



Women`s Leadership and Gender Equality in Aceh: A Socio-historical Perspective

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Abstract

This research analyzes the problems of women`s leadership and gender equality in Aceh. The analysis is focused on the basic philosophical of women`s leadership in Aceh. The qualitative-descriptive was used as the research approach. The primary data were collected by interview and observation to the informants. The secondary data were taken from journals, books, and other reliable resources. The results of the research show that the spiritual and intellectual values of Islam and *adat* (custom) become the basic philosophical of Acehnese women`s leadership. Woman and man have equal roles, opportunities, rights, and responsibility to be a leader in the society based on Al-Qur`an and *Sunnah*, which are aligned with the Acehnese`s culture.

Keywords: Leadership; Acehnese`s Woman; Gender Equality

Introduction

The problems of women commonly associated with gender or feminist movements. A woman is a beautiful creature who has important roles in the society (Kartono., 1992). In the socio-political order in Southeast Asia, that is generally fabricated by paternalistic society, has located women under the man`s authorities. In this construction, women are domesticated and privatized as a silent object (Carey and Houben., 2016). This milieu has sprouted gender movements. The problems of gender are interlinked with the socio-cultural structure and political construction of society. Gender is an inherent trait of women and men, which are constructed socially and culturally by society. Gender does not only refer to the sex differentiation. Gender is specifically defined as the differentiation of role and position of women and man in society. This definition is relative, thus, it is transformable depend on the social, political, and cultural changes in society (Asrini., 2013).

According to the Engineer and Mernisi`s argumentations, the problems of gender are affected by the socio-religious aspect of society. In their argumentation, the main problem was lies on the masculine interpretation of sharia. They argue that Islam truly supports the gender equality. Engineer (1992) explains more detail that sharia is always reinterpretable. Sharia was formed through an evolution process, which it had been reinterpretation time after time according to its milieu. In the 12th century, the reinterpretation of sharia had been stopped due to the political interests of the elite. This caused a negative effect that sharia not accommodating to the oppressed.

The problems of gender also closely relate to the concept of power relation and class in society. Scott (1988) defines gender as a basic element of social relations based on the idea that the difference between the sexes is the primary way to symbolizing the power relations. Furthermore, Scott provides a further analytical stance to see the four interlinked elements in gender and power relations:

First, it invites us to look the making of women as a cultural symbol that refers to a specific representation. Second, normative concepts, which express the doctrines of religion, education, science, law, politic and determine the interpretation of the symbol, should be understood deeply. Third, the analysis should be directed at how gender is constructed through social institutions and social organizations. Fourth, we should examine how gender identity is substantively constructed to be a subjective identity, and link the findings with a series of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations.

In the context of power and class, the discussion of women's role is located in the opportunities of women to become a leader. The women had opportunities to become a leader in society. It affects the issues of gender equality and the problem of discrimination when the women had equal opportunities to become a leader in society. Ideally, women could take part to participate and control the construction of a better society. Of course, this will lead to the welfare of society through equality and fairness between women and men. Thus, the women ideally could move forward and have an important role in leadership.

In Indonesia, the situation becomes worse due to legacies of New Order Government, which posited women as a tool to strengthen the state. Consequently, the women are marginalized and lost their rights (Suryakusuma., 2011). In 1978, women's role was accommodated by the Indonesian government through *Garis-Garis Besar Hukum Negara (GBHN)* or *The Outlines of State's Law* and the establishment of *Kantor Menteri Urusan Muda Urusan Peranan Wanita*. The GBHN mentioned explicitly seven points of women's role encompassing women's rights, women's responsibility, and women's opportunities to take a part in the state's development. These outlined that women's also become a subject in state's development and should take a role in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. Furthermore, the women's position and roles were escalated by President Instruction Number 9 of 2000 about the gender mainstreaming policy. This policy hinted that the national development should consider equal participation, access, and control between women and men. However, the women and gender problems are still sprouting continuously in many regions in Indonesia. Many people in Indonesia have not understood the gender issues. There are many disparities in the implementation of gender equality in Indonesia.

