

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF SPOUSAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS BASED ON SURAH AL-NISA' VERSE 34 IN SIMPANG KIRI, ACEH

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ABSTRACT

Marriage in Islam aims to create a harmonious family rooted in the principles of *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion). However, a limited understanding of spousal rights and obligations—especially in Simpang Kiri Subdistrict, Subulussalam City, Aceh—often leads to conflicts that can culminate in divorce. This study analyzes the local community's perceptions and practices regarding marital rights and obligations as outlined in Surah Al-Nisa', verse 34, while also evaluating the impact of local customs on household dynamics. Employing a qualitative field research approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations with community members, religious leaders, and officials from the local Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The findings indicate that the community's understanding of spousal rights and obligations primarily focuses on tangible aspects such as financial support and *mahr* (dowry), often overlooking the essential Islamic values of justice and compassion. Additionally, local customs significantly shape marital practices, frequently resulting in inconsistencies with Islamic principles. This study recommends enhancing religious education and fostering collaboration between religious institutions and community leaders to deepen the understanding of marital roles in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *Spousal Rights, Surah Al-Nisa' Verse 34, Local Customs, Religious Education*

ABSTRAK

Pernikahan dalam Islam bertujuan untuk menciptakan keluarga yang harmonis berdasarkan prinsip sakinah, mawaddah, dan rahmah. Namun, di Kecamatan Simpang Kiri, Kota Subulussalam, Aceh, pemahaman masyarakat tentang hak dan kewajiban suami istri sering kali terbatas. Hal ini dapat memicu konflik yang berujung pada perceraian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana masyarakat di Kecamatan Simpang Kiri memahami dan menerapkan hak dan kewajiban suami istri menurut surah Al-Nisa' ayat 34. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menilai pengaruh adat dalam kehidupan rumah tangga mereka. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi terhadap masyarakat, tokoh agama, serta pejabat Kantor Urusan Agama setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman masyarakat umumnya masih terfokus pada aspek fisik, seperti nafkah dan mahar, sedangkan nilai keadilan dan kasih sayang dalam ajaran Islam belum sepenuhnya dipahami. Adat berperan signifikan dalam menentukan praktik pernikahan, sering kali mengarah pada ketidaksesuaian dengan prinsip syariat. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan pentingnya pendidikan agama yang lebih mendalam dan kolaborasi antara lembaga keagamaan dan tokoh adat untuk memperkuat pemahaman masyarakat dalam menjalankan peran rumah tangga sesuai ajaran Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Hak Suami Istri, Surah Al-Nisa' Ayat 34, Adat Istiadat, Pendidikan Agama*

A. Introduction

In Islam, marriage represents a deep, both physical and spiritual, bond between a man and a woman, designed to foster a lasting, harmonious family life rooted in devotion to the One Supreme God.¹ At the core of marriage lies a pursuit of a life enriched by *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (affection), and *rahmah* (compassion), foundational qualities that enable both husband and wife to support each other in fulfilling their roles.² Couples who embrace these principles often find their bond strengthened, achieving a balanced dynamic where rights and responsibilities align, as guided by the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith.³

However, many couples may not fully understand these principles or struggle to apply them in daily life. Such gaps in understanding can lead to imbalances in relationships, which, over time, may escalate into conflicts or even divorce.⁴ Research highlights that many Indonesian couples face challenges in maintaining household harmony due to a lack of awareness about their respective roles and duties.⁵ These findings underscore the pressing need for marriage education, especially within communities where access to formal education is limited.

One such community, the Simpang Kiri District of Subulussalam City, has seen an increase in divorce rates, underscoring a need for better understanding of marital rights and responsibilities. Interviews with local leaders and the Head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) reveal that couples here often encounter challenges linked to lower educational levels, which contribute to a limited understanding of religious marital concepts.⁶ Data from the Aceh Provincial Education Office (2021) shows that the majority of residents in Simpang

¹ Imam Rofiqi, Ikarini Dani Widiyanti, and Nuzulia Kumalasari, 'Analisis Yuridis Permohonan Isbat Nikah oleh Istri yang Suaminya telah Meninggal Dunia', *Jurnal Jendela Hukum*, 7.2 (2020), pp. 23–37, doi:10.24929/fh.v7i2.1068.

