.

Buya Syafii Maarif critically examines patriarchal culture, which dominates many traditional family structures. Patriarchy often perpetuates the notion that men are the heads of households with absolute authority, while women are relegated to subordinate domestic roles. Buya Syafii views this structure as not only limiting women's potential but also creating imbalances that harm all family members. He emphasizes that responsibilities within the household — ranging from domestic chores to child-rearing and financial management — should be shared fairly based on mutual agreement and individual capacities. In his view, the relationship between husband and wife is not hierarchical but rather a partnership of equals. This perspective also critiques narrow interpretations of religious texts that are often used to justify male dominance in the household.

Buya Syafii Maarif considers gender equality a principle inherently aligned with Islamic teachings. In his interpretation, Islam places men and women on equal footing as servants of God (*'abdullah*) and stewards (*khalifah*) on Earth. He frequently refers to Qur'anic verses that emphasize reciprocity, such as QS. Ar-Rum (30:21), which highlights *mawaddah wa rahmah* (love and compassion) as the foundation of marital relationships. Furthermore, he asserts that Islam does not advocate for gender-based discrimination. On the contrary, Islam upholds justice and respect for individual rights. In the context of the household, this means that both husband and wife have complementary rights and responsibilities, without one dominating the other. He also critiques literalist interpretations of religious texts often used to reinforce patriarchal norms, advocating instead for a more contextual and inclusive understanding (Tasbih et al., 2024).

Buya Syafii Maarif believes that gender equality in the household has far-reaching implications beyond the family unit. A harmonious and just household serves as the foundation for an inclusive and equitable society. In families that uphold gender equality, children grow up with a healthy understanding of gender relations and are better equipped to establish fair relationships in the future. Moreover, Buya Syafii sees the empowerment of women in the household as a strategic step toward broader social transformation. When women are given the space to actively contribute, both within the household and in society, they can create significant positive impacts, such as improving educational quality, alleviating poverty, and strengthening family economies. This perspective underscores that gender equality is not merely a matter of individual justice but also a critical factor in collective social development.

As an intellectual committed to humanistic values, Buya Syafii Maarif views gender equality in the household as integral to the broader struggle for building a more civilized society. For him, the household is the first setting where moral, ethical, and justice-based values are instilled. If households fail to reflect these values, it becomes challenging for broader society to achieve harmony. Buya Syafii also connects gender equality to the principles of democracy and human rights. In his perspective, gender equality is not a concept that contradicts tradition or religion; rather, it is integral to the aspirations of a modern and civilized society. By promoting gender equality, the household can become a space where individuals feel valued, protected, and supported in realizing their full potential.

Buya Ahmad Syafii Maarif's views on gender equality in the household integrate the values of justice, religious teachings, and the spirit of humanism. He rejects traditional views that support male dominance in the household and advocates for egalitarian relationships grounded in love, respect, and collaboration. These perspectives are not only locally relevant but also provide significant intellectual

contributions to the global discourse on gender and family. By emphasizing the importance of gender equality within households, Buya Syafii Maarif lays a conceptual foundation for building a more inclusive, just, and prosperous society, aligning with the collective aspirations of humanity.

### **Buya Syafii Maarif's Perspectives on Gender Equality in Social and Community Life**

In the book *Mencari Autentisitas dalam Dinamika Zaman*, especially in the fourth section entitled "Building Indonesia's Land of Hope," Buya Syafii discusses Qur'an Surah An-Nisa verse 34. He highlights that the verse is often quoted or translated with an understanding that places men in a superior position over women. However, Buya emphasized that the principle of gender equality is fully in line with the teachings of the Qur'an. He also noted that in today's reality, the responsibility of earning a living is not only limited to the husband, but can be a joint role between husband and wife in the public sphere to improve the welfare of the family, or even vice versa (Maarif, 2019b).