In case of Aceh, women are in a unique position. Structurally, Islamic law, tradition, and social order construct Acehnese women, which generally posit women under the man authorities. However, in the historical perspectives, the Acehnese women are under the shadows of four Queens, who rule the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate in the 15th to 17th century. This historical legacy has highly influence on gender movements, as a narration and discourse to counter the gender inequality in Aceh. Scott (1988) argues "while Notions of 'language' have allowed Historians to call for a major epistemological shift," gender "has had no such effect on their conceptions of politics or class". Women are only used in the explanation of social roles, but they are not brought into the epistemological level to provide analytical guidance, both in the discourses of nationalism or social classes. Women are considered irrelevant in the "political and social construction of meaning".

In the historical account, women are threatened by the concept of masculinity, tend to just as "physical persons" alone (Scott., 1988). This discourse makes society posits the presence of women in the economic, political and social activity only as a floating body that does not perform a central role in the making of history or in the construction and reconstruction of meanings and power relations. Following Weedon, we also need to look at the discursive relationship between nationalism and gender relations in

the level of institutions and social practices. Scott advanced to not only argue that all Nationalisms are gendered (McClintock., 1993). Scott has formulated a definition of gender to provide a clear insight to see how the discourse of gender relations and nationalism are work at the level of institutions and social practices. With this stance, Scott provokes to not only care about the exclusion of women from the discourse but also how women are conceptually treated when they are involved in the discourse.

This article is trying to depict the Acehese women`s in socio-historical perspective. The discussion will be focused on the historical aspect of women`s leadership in Aceh and its analysis in the perspectives of gender equality. Referring to the history of Acehese women, the present struggle for women`s rights is not merely a product of western thinker that secular and decadent. The authors believe that it has rooted in the social structure of indigenous people, for instance in the case of Acehese women`s leadership. The vast majority of researcher agrees that the presence of four queens who led Aceh, as well as the emergence of several women warlords, has provoked that there should be a discussion about the role of women in the public sphere, which tend to be discriminatory. This shows the progress of women thought in Aceh had begun long ago since the 17th to the 19th century before the study of gender and women begin. The narration of Acehese women's leadership can serve as an example for other regions in Indonesia. Possessed a long history of this area proves that Acehese women devote themselves in various fields, both as a leader in the lowest level or in the highest leaders in the community.

History of Women in Aceh

Comparison of two version of *Hikayat Perang Sabil* or the history of Holy War, written in the 17th century and at the end of the 19th century, give us a lot of information that the Acehese women are involved as prominent actors in the construction of collectivism in the 17th century. Before the end of the 19th century, Acehese women played an important role as queen, a prime minister, the head of an autonomous region called *uleebalang*, and in the war against the western colonialism as admiral, warlord, or soldiers. It shows a large number of Acehese women holding decision-making positions, making them an active role in politics is not a matter of coincidence or a result of political manipulation by the political leader. Jakobi (1998) describe the women`s position in Acehese history as follow:

“Many Dutch officers discussed Aceh women with a sense of awe and respect for their courage. Acehese women valiantly never resent defending something that is seen as a religious and national interest. They played a role and involved directly in the 80-year war between Aceh and Dutch. The Dutch respects to the Acehese women as "*de Grootes Dames*" or the women noble, who has played a major role in the politics of the war in Aceh."

In the same sense, Jakobi also wrote the representation of Acehese women, which provoking the spirit of heroism:

In the past, Van der Heijden attacked Samalanga. There was a woman named Pocut Meuligo, who was able to persuade her brother, Teuku Chik Samalanga, to continue to fight against the Dutch. In the same case, Cut Nyak Dien supported her husband, Teuku Umar to fight against Dutch. It is a historical fact. Even if we dig deeper, there are a lot of women characters and heroes in Aceh, such as Cut Meutiah, who was found dead with Pang Nanggroe.