² Nirwan Nazaruddin, 'Sakinah, Mawaddah wa Rahmah sebagai Tujuan Pernikahan: Tinjauan Dalil dan Perbandingannya dengan Tujuan Lainnya Berdasarkan Hadits Shahih', *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah*, 21.02 (2020), pp. 164–74, doi:10.36769/asy.v21i02.110; Taurat Afiati, Ani Wafiroh, and Muhamad Saleh Sofyan, 'Upaya Pasangan Suami Istri Tidak Memiliki Keturunan dalam Mempertahankan Keharmonisan Rumah Tangga (Studi Kasus Di Desa Siru Kabupaten Manggarai Barat NTT)', *Al-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Jurusan Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah Fakultas Syariah IAIN Mataram*, 14.2 (2022), pp. 161–84, doi:10.20414/alihkam.v14i2.6927.

³ Sifa Mulya Nurani, 'Relasi Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Analitis Relevansi Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Berdasarkan Tafsir Ahkam Dan Hadits Ahkam)', *Al-Syakhshiyah: Journal of Law & Family Studies*, 3.1 (2021), doi:10.21154/syakhshiyah.v3i1.2719.

⁴ Dian Apriana and Nanda Silvia, 'Imbalance of Rights and Obligations of Husband and Wife in the Family', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 1.2 (2022), p. 214, doi:10.32332/milrev.v1i2.6210; S Qutb, J B Hardie, and H Algar, *Social Justice in Islam*, American Council of Learned Societies. Near Eastern Translation Program (Islamic Publications International, 2000).

⁵ Mia Nurislamiah, 'Komunikasi Interpersonal Pasangan Suami Istri Dalam Upaya Menjaga Keharmonisan Rumah Tangga', *Communicative: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Dakwah*, 2.1 (2021), p. 15, doi:10.47453/communicative.v2i1.409; R. Aziz and R. Mangestuti, 'Membangun Keluarga Harmonis Melalui Cinta Dan Spiritualitas Pada Pasangan Suami Istri Di Provinsi Jawa Timur', *Jurnal Ilmu Keluarga Dan Konsumen*, 14.2 (2021), pp. 129–39, doi:10.24156/jikk.2021.14.2.129; Siti Zulaichah, *Analisis Ketahanan Keluarga Pasangan Suami Istri yang Tidak Mempunyai Anak (Studi Kasus Kecamatan Pedurungan)*, *Jurnal Ilmiah Sultan Agung*, 2023, II; Fahmi Fahmi, Jailani Jailani, and Hayati Hayati, 'Pembentukan Keluarga Islami: Analisis Tanggung Jawab Pasangan Suami Istri di Kecamatan Nisam Kabupaten Aceh Utara', *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (JSPM)*, 5.1 (2024), p. 225, doi:10.29103/jspm.v5i1.16112.

⁶ Interview, Rusyda, 2022

Kiri have only completed elementary education, impacting their ability to fully grasp the religious principles governing marriage.⁷

Islamic teachings outline a marriage relationship as one where both husband and wife have mutual rights and responsibilities.⁸ For example, Surah al-Nisa' verse 34 designates the husband as the leader of the family, responsible for the welfare of his wife and children. Yet, this leadership role is not absolute and must be carried out with love and fairness.⁹ A balanced approach to leadership is vital for a harmonious household, as misunderstandings here can disrupt family unity.¹⁰ Maintaining family harmony relies on the mutual upholding of these rights and obligations.¹¹ For instance, while the husband is expected to provide for the family, the wife honors her husband's lawful requests. When these roles are misinterpreted or neglected, conflicts may arise, potentially disrupting family unity

In Simpang Kiri, many couples face challenges due to limited understanding of these marital principles. Often, without internalizing and practicing these mutual rights and responsibilities, conflicts emerge, particularly among those with limited educational backgrounds. This study seeks to explore how the community in Simpang Kiri perceives and applies the marital rights and obligations derived from Surah al-Nisa' verse 34.

This research poses two primary questions: (1) How does the community in Simpang Kiri interpret marital rights and obligations as presented in Surah al-Nisa' verse 34? and (2) How are these interpretations applied in daily household life in Simpang Kiri? By exploring these questions, this study aims to provide insights into the community's understanding of Islamic marital principles and contribute to the building of more harmonious families aligned with these values.

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing field research to gain direct insights and examine social phenomena. Through descriptive analysis, we aim to understand the community's perceptions and practices related to marital principles. Data was gathered through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document reviews in the Simpang Kiri District, Subulussalam City, Aceh. Key informants, including married individuals, religious leaders, community figures, and local KUA officials, were carefully selected to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive

⁷ Riswana, 'Pemahaman Masyarakat Simpang Kiri Kota Subulussalam Tentang Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Yang Terdapat Dalam Surah Al- Niṣā' Ayat 34' (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2024) <<https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/cgi/users/home?screen=EPrint::Edit&eprintid=38823&stage=core#t>>.

