

# Imam-Khatib Women Lost the Pulpit

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## Imam-Khatib Woman Lost the Pulpit

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### Abstract

*The position of women besides being vulnerable to delegation can also be transferred to the hands of men. Women as preachers and preachers, as found in West Sumatra, lost their position being replaced by men. This phenomenon is inseparable from the development of religious thought patterns and dialectical models of the Islamic law that are not friendly to social change. As a result, women are excluded from positions and roles they have inherited for a long time. This phenomenon confirms that the interpretation of religion is one of the factors causing gender inequality.*

**Keywords:** *female-preacher priest, gender injustice, legal dialectics*

### 1. Introduction

Women tend to be in a vulnerable status that is easily threatened by the sources of power they have. The position of women in addition to being vulnerable to delegitimation can also be transferred to the hands of men. Women as priests and preachers, as found in West Sumatra, lost their position which was then replaced by men. In line with the masculinization of the role of priests and preachers, women experience marginalization of position and role in religious rituals that they have inherited from generation to generation. this religious field, completes the marginalization of women which has also occurred in various aspects of life [1], such as in the economic field [2], education, health, employment, mastery of science and technology, and other fields [3].

Marginalization is an expression of the impact of hierarchical dialectical relations between men and women, which according to Mansour Fakih, is a form of gender injustice [4]. Marginalization of the position and role of women begins with the social construction that lies behind it. According to [5], women in social life are always assumed to be the second sex which largely determines the mode of social representation about the status and role of women. The marginalization of women that emerged later showed that women were not limited to the second set, but were considered as the others. Nature and culture dichotomy, or another term nurture, for example, has been used to indicate separation and stratification between two sexes.

The determining component that causes gender inequality can come from cultural values, religious traditions, and political structures and systems. In the hegemony of patriarchal interpretations and religious culture, women's experiences and contributions have no place in the history of religious discourse. Women seem to be marginalized from religious doctrines and beliefs [6].

Studies on the marginalization of the position and role of women concerning religion, especially Islam, have been carried out. Some studies direct the discussion to how the sources of Islamic teachings are interpreted and interpreted and then give birth to a gender-biased religious understanding. Inayah Rohmaniyah, in her writings titled "Gender and Construction of Women in Religion," highlights the process of understanding and formulating religious doctrines and beliefs causing the aspirations, interests, and experiences of marginalized women. Portraits of women in the hegemony of understanding and culture of androcentric, sexist, and patriarchal religions become grim and unrepresented. Meanwhile, in [7]-[10] more specifically emphasized the discussion on the

side of the quality of the related traditions and differences in understanding of the legal content. Some other studies focus on religious practices that are controversial nuances of gender progress and discuss them from various perspectives, such as the writings of [11]-[12].

This paper complements the study of the marginalization of the position and role of women by focusing the discussion on how religious understanding and interpretation related to gender work in the real life of society and engenders social changes that degrade the position and role of women in religious rituals. This paper specifically examines the phenomenon of the delimitation of women's power so that they lose their position and religious role in the community as priests and preachers of prayer 'Eid al-Fitri and' Eid al-Adha. Accordingly, three questions were formulated: (a) how did the emergence and disappearance of the position and role of women as priests and preachers in Eid prayer?; (b) what are the arguments used to decide the position and role of women as priests and preachers; and (c) how the community responded to the loss of the stage of women as priests and preachers. The answers to these three questions form the core / main topic of this paper.

The writing departs from three arguments. First, the emergence of the tradition of women priests and preachers is the local wisdom of the community as a solution to existing needs. The tradition continues because it is supported by religious understanding that is aspirational and friendly to change. Secondly, along with changes in the religious understanding of society towards a un aspirational direction and a tendency to reject social change, the tradition of women priests and preachers ended and experienced delegitimation. This led to the marginalization of the public role of women in the religious field. Third, there are still differences of opinion in the community in response to changes in the tradition of women preachers and preachers. Some people still want to restore the tradition of women 's imams and preachers to Id prayers, while others argue otherwise. For that, transformative adaptive policies are needed that can bridge the developing opinions.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Prayers 'Id and Position of Women

Salat 'id is an example of establishing a Shari'a with a cultural acculturation approach, where Islam accommodates the culture that already exists in society, then modifies and changes its contents so that a new culture is born by Islamic teachings. When Rasulullah SAW migrated, the citizens of Medina already had two feasts, namely Nairuz as a marker for early spring and Mahrajan as a marker for early autumn. They celebrated these two feasts by partying, spring, and disobeying. When witnessing this, Rasulullah SAW said: "Verily, Allah has replaced the two holidays with something better, namely" Eid al-Adha and "Eid Al-Fthri." [13], [14].