Of course, this historical narration should be followed by further analysis regarding gender relations, Islam, and aristocracy in Aceh. Even though, the role of women in Aceh in the political decision-making process was affected by political manipulation of the Acehese aristocrat. However, the truth is that Acehese women could use the political situation to maintain their power in the long period.

The four Acehese women held supreme power as the queen in the early 15th century, and from the mid to late 17th century.

Queen Safiatuddin

Safiatuddin is the first women's leader in the Acehese Darussalam Sultanate. She ascended the throne replaced her husband, Iskandar Tsani. Safiatuddin is popularly known as Sultanah Taju Safiatuddin Shah Alam. She ruled the Kingdom from 1641 to 1675. Safiatuddin appointed as the leader of the kingdom at the time when Aceh facing a political upheaval, social, and cultural (Said., 2002). After Iskandar Tani death, there was no hereditary descendant and the king only had one sister, namely Safiatuddin. This condition caused a clash among aristocrats and ulama in Aceh. Some of the ulama prohibited women to become a leader and some others allowed women to become a leader. The *ulama*, who allowed women to become a leader, had argumentation that the women were only prohibited to become the imam or a leader of the prayer. Nurudin Ar-Raniry, the greatest and most influence ulama, mediated the confrontation by legitimizing the position of Safiatuddin as the Queen of Aceh Darussalam Sultanate (Hasjmy., 1996).

Safiatuddin studied religious and literary under the greatest ulama in Aceh, Hamzah Fansuri, Syekh Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, Syekh Kamaluddin and others ulama. After Safiatuddin was appointed as the queen, she developed many aspects of the Sultanate, from politic, education, religion, and economic. In the aspect of politic, Safiatuddin united the Acehese people to face the problems of Sultanate. Safiatuddin also strengthened the military aspect of the Sultanate. Safiatuddin undertook the construction of military defense and created women special forces to guard the palace and women elite troops to the secure the Sultanate. Safiatuddin checked and controlled Special Forces on horseback, which also fought in the War of Malacca in 1639. Safiatuddin also continued the tradition of giving land to the heroes of the war as a gift of the kingdom (Said., 2002).

In the religious aspects, Safiatuddin was assisted by Sheikh Nuruddin Al-Raniri and Sheikh Abdul Rauf Singkel. Sheikh Abdul Rauf Singkel had a great influence in Aceh because of his Islamic knowledge. Safiatuddin asked Abdul Rauf as-Singkili to wrote a book called *Mir'at al Tullab*, which contains the science of fiqh that can facilitate the acquainted with Islamic Shari'ah (Hasjmy., 1974). Safiatuddin era is known as the golden age of science in the kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, with many great scholars emerged as Nurdin Ar-Raniry, Abdurrauf Syiah Kuala, Jalaluddin Tursany, and others. She encouraged the scholars to compose books in various disciplines, such as *Hidayatul Manan Fadhil Faith Fi of Nurudin Ar-Raniry* and *Miratuth Thullab of Abdurrauf Syiah Kuala*. In the reign of Safiatuddin, there were 30 book titles, while Abdurrauf completing 10 books in various fields of science that became the center of civilization development of science in Southeast Asia (Hasjmy., 1996). Safiatuddin also took a part in the development of Islamic society. In 1668, Safiatuddin designated Ulama to spread Islam in Siam. The Safiatuddin's role in the religious aspect shows a great influence on the Acehese society. It because, following the Muslim intellectual explanation, religion is not just belief in some certain rituals. Religion is the overall human behavior, which is practiced to gain the pleasure of Allah. Religion, in other words, covering overall behavior of human, as a basic trust or faith in God and personal responsibility in days later (Naim., 2012: 123).