⁸ Muhammad Fuad Mubarak and Agus Hermanto, 'Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Dalam Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Maqasid Syariah', *The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law and Civil Law*, 4.1 (2023), pp. 93–108, doi:10.51675/jaksya.v4i1.298; Mulki Al-Sharmani, 'Marriage in Islamic Interpretive Tradition: Revisiting the Legal and the Ethical', *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, 2.1–2 (2018), pp. 76–96, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/24685542-12340017>.

⁹ Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah, Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2002); M H Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Islamic Law and Jurisprudence Series (Islamic Texts Society, 2003).

¹⁰ Renata Forste and Kiira Fox, 'Household Labor, Gender Roles, and Family Satisfaction: A Cross-National Comparison', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 43.5 (2012), pp. 613–31.

¹¹ Reni Nur Aniroh, 'Hak Dan Kewajiban Suami Istri (Kritik Realitas Atas Aturan Hukum Keluarga Di Indonesia)', in *Progres Hukum Keluarga Islam Di Indonesia Pasca Reformasi: Dimensi Hukum Nasional-Fiqh Islam-Kearifan Lokal*, Yogyakarta: CV. Istana Agency Bekerja Sama Dengan ADHKI (Asosiasi Dosen Hukum Keluarga Islam Indonesia, 2020), pp. 88–105.

approach, incorporating data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing, applied iteratively to ensure a thorough and accurate exploration of the research questions.

B. Results and Discussion

1. Community Understanding of Spousal Rights and Obligations in Light of Surah Al-Nisa, Verse 34”

This research explores how residents of Simpang Kiri District perceive Spousal Rights and obligations through an Islamic lens, especially regarding Surah Al-Nisa, verse 34. Several respondents mentioned that they learned about these matters from everyday encounters—short religious talks, pre-marital guidance sessions at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), or occasional community events. For example, Mr. Razali noted “I only know a little about marital rights and obligations, mostly from wedding talks. From those, I gather that a husband must provide a dowry, financial support, and a home for his wife.”¹²

This suggests that many community members understand Surah Al-Nisa, verse 34, largely in terms of a husband's financial duties. The spiritual and moral dimensions of the verse seem to receive less attention. Mrs. Samsinar commented, “I’ve read verses on spousal rights and obligations in the Qur’an, but I didn’t study the interpretations—just the literal meanings.”¹³ This points to a clear need for deeper, guided understanding, as many rely on straightforward readings without fully exploring the ethical values in the text.

Shihab (2002) explains that Surah Al-Nisa, verse 34, emphasizes not only the husband’s material duties toward his wife but also his moral and spiritual obligations. The verse calls for justice and compassion. However, the community’s limited access to Qur’anic exegesis (interpretive study) often leaves marital duties viewed more through a practical lens, emphasizing financial aspects over emotional or spiritual dimensions.

These findings align with another study, who points out that limited access to religious education often leads to a more restricted view of gender roles.¹⁴ It echoes by other study who claim that restricted religious education may lead to a mostly practical understanding of family teachings, often missing the underlying principles.¹⁵

Respondents in this study commonly expressed only a general understanding of marital obligations. This understanding is often limited to a husband’s duty to provide a dowry, support, and shelter, typically gathered from brief, generalized sermons with little engagement in interpretative study. Mrs. Sederhana mentioned, “I read the Qur’an, but I don’t study it deeply or sit through long explanations on spousal duties. As far as I know, the husband must provide a dowry and support, and the wife should obey him.”¹⁶

¹² Interview with Mr. Razali, February, 2024

¹³ Interview with Mrs. Samsinar, February, 2024

¹⁴ John P Bartkowski and Sarah Shah, ‘Religion and Gender Inequality: From Attitudes to Practices’, in *Religion and Inequality in America: Research and Theory on Religion’s Role in Stratification*, ed. by Lisa A Keister and Darren E Sherkat (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 173–94, doi:DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139226479.012.

¹⁵ Asmiraty, ‘Problematika Rumah Tangga Dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam’, *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender Dan Agama*, 14.1 (2020), p. 11, doi:10.46339/AL-WARDAH.V14I1.242; Muhammad AR, ‘Pendidikan Agama: Sebuah Kewajiban Rumah Tangga pada Peringkat Awal’, *Jurnal Ilmiah Didaktika*, 12.2 (2012), doi:10.22373/jid.v12i2.453.