Buya also explained the Qur'anic verse that illustrates equality between men and women, namely the Qur'an Surah At-Taubah verse 71, "And, the believers, men and women, they are helpers to one another, they enjoin good and forbid evil; they establish prayer, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They will have mercy from Allah. Indeed, Allah is mighty and wise". According to Buya, the verse clearly affirms the equal role of women and men in various broader aspects of life. Unfortunately, pretexts in the name of religion are often used by women to receive certain treatment, including verbal violence, or by men to dominate women, as if religion justifies such actions. However, Buya emphasized that the Qur'an strongly supports the principle of gender equality, without giving superiority to one sex over the other. This view is based on the teachings of the Qur'an which asserts that glory in the sight of Allah is open to anyone who is pious, both men and women. The Qur'an guarantees that pious male and female Muslims will attain glory in the sight of Allah, provided they strive to achieve it. Formal positions, whether male or female, will be respected by the people if they are pious by upholding justice and working hard to improve the common welfare without discrimination. Justice means putting something in its right place, while injustice is the opposite, putting something in the wrong place. A just leader, whether male or female, must be able to fulfill these criteria as basic elements in exercising leadership (Hudiono, 2021).

Buya Syafii said that the Qur'an does not have hands and feet, so humanity must play a role as the embodiment of Qur'anic values. In this way, Islam as rahmatan lil alamin can be realized and delivered to every human being without any oppression stemming from the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses that are misused to undermine certain parties. According to Buya, Allah is the Most Just, the Most Compassionate, and the Most Merciful, so His verses cannot possibly reflect injustice or wrath without cause. Buya tried to translate these verses through his thoughts and behavior. Although Buya Syafii's thoughts on gender equality are rarely found explicitly in his books, a work entitled *Ibu Kemanusiaan: Catatan-catatan Perempuan Untuk 86 Tahun Buya Ahmad Syafii Maarif*, written by women activists as his 86th birthday present, attempts to present a stronger gender perspective. Some of the contributors to this book felt that Buya had discussed gender issues less than topics such as Islam and the state or Islam and democracy. As such, some of the writings in this book also serve as constructive criticism of Buya's views on gender issues.

Aminah Wadud states that in the Islamic social structure, women are often placed second to men (Wadud-Muhsin, 1994). This view is based on the fact that religion justifies the subordination of women, by referring to the verse Q.S an-Nisa verse 34, "*ar-Rijalu Qawwamuna al-nisa.*" The view is often contentious, with those in favor of the view arguing that women should not have more authority than men. Meanwhile, those who oppose this view push for a reconstruction of Islamic teachings, both in the Qur'an and Hadith, relating to the position of women in society. Buya Syafii was on the side that opposed this view. Besides Buya Syafii, many other feminist figures such as Assia Djebar, Fatimah Marnissi, Zaynab al-Ghazali, Nawal El-Sadawi, Asma Barlas, Amina Wadud, Musda Mulia, and others are fighting for women's rights and equality in social life. They are part of a modern movement that seeks to improve the status of women who are oppressed by the patriarchal system created by certain parties (Alwi, 2019).

History records that before the advent of Islam, women endured tremendous suffering. The birth of a daughter was often seen as a burden to the family (see QS. An-Nahl: 58-59). Women were considered to have a very low status, and practices like the live burial of female infants (see QS. At-Takwiir: 8-9) were common, as well as other forms of oppression such as being denied inheritance and other rights typically granted to men. According to historical records, the oppression of women was a widespread practice among the Jahiliyyah society (Alwi, 2019). During that time, the prevailing social paradigm viewed women as living only to serve and remain under the control of men (Muqoyyidin, 2013).