In the economic aspect, Safiatuddin tried to increase the number of goods, such as gold mine and implemented a tax on every foreign trader who trades in the territory of Aceh and conquered lands. Safiatuddin also concerned about the welfare of society, especially widows and children victims of war in Malacca in 1640. For those, she rebuilds a city known by the name, *Krueng Inong Balee King*, was financed by money and charity from the kingdom. The town is guarded by troops so that the widows and children of war victims can live safe and feasible (Hasjmy., 1996).

Queen Safiatuddin also was known as the queen who upholds Indigenous cultural values in Aceh. It could be seen through the cultural events that legalized the culture, such as her respect to funerals of her husband. Before the funeral takes place, first parade accompany casket made of the bodies were covered with velvet and gold to the cemetery. At least, 260 elephants included in the parade. In such of movement, all the elephants customized with velvet and ivory, as well as wrapped with gold and silver (Hasjmy., 1997). The above description explains that the Safiatuddin loving husband and the people as well as consistent in carrying out customs which has been imposed by the empire, not only that, as the body of Sultan Iskandar Tsani. The convoy of royal party performs charity activities to the people of Aceh.

The legacy of Safiatuddin can be found in the present day as a custom or tradition that lives in Aceh Besar. As described by Muhammad Said, the most remarkable legacy of Safiatuddin is *Meutukar Bantai*. *Meutukar Bantai* is a tradition when a younger sister or brother to marry the widow would replace sister or brother of a deceased husband. The function of this tradition is not only to maintain the treasure from falling into the hands of others, but it also has a function to maintain the values of familial. Besides that, Safiatuddin created a policy that any Acehnese people who want to marry off his daughter must provide a home for her daughter on the grounds that as a tribute to the girls aside to anticipate divorce in the family (Hasjmy., 1997).

Queen Naqiatuddin

Before she died, based on the provision of *Qanun al-Asyi*, Safiatuddin prepared her successor and surprisingly all of them were women. One of her successors was Naqiah. Naqiah is the daughter of Malik Radiat Syaik Hotam, son of Firman Ali Riayat Shah, the earlier sultan in the 14th century. Naqiah was inaugurated as the leader of Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, on the Syakhban 1084 H or 23 October 1675 AD, with the name Sri Ratu Nurul Alam Naqiatuddin, reigning until 1087 H or 1678 AD (Said., 2002).

At the beginning of his reign, Naqiatuddin faced challenges from internal as well as external. Threats to the Sultanate grew stronger while "*wujudiyah*" as a religious group, which had diverted from Islamic teachings, increased their opposition to Naqiatuddin by burning Banda Aceh city. To suppress the Wujudiyah group, Naqiatuddin made changes in the government of Sultanate by perfecting *Qanun Al-Asyi* or *Adat Meukuta Alam*. Among the important changes made by Naqiatuddin, with the guidance of Sheikh Abdur-Rauf As-Singkili and with the approval of the Central Council of the People's Court, namely the rights of Sultan's appointment and the completion of the Federation of three *Sagoe*, which was established by Safiatuddin.

The Federation of three *Sagoe* consists of *Sagoe XXI Mukim*, *Sagoe XXV Mukim*, and *Sagoe XXVI Mukim*. Under the *Sagoe* was the Mukim, headed by an *imuem*. The governing structure of the commander-in-chief was *Gampong*. Besides that, there was also an autonomous government called Nanggroe, which was directly governed by *uleebalang*. The political structure in Aceh Besar ruled directly under *uleebalang* authority, which had the permission under Nanggroe was the *mukim*. Mukim oversees the Gampong as the lowest part in the government structure (Hasjmy., 1997). The formation of *Sagoe* was to form a centralized government by handing over government affairs to three commanders of *Sagoe*. Panglima *Sagoe* primarily serves to streamline the task of oversight, namely by monitoring the extent to which the policies and orders of the sultanate submitted the leaders of the country or *uleebalang* actually implemented (Said., 2002).