In the series of 'id celebrations, it is prescribed to perform the alatid prayer which is accompanied by a sermon afterward. Prayers are performed by all Muslims together. In fact, in the hadith, it is mentioned that the Messenger of Allāh ordered to invite out to pray 'Eid al-Fitri and' Eid al-Adha girls, menstruating women, and secluded women. Women who are menstruating do not join the prayer, but also witnessed the kindness and welcomed the call of the Muslims. When asked what if there are women who do not have a headscarf, Rasulullah SAW asked women who have excess headscarves to lend their headscarves [15], [16]. According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, the above hadith shows that women are meant to go out to attend the 'Id [17] prayer. Al-Syaukani states that all women are required to go out to pray' Id in the field as long as it does not cause slander or temptation [18].

Regarding the possibility of women praying 'their Id apart from prayer' male Id, the scholars differed. Shaykh Ibnu 'Utsaimin, representing the clerics who argued that women should not make pilgrims' The id alone was led by a female priest. Such practices have no basis in Hadith. What is justified is that women come to the place of prayer 'Id together

with men [19]. Meanwhile, al-Bajur allows women to make worshipers' Id separately. However, it is not prohibited to carry out sermons, except for the compatibility of men. If there is no male preacher in the female congregation, then it is permissible for one of the women to appear to give advice [20].

## 2.2. The Existence of Imam-Khatib Women and Ulama Opinions

The existence and practice of women as imams can be referred to as early as Islam. The prophet's wives, such as 'Aisha and Umm Salamah, were once priests of the women. In a hadith from Raithah al-Hanafiyah, it is mentioned: *أمتهم وقامت بينهن في صلاة مكتوبة*. Meaning: "Aisha once led women and she stood on equal footing when performing the obligatory prayers." [21]. According to Imam al-Nawawi, this hadith is authentic. According to al-Albani, this hadith is *da'eef* but has an amplifier, namely the Hadith Hujairah bint Husain *أمتنا أم سلمة في صلاة العصر قامت بيننا*: "Umm Salamah once led us (women) when the 'Asr prayer and he stood in our midst [22], [23]. This hadith also has reinforcement from the history of the path of Qatadah from Umm al-Hasan where he had also seen Umm Salamah leading women and he stood in their shaf. Atsar according to al-Albani can be practiced [24].

In another narration, it is also mentioned that the Prophet SAW once appointed Umm Waraqah as an Imam for his family members as follows: *كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يزورها في بيئتها وجعل لها مؤذنين لها وأمرها أن تؤم أهل دارها. قال عبد الرحمن فأنا رأيت مؤذنيها شيخا كبيرا*

Meaning: "Rasulullah SAW once visited Umm Waraqah at his home. He appointed someone to azan and ordered Umm Waraqah to lead family members in his home. "Abd al-Rahman said: " I saw the muezzin of an old man. Al-Albani considers this tradition to be *hasan*.

The scholars of jurisprudence differed on the ability of women to act as imams. In general, opinions that develop can be categorized into three groups. First, women must not be priests at all. Secondly, women may become priests only to women. Third, women may be priests both for women and for men.

The Maliki School believes that women should not be imams in absolute terms, both for men and for women, both for the obligatory prayers and the circumcision. Al-Hasan and Sulaiman bin Yasar also have the same opinion [25]. The majority of fuqaha 'allow women to be imams restricted to a limited number of women. According to the Shafi'i school, it is permissible for women to be priests for the majority of women, but it is forbidden if the majority of men are, both at obligatory prayers and circumcision [26]. The general view of the Hanbali School also holds that women may be imams for women, but it is not legitimate to be an imam for men in all circumstances, both at the fard prayer and the breath. Al-Shay'bi, al-Nakha'i, and Qatadah limit the ability of women to become imams for the majority of women only for circumcision prayer. The Hanafi School believes that women can be priests to the majority of women even though the law is abusive, but if there is a majority of men, women should not be imams [27].