Regarding Buya Syafii's views on gender, there are only two works related to gender among his hundreds of writings, but these two writings are highly significant because they deeply discuss the core of his perspective, his concern, and his support for women. The first writing is a new sub-chapter in the second edition of the book "Islam, Kebangsaan, dan Keindonesiaan" published in 2015, titled "Status Perempuan Dalam Islam." This addition was included based on the suggestion of Buya Syafii's friend, feminist figure from Nahdlatul Ulama, K.H. Husein Muhammad. In the first edition of the book (2009), Buya Syafii did not address gender issues. The second writing is an opinion series published in *Republika* in 2017 about Malala Yousafzai, a young activist for women's educational rights in Pakistan, under the title "Malala: Oase di Bumi yang Tandus." Buya Syafii's work "Status Perempuan Dalam Islam" is a tribute to K.H. Husein Muhammad, a charismatic cleric from Nahdlatul Ulama and founder of the Fahmina Institute in Cirebon. Buya Syafii shared that Kiyai Husein was a figure who worked tirelessly to place women in their rightful, dignified position according to Islam as understood justly. Buya Syafii emphasized that had Kiyai Husein not raised his critique, this important addition would not have been included in the second edition. In fact, both Buya Syafii and Kiyai Husein shared the same stance on gender equality (Khisbiyah, 2021).

Buya Syafii critiques the dominance of Islamic discourse controlled by men, which has led to the marginalization of women from public life. He provides the example of a Javanese tradition that views women as *konco wingking* (back companions), a cultural notion that limits the movement and space of women, further exacerbated by restricted access to education for women. A similar situation also occurred in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, where women were banned from leaving their homes and denied access to education. The same circumstances apply to women in Saudi Arabia, who live under pressure due to the restrictions imposed on them. Ironically, these restrictions are often justified by religious texts used as references (Sa'dan, 2021).

Buya Syafii strongly emphasized the importance of gender equality. However, he did not view gender equality as something unrestrained or uncontrollable. He argued that there are limits that must be followed in advocating for gender equality. For instance, certain inherent boundaries that are part of every individual's nature cannot be ignored, such as the biological ability to conceive and give birth. These are limitations that cannot be denied, and it would contradict basic values and religious teachings if women were to reject or refuse pregnancy and childbirth on the grounds of gender equality. With his humility, simplicity, and respect for women, Buya Syafii was able to foster relationships that allowed women—whether ordinary women or empowered female figures—to feel dignified and respected (Khisbiyah, 2021). In this perspective, men who belittle or demean women are clearly outside the realm of civilization. However, in order to uphold their dignity, women must also preserve their own honor and self-respect (Maarif, 2019b).

## Conclusion

Buya Syafii Maarif's thoughts on gender equality within the family emphasize the principles of fairness, justice, and respect for women's rights in the context of Islamic teachings. Buya Syafii believes that Islam, when understood correctly, provides a foundation for equality between men and women, including within the family unit. One of the key aspects of Buya Syafii's perspective is that men and women have complementary roles in the family, but this does not imply that one gender is superior to the other. Both have essential responsibilities and rights within the family structure. In his view, the traditional

understanding that women are solely responsible for domestic duties, such as taking care of children and managing household chores, is limiting and does not reflect the broader role women can play in family decisions and society at large. Buya Syafii also critiques the interpretation of certain religious texts that have historically been used to justify gender inequality. He emphasizes that the Qur'an does not advocate for the subjugation of women but, rather, calls for mutual respect and cooperation between men and women. According to Buya Syafii, the Qur'an supports the idea of gender equality, and any interpretation that portrays women as inferior to men is a misreading of Islamic principles. Furthermore, Buya Syafii underscores the importance of education for both men and women. In his view, education empowers women to contribute meaningfully to both the family and society. He advocates for equal opportunities for women to access education and participate in public life, ensuring that both genders can work together to achieve prosperity and justice within the family. In conclusion, Buya Syafii's thoughts on gender equality in the family are rooted in a just and balanced interpretation of Islam, where both men and women are valued equally and encouraged to work together for the betterment of the family and society.

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## Conflict of Interest

This article does not contain any conflicts of interest.

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