The Naqiatuddin's policy can be seen as a progress in Aceh's history as Thomas Braddel put it in his work "On the History of Acheen". Braddel said that the establishment of three *Sagoe* in Aceh Besar, with the distribution of some *mukim* to her subordinates, was an example of the progress of the governmental system of Sultanate. As Mohammad Said said that democratization of the government in

Aceh had been implemented based on the principle of deliberation, 200 years ago before Europe itself knew democracy. However, some scholars argued that the formation of *Sagoe* was based on coercive circumstances. According to this perception, a balance of power between the commander of the *Sagoe* and Sultana was required at that time. As stated by Veltman, this policy was held to affirm the *Sagoe* commander's powers themselves against Sultana (Hasjmy., 1985). Another Naqiatuddin` policy was issued his own currency made of gold as a medium of exchange. Currency issued was located at the value of gold as high as 17 carats, writing the name and title of queen. ***Queen Zakiatuddin***

Before the funeral of Ratu Naqiatudin, Zakiah was inaugurated as Sultanah of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, with the title of Sri Ratu Zakiatuddin Inayat Syah. The inauguration took place on the 1 Zulkaidah 1087 H or 23 January 1678. Zakiatuddin reigned until 1097 H. Zakiah's daughter was the second successor to be prepared by Queen Safiatuddin, who was then the first candidate to replace Queen Naqiatuddin. Queen Zakiatuddin also faces tough challenges, more than her predecessors. Fortunately, she was helped by Sheikh Abdrauf, who has so much influence as *Qadhi* or Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The wisdom that had been carried out by her predecessors continues to run as far as possible: the crackdown on "*Wujudiyah*" is still carried out (Said., 2002).

In West Sumatera, Zakiatuddin showed her power to the Dutch trading partnership by recalling goods to the territory of Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. The assertiveness of the Minangkabau people, thus, was causing great difficulty for Melchior Hurdt as the head of the VOC Representative (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) in Padang (Said., 2002). Mohammad Said stated that during the reign of Ratu Zakiatuddin, British delegates and Sharif Mecca once visited Aceh. The British envoy was Ord and Cowley, requesting a Queen`s permit for England to set up its trade office in Aceh with a military fleet. However, they were rejected with anger and returned empty-handed. One of the other British visitors, William Dampier told: "The country is governed by a Queen, under whom 12 are rich or the Great Prince, and they exercise their power in their respective fields with great power." (Hashimy., 1997).

Dampier's story is an indication, that the power of *Sagoe* was not absolute. The commander of *Sagoe* only appeared to the fore or prominent time of death and coronation of sultan or sultana. Twelve Ministers supported the political structure of Aceh Sultanate at that time Sultana reigned: Qadh Malikul Adil, Admiral, Prime Minister, Wazir Mu'addham, Wazir, Sayhbandar, and so on. Each minister is in charge and responsible in their field. Particularly regarding the government in Aceh *Rayeuk*, each *Sagoe* was led by a *Panglima Sagoe* (Hasyimy., 1996).

Queen Kamalat Shah

In 1689 to 1699, Sultanah Kamalat Syah ruled the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. He reigned until 1600 after abdicated by her challenger who genealogically was the Arabic descendant, Sultan Badr Al-Alam Syariff Hashim Jalam al-Din (1699-1702). Thus, Sultanah Kamalat Syah is the last women ruler in Aceh Sultanate. After the death of Sultanah Nurul Alam Zakiatuddin in 1688, there was a dispute between the institution of the commander of the three *sagi* and the Assembly of the rich regarding the legitimacy of women as leader of the kingdom. This issue actually had been resolved by the ulama`s fatwa of Sheikh Abdur Rauf Singkel in the time of Sultana Tajul Alam Safiatuddin. However, this issue was reappeared by some group of an aristocrat and the Rich, who did not agree with the appointment of Zinatuddin as Sultana. The Assembly of the Rich disagreed with Zinatuddin's appointment as Sultanah. Nevertheless, she finally inaugurated as a sovereign of Sultanate because the power in succession process was in the hands of the Commanders of three *Sagi* (Hasyimy., 1997).