The arguments used by the majority of scholars include the words of the Prophet Muhammad: *" لا تؤمن امرأة رجلاً "*. Meaning: "Let no woman be a priest for men [28]. Likewise the hadith: *بجروهن حيث آخرن الله*: "Put women behind as God put them behind." [29] priest for men. Whereas the second hadith, comprehensively mukhalafah, contains a prohibition on placing women in front, including in this case as an imam. Rational arguments used include if women are allowed to be imams for men, of course, there have been practices since the beginning of Islam. It was not found at all history. Besides, special movements in unethical prayer are performed by women in front of men because they can arouse lust and disturb the solemnity.

In contrast to the majority opinion, some scholars allow women to be priests for a large number of women and men. Abu Tsaur, Ibn Jariral-Tabari, Daud al-Zhahiri, and Al-Muzani

allowed women to be absolute priests for men [30], [31]. This opinion is partly based on the historical hadith of Abu Dawud above. The Hadith shows the validity of Umm Waraqah to lead its inhabitants, even though there are men. In zhahir, in the hadith it is stated that Umm Waraqah became an imam for his male muezzin, his son, and his female slave [32] Meanwhile, some Hanabilah scholars, including one of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's opinions, allowing women to become imams for male worshipers is limited to tarawih prayer on condition that the recitation of al-Quran for men is not good (ummi) and the reading of women who become good priests (qari) and between these women and male worshipers there is a mahram relationship [33].

Regarding the preacher, the ulama generally associates the preacher with the status of the preacher, both on the obligatory prayers, such as prayer, circumcision, and circumcision prayer, such as prayer 'id and salatkusuf or khusuf. Eligibility criteria also follow the eligibility criteria of imams, there are even opinions of scholars who require that the priest also functions as a preacher. In the context of prayer, for example, the Imams of four different schools of opinion differ on the necessity of preacher concurrently becoming a prayer. Imam Hanafi stated that the preacher should act as an imam at the same time, but it is permissible for the priest not to be a preacher if there is an ust. Imam Malik believes not to be a priest unless he is preaching. While, the authentic opinion of Imam Shafi'i is to allow those who are not entitled to become imams. Meanwhile, from Imam Ahmad two opinions are reported, namely allowing and banning [34], [35].

### 2.3. Dialectics of Islamic Law and Social Change

Law, including Islamic law, has a reciprocal relationship with social change. Law can cause social change and vice versa social change can cause changes in the law [36]. In the context of this relationship, there are three dialectical models between Islamic law and social change, yaknitahmil, tahrir, and taghyir. These models appear when Islamic law responds to the phenomenon of social change that occurs in society, both in the form of tradition and the rule of law. The definition of Islamic law here is the products of Islamic law, both in the form of books of jurisprudence, kanun, court decisions, and fatwas [37].

The dialectic of the tahmil model is a condition in which Islamic law is accepting, allowing to apply, and perfecting the phenomenon of social change that can take the form of tradition or the rule of law. With this nature, this model is also called the aspirational model. The dialectic of the Tahrir model is the attitude of Islamic law to reject the phenomenon of social change. While, the dialectic of the taghyir model is the attitude of Islamic law accepting the phenomenon of social change accompanied by modification actions so that there is a change in character in the phenomenon of social change [38], [39].

### 2.4. Gender Injustice and Interpretation of Religion

Gender injustice is a condition where a person experiences unfair treatment because of his gender. According to Fakah, gender differences have given birth to various acts of injustice against women. Injustice is manifested in various forms of injustice, such as marginalization, subordination or perceived insignificance, negative stereotypes or labeling, violence, multiple workloads, and ideology of the value of gender roles.

The determining component that causes gender inequality can come from cultural values, religious traditions, and political structures and systems. Religious teachings have a dominant potential in the application of biased gender ideologies. In this context, religion can inspire and encourage the emergence of gender injustice. The potential for injustice does not originate from religious principles, but rather because the process of religious development is dominated by patriarchal culture [40]. In the hegemony of patriarchal interpretations and religious culture, women's experiences and contributions have no place in the history of religious discourse. Women seem to be marginalized from religious

doctrines and beliefs. Religious traditions also play a major role in legalizing gender injustices confirmed by research results. Differences in cultural and religious-based, especially fiqh discourse, have a profound impact on the lives of women [41]. The relationship between religion and women like this is rather sarcastic expressed by the German ideologist, Moriz Winternits, that women have always been friends of religion, but religion is generally not a friend for women [42].