The Rich`s Assembly reason to disagree with the appointment of Kamalat was because they had argumentation that Islam forbids women to be leaders. They handed a hadith to legitimate their

argumentation: “*Khasira qaumun allazina wallau umuurahum imraatan*” (al-hadis). It means that "misfortune a people who submit their public affairs to women". As described in the hadith as well as the second based on facts after being led by three consecutive sultanates of Aceh did not result victorious but on the contrary increasingly backward proved by the many subordinate areas that escape. On the other hand, the argument of Rich's Assembly was broken by the Commander of the Three *Sagi*. In facts, among the previous Islamic empires, there were women who ruled the kingdom and there was no problem with the kingdom. The women who were appointed as leader was Sultanah Syajaratul al-Daur who led the Mameluk Kingdom in Egypt and Sultanah Raziah in Delhi India, and even in the golden age of Pasai Sultanate, there was a queen of women named Sultanah Nahrasyiah (Said., 2002).

The Assembly of the Rich kept searching a way to dethrone Kamalat. Among the efforts they made to bring down the throne was to ask a fatwa from Mecca about whether a woman should become a leader of the sultanate. After a long time, the fatwa came. Mufti Mecca turned out to issue a fatwa haram for women to become leaders. This fatwa sparked a debate among ulama and ultimately affected the political sphere with the descent of Zinatuddin (Hasjmy., 1997). Although based on the existing regulations, the power to appoint the sultan was in the hands of the commander-in-chief of three *Sagoe*, this era the institution of the three commanders of *Sagoe* was not as strong as the Sultan of Tajul Alam Safiatuddin. Due to the influence of the *Polem* Commander and 22 *mukim* was not great as the influence of his grandfather who was a direct descendant and Iskandar Muda. Another factor was the increasing pressure of the Wealthy Assembly after the issue of the fatwa haram and Mufti of Mecca despite the fact that three female leaders have ruled the weakness of Aceh since fifty years. This further strengthened the position of the opposition who wanted to overthrow Ratu Kamalat.

Besides that, the weakness of Aceh territorial position also affected the position of Kamalat. Many areas in Sumatra have detached themselves from Aceh since the Dutch suppressed Aceh in 1667, including East and West Sumatra. Likewise, it weakens Aceh's economy and trade because since East Sumatra and West Sumatra have separated, they have shifted trade in important commodities such as gold, pepper, and tin through the Siak, Rokan, Kampar and Inderagiri rivers to ports in eastern Sumatra and then transported across the Strait of Malacca to the Ujong River, Naning, and Rembau in the Malay Peninsula. Same with its predecessors, Sultan Kamalat Syah also issued gold money with Paduka Seri Sultanah Zinatuddin writing and behind it Kamalat Syah Sovereign. The worsening economic and political conditions that made the people of Aceh unsatisfied with Kamalat Syah plus the Meccan mufti fatwa, which forbade the royal leaders of women, required Kamalat Syah to descend the throne in October 1699 (Hasjmy., 1974).

After the abdication, her husband, Sayid Hashim Jamalulail, who genealogically came from Hadramaut and the descended from Muhammad SAW, replaced Kamalat Shah. After being appointed as Sultan of Aceh, Sayid Hasyim Jalamulail was given the title of Sultan Badrul Alam Syarif Hasyim Jamalulail. He ruled Aceh in a relatively short time, abdicated in 1702, and died two weeks after his abdication in the same year (Said., 2002).

Women and Gender Equality in Aceh

The history of four sultanas in Aceh Sultanate reflect the alternative stories regarding the women's position in Indonesian socio-politic landscape. The recognition of women's rights to participate in political decision-making in the past, as well as the women's contribution to fighting against European invaders ideally, could become a weapon for Acehnese women Aceh. For long decades, the historical narration in Aceh as well as in Indonesia does not exclude women from the discourses of nationalism, both in Acehnese nationalism or in Indonesian nationalism. Women are included and pushed in a certain way into the position of the oppressed, to serve the political interests of the dominant parties.

Women have not a great physical power like a man. Nevertheless, women have ideas and concepts and they cannot be ruled out their role and functions. The history has recorded that Indonesian women's also take part in the physical struggle. The women's struggle against invaders has perpetuated names, such as Cut Nyak Dien, Martha Tiahahu, Yolanda Maramis, and so on. In the emerging national movement, there was Rasuna Said and Trine. While R.A. Kartini and Dewi Sartika, have carved their names as people who fought for the rights of women to obtain an equal education.

Theoretically, is not easy for women to become a leader. Kartono (2011) describes a leader is a person who has the skills and strengths, in particular, skills. The leader is able to know others to undertake certain activities in order to achieve one or several specific activities. Leaders can take advantage of their sensitivity to personal relationships to realize an attitude of service when they act as a facilitator and supporter. So that concrete goal in terms of organizational objectives can be achieved, and most importantly, they touched the lives of many people, the community. An educational background that corresponds to the field that will be held supports the leadership ability. According to Tan (1991) there are basic values that should be owned by the leader: (a) intelligence, (b) positive thinking, (c) social maturity, (d) a good role model, (e) being a good listener, (f) openness in communication, (g) does not easily give up. The basic values of leadership direct the leader and must be executed by the leader in running the organization and reach the objectives of the organization.

Brown mentioned that the leader cannot be separated from the group. However, it can be viewed as a position that has a high potential in the field. The leader's character is able to change, influencing, and directing others to achieve the objectives. The leaders should have a strong vision. This is, of course, has a meaning that the role of women in leadership actually is a normal situation. In terms of gender equality, it means that, with similar conditions for men and women in the opportunity as well as their rights as human beings, to be able to contribute and participate in the activities of political, legal, economic, social, cultural, education and defense and national security as well as similarities in enjoying the fruits of development.

Thus, in the context of leader and leadership, the women's leadership serves as a partner to men. It means women have a clear portion to participate in nation building. Gradually, the woman's status and real leadership will be the same as the man so it will diminish gender division of effort and devote themselves to the development in accordance with national aspirations. Therefore, women's leadership need to be given the same opportunities. As proposed by Tan (1991), there are some aspects: (a) leadership development of women in the era of present and future have a potential and a major role in the development of politic, economic, socio-cultural, and religious of the nation; (b) women leader may develop if the education of women can be equal to men; (c) women leader must be declared as a necessary and important to be developed in all fields and for all levels; (d) The man needs to be assured the importance of women's leadership, and convinced that women's leadership will not compete with the leadership potential of men. The man needs to provide many opportunities for women leaders; (e) The Government along with women's organizations need to compile a "master plan", on how to increase women's leadership in all spheres of life nation and state.

According to Schermerhorn, the level of achievement and success of women leaders is on par with men. The comparison is only distinguishable from the angle or the way in terms of the process. This argumentation also supported by others research. Based on studies conducted by Sharpe (2000) found that women have always been more concerned with interpersonal relationships, communication, motivation, task-oriented, and be more democratic than men who are more concerned with the design aspects of strategy and analysis.

Conclusion

The women`s position in Aceh Darussalam Sultanate had contributed in strengthening Islam as the basis of the state, and its legal sources based on Al-Quran, Sunnah, Ijmak, and Qiyas through Adat Meukuta Alam or the Basic Law of Aceh Darussalam Sultanate. The women`s role in the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate adapted to the provisions of the Al-Qur'an and Sunnah, which stated that the women had equal right to be a social and political leader long as they are capable and have skills to lead the society or organization. Under these provisions, women's existence in Aceh is not representing a gender inequality, but the 59-year-old Aceh-led by women proved that gender equality has been applied since the time of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate.

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