### 3. Methodology

This research was conducted in Sungai Landia, a nagari (village level) in Ampek Koto District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Landi River is bordered by Nagari Panta Pauh to the west, Nagari Balingka to the east, Nagari Koto Panjang to the north, and Nagari Malalak Utara and Nagari Sungai Batang to the south. There are three jorong in the Landia River, namely Jorong Kampuang Ateh (top), Jorong Kampuah Baruah (bottom), and Jorong Ranah. The total population based on the 2010 population census was 1,923 people. Topographically, this nagari is located at an altitude of 1000-1300 meters above sea level, surrounded by hills with a valley in the middle which is used as a rice field, at first glance like a cauldron. Residential housing and public facilities are more located in the hills arranged tiered along the contours of the land, making it difficult to find a field that can accommodate many people.

The study was conducted to describe and analyze the phenomenon of the existence and loss of the role of imams and women preachers on the 'Id prayer in the Landia River. Data about the practice of female imams and preachers were collected through interviews with informants selected from government officials, community leaders, mosque officials, and community members. The selection of informants was based on the assumptions of knowledge and understanding concerned with the problem under study. The selection of informants was sufficient when the information provided no longer provided new data. The interviews focused on the history, background, implementation, and end of the tradition of women priests and preachers in the Landia River.

Data collection has been carried out since 2018, then stopped because of information about plans to revive the tradition of women priests and preachers. However, this discourse has not yet been realized, so research has been resumed since the beginning of the end of 2019. To maintain the validity of the data, the data collected is rechecked, reconfirmed, and cross-checked. Besides, consultations and discussions with colleagues were also carried out. The data obtained are then sorted and constructed according to the research problem and then analyzed using relevant theoretical frameworks and concepts.

### 4. Results and Analysis

#### 4.1. Khatib dan Imam Perempuan di Sungai Landia

The tradition of women as priests and preachers in the Landari Nagari has been going on for a long time and has been passed down for generations. No data is found about when exactly this tradition began. However, from the narratives of several residents and community leaders of the Landia River, we can be sure this tradition has been going on for decades. At the age of those who have reached 60-70 years, childhood memories when brought by parents and directly witnessed the women become priests and preachers at the prayer 'Id is still clear.

The practice of women as priests and prayer preachers' Id is at least motivated by two intertwined factors, namely the desire for friendship in a broader scope that includes all residents of the Landi River and Nagari River topography factors in the hilly Landia river making it difficult to find a field that can accommodate many worshippers. The existing mosque, due to limited flat land, was built with a small size so that it cannot be made a

place of prayer 'Id for all residents of the village. Especially when the holiday, many immigrants who returned home so that the congregation 'Id became booming. That is what led the Landia River figures and residents to make a breakthrough by separating male and female worshipers. Thus, all Landia River residents from the three jorong can still jointly perform the Id prayer, even though it must be separated between male and female worshipers [43].

This breakthrough turned out to have an impact on the emergence of practices which later became a unique tradition, namely prayer 'Id for female worshipers with their priests and preachers also women. As far as residents remember, there were several names of women who had become preachers of prayer 'Id, including Sunartati, a community leader who had been a member of the regional legislature and was also known as a suluk teacher or tarekat. Other female figures who have served as preachers are Nirmawati, Yelma Susanti, and Syorga Yati who are also educators. Besides, the names of women who had been the prayer prayers 'Id were mentioned, such as Jaliar, Jawaher. In addition to the female preachers mentioned earlier.

This unique tradition continues and is maintained by residents of the Landia River until it has stopped for the past five years. The prayers 'Id remains separate between male and female worshipers, but those who act as imams and preachers at both congregations are men. Since then, no longer heard the voice of the female priest. No longer heard the shrill and thunderous sounds of female preachers. The priest and the preacher of a woman also lost their pulpit.

#### **4.2. Causes of the Disappearance of Women as Preachers and Imams**

Why did the changes above occur? According to the testimonies of citizens and community leaders, one of the reasons for this tradition was stalled because of the emergence of differences of opinion among the Landia River community regarding the ability of women to act like preachers and also imams, and practiced by the Muslim community at large. Meanwhile, some others do not question the appearance of women as priests and preachers and want to maintain the tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. Different views on this issue are not new. For a long time, different voices and opinions related to the practice of women as priests and preachers were always there. But the general choice of the Landia River community at that time was to continue the existing tradition and there was never heard of rejection and upheaval in the community regarding the practice of women becoming preachers and priests.

Later, differences of opinion were discussed again in the community in line with the increasingly intensive religious studies conducted in various places, especially in mosques. The winds of change eventually led to the idea of masculinity the role of the preacher and the prayer leader 'Id after the preachers in the mosques on the Landia River claimed that if there were still men, then women would not be allowed to become priests or preachers. This situation created a psychological atmosphere that would not allow for the continuation of the tradition of women preachers and priests and encouraging changes that led to the exclusion of women from their roles as priests and preachers of 'Id prayers.

#### **4.3. Community Response to the Loss of the Female Stage as a Preacher**

The Landia River community finally experienced a change of tradition in conducting prayers' Id. Women no longer have an important and major role in the celebration. They are only domiciled as ordinary worshipers. No longer as priest and preacher, a noble, respected, and prestigious position and role. The Landia River community finally faced with a choice of attitude that is not easy. Some accept these changes and consider them to be natural and should be given the understanding and practice of Muslim societies, in general, do put men in the role of imams and preachers of 'Id prayers. It can be said there is no explicit rejection

of these changes as also they accept what is the unique tradition of women priests and preachers inherited from their previous ancestors.

However, in the hearts of some of the Landia River community, there is a feeling of missing something meaningful, something unique, memorable, and longed for. They feel the passion and enthusiasm that stirred among women when the practice of preachers and women priests are still implemented. There is a spirit of unity, friendship, and high independence because of the demands of managing their own prayer processions 'Id. That feeling has been missing in recent years. This has also led to discourse in some residents to revive the tradition of lifting imams and preachers from among women for female worshipers 'Id. Some older people want to maintain the tradition of female priests and preachers, while young people are more inclined to change.

## 5. Discussion

The phenomenon of the priestly and khatib tradition of women in the Landia River is the local wisdom of the people born as a response to the social and topographical problems they face. The essence of the birth of this tradition is the existence of special needs that require answers and special treatment. Special treatment for special needs, in the context of pilgrims and women priests, was carried out by the Prophet SAW when appointing Umm Waraqa to lead his family members. Likewise, in the case of the two wives of the Prophet SAW, namely 'Aisyah.a. and Umm Salamah. The Prophet SAW's policy was to respond to the need for special female worshipers when. This can be used as a precedent and an argument to understand the tradition that took place in the Landia River, although the example that occurred at the time of the Prophet SAW was not in the context of prayer 'Id. Based on this argument, some scholars, such as al-Bajuri, also allow prayer 'Id for the special female congregation with female imams. While preachers, if there are no men, women can appear as advisors.

The policy taken by the Prophet Muhammad is a proof that shows that Islamic law is very responsive and adaptive to the development of needs in the community. Dialektikahmil typology of Islam runs when Islamic law gives social change and provides a way out for the needs of society. This dialektikahmil model of Islam which also worked when the practice of female priests and preachers emerged and later became a tradition in the Landia River. Ulama and society understand the tradition as a useful, fulfilling needs, and has religious arguments, although it looks unique and different from the mainstream practice of Muslims.

The tikatahml dialect model can work and last a long time because it is supported by compatible and compatible religious understandings. When the tradition of female priests and preachers continued, the Landia River community was more influenced by traditional Islamic religious understandings. This is inseparable from the position and role of the female leader Sunartati, a community leader, having been a member of the legislature, and also as a suluk teacher, a practice that is prevalent among the tarekat, Sufi organizations which are one of the hallmarks of traditional Islam. He plays the role of moving and taking care of the prayer 'Id specifically for women, looking for female preachers and imams, and not infrequently directly acts as a preacher. When he was getting older and living in Bukittinggi more and more, his control over religious activities was increasingly diminishing so that his influence became weak.

The void of religious influence is then filled by new religious verses and preachers who come to the Landia River. They bring new religious understandings that are different from those that have been established so far. Judging from the material of Islamic teachings provided, most religious teachers and preachers understand the renewal of Islam which is dominant in the West Sumatra region. One of the teachings of the religious teachers and preachers is that if there are still men, then women are not allowed to be priests or preachers.



This fatwa was one of the determinants of the end of the tradition of women priests and preachers in the Landia River.

The change in religious understanding then brought changes to the dialectical model between Islamic law and social change in the Landia River community. The dialektikatahmil model of the Muslim which has shifted so far is that the activist and aspirational tradition of the priest and the preacher of women has shifted towards dialecticism that tends to reject the phenomenon of social change. As a result, the tradition of women priests and preachers who are indeed different from mainstream Muslim practices is challenged and rejected and ultimately unable to survive. This process leads to the exclusion of women from their religious social positions and roles as priests and preachers in line with the increasingly strong modernist and dialektikatahlim understanding of Islamic law and social change.

From the perspective of jurisprudence, actually, the priestly and female preacher traditions as happened in the Landia River are among the areas of dissent (ikhtilaf). The majority of scholars allow women to become imams for women. Some Hanbali schools only allow circumcision. While Abu Tsa'ur, Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Daud al-Zhahiri, and Al-Muzani allowed women to become priests for the majority of women and men. Only the Maliki school of law forbids women from becoming absolute prayer leaders. Likewise related to the preacher, some scholars forbade because the practice was unknown in the time of the Prophet SAW. Some others allow, although women who preach are not called preachers, but only as advisors. Thus, theoretically, the practice of women priests and preachers in the Landia River does not contradict the opinion of the majority of scholars and has its arguments, although it must be admitted, in practice, there is no historical evidence found in the time of the Prophet SAW that women performed separate 'Id prayers themselves from male worshipers. The Prophet (SAS) ordered all citizens, including women in the seclusion and those who were menstruating, to gather around the field where the 'Id prayers took place so that they could feel the goodness and the propaganda.

Changes in the tradition of female priests and preachers due to changes in the religious understanding of the Landia River community confirms the assumption that has developed so far that one of the determining components that cause gender injustice can stem from religious interpretations and traditions. Religious teachings have a dominant potential in the application of biased gender ideologies. In this context, religion can inspire and encourage the emergence of gender injustice. The potential for injustice is not rooted in religious principles, but because of the process of development and interpretation of religion which is dominated by patriarchal culture. In the hegemony of patriarchal interpretations and religious culture, women's experiences and contributions do not get an adequate place. Women are marginalized from religious doctrines and beliefs. Differences in cultural and religious-based, especially fiqh discourse, can have a profound impact on the lives of women.

## 6. Conclusion

This research produces several conclusions. First, this study found that the priestly and female preacher traditions in the Landia River are the local wisdom of the community that emerged as a response to growing needs. Responsive and aspirational dialectics (dialektikatahmil) between legal understanding and social change causes this tradition to be accepted and enduring. This is also supported by traditional religious understanding which tends to be adaptive to the traditions of the community. Secondly, the shifting of people's religious understanding towards non-aspirational and rejecting social change (dialektikatahlim) causes the tradition of female priests and preachers to be delegitimized and then stopped. This phenomenon reaffirms that religious interpretation is one of the causes of the marginalization of women's public roles. Third, the struggle for religious

understanding still occurs in the Landi River community in response to changes in the tradition of women preachers and preachers. It is necessary to develop an understanding and policies that are adaptive transformative that can bridge the developing opinions (dialektikataghyir).

This study only looks at the marginalization of the position and role of women in religious rituals which eliminates their role in society as priests and preachers of the Eid al-Fithri and 'Eid al-Adha, thus ignoring other aspects. With this, it is suggested that there is a need for research that specifically analyzes the marginalization of women in other aspects with the same or different approaches. Besides, this paper only looks at marginalization in the position and role of priests and preachers so that it has no power in mapping the marginalization of women in the wider religion. This paper suggests the need for a comparative study of the marginalization of women in religion both at the level of religious rituals and other aspects. Besides, it also needs to be seen from the practice in the community so that it becomes whole and complete.

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