¹⁶ Interview with Mrs. Sederhana, February, 2024

This limited perspective underscores a need for accessible, comprehensive religious education in the district. Sermons alone may not be enough to foster a nuanced grasp of marital roles from an Islamic viewpoint. Al-Sharmani suggest that religious education, especially one rooted in Qur'anic exegesis, is essential for a more in-depth comprehension of marital rights and obligations.¹⁷

The study highlights how reliance on oral sources often leaves a gap between Qur'anic teachings and how they are practically understood and applied. Kamali¹⁸ notes that understanding exegesis is crucial to embodying household roles in Islam, including justice and equality between spouses. Without this, local practices may be shaped more by cultural values than by a deep understanding of Islamic teachings.

This limited comprehension suggests a larger issue—the role of religious educational institutions and organizations like the KUA in providing a holistic understanding of Islamic teachings. Most residents receive only brief pre-marital counseling at the KUA, focusing on administrative aspects rather than in-depth religious education.

As a formal institution overseeing marriage, the KUA has a strategic role in educating spouses on their rights and obligations in Islam. Zaki's¹⁹ research shows that detailed pre-marital counseling, which includes Qur'anic exegesis, can significantly improve public understanding of marital roles. Yet, time and resources at the KUA are often limited, resulting in a focus on the administrative aspects rather than a broader view of Qur'anic guidance on marriage. Here, religious education largely depends on respected local figures who play an influential role in the community. Mr. Midan, for example, remarked, "I'm not familiar with Qur'anic verses on marital rights and obligations because I only completed elementary school and rarely attend religious gatherings."²⁰ This illustrates how gaps in formal education can contribute to a limited understanding of religious concepts. It underscores the role of structured learning in fostering religious awareness, highlighting that literacy serves as a fundamental tool for comprehending religious texts and engaging with spiritual teachings more meaningfully."

The study suggests that cultural norms often reinforce a practical understanding of marital roles, frequently overlooking the moral and spiritual aspects of Islamic teachings. For instance, the community often emphasizes the husband's duty to provide dowry and financial support without equally highlighting the values of justice, protection, and compassion integral to a husband's role, as outlined in Surah Al-Nisa, verse 34. Mansour²¹ discusses the challenge of balancing cultural practices with Sharia principles in many Muslim communities, which can sometimes lead to a selective application of Islamic teachings. Findings indicate that structured, Qur'an-based religious education could greatly benefit the Simpang Kiri community, helping residents view spousal roles not only as physical obligations but as commitments to harmonious family life rooted in Islamic values.

¹⁷ Al-Sharmani.

¹⁸ Kamali.

¹⁹ Ahmad Arifuz Zaki, 'Konsep Pra-Nikah Dalam Al-Qur'an: Kajian Tafsir Tematik', *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 10.1 (2017), pp. 155–92.

²⁰ Interview With Mr. Midan, February, 2024

²¹ Dina Mansour, 'Women's Rights in Islamic Shari'a: Between Interpretation, Culture and Politics', *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 11.1 (2014), pp. 1–24, doi:10.1515/mwjhr-2012-0006.

2. The Implementation of Spousal Rights and Obligations in Daily Life

This study reveals that, in everyday practice, the implementation of spousal rights and obligations in Simpang Kiri District is more influenced by local customary values than by Islamic guidelines. Customary practices largely shape the roles and responsibilities within households, creating a distinction between traditional values and principles advocated by Islam. Key aspects related to this implementation are as follows:

Mahr (Bridal Gift)

In the Simpang Kiri community, *mahr* is viewed as an essential prerequisite for marriage and is often linked to social status or lineage. As Mrs. Samsinar noted, “To me, *mahr* is a mandatory gift without a set limit, but in our customs, there are specific rules and limits, especially concerning lineage and title.” This statement indicates that the value of *mahr* is set more by traditional norms, which consider lineage or social status as factors influencing the amount, rather than by the flexible agreement between husband and wife as encouraged in Islamic law.

These findings align with Qutb’s assertion that customs exert a significant influence on the determination of *mahr* values in many Muslim communities.²² Kamali similarly states that Islamic law allows both parties the freedom to agree upon *mahr* based on mutual consent and financial ability;²³ however, customary practices often dominate this decision. Consequently, high expectations for *mahr* may place a financial burden on the prospective husband, potentially impacting the financial stability of the household. This customary emphasis on high *mahr* can also increase economic pressure on newly married husbands, potentially affecting the quality of married life at the outset.

Furthermore, the study indicates that customary values around *mahr* can shape perceptions of women’s worth. Mrs. Sederhana added, “In our tradition, a woman with a certain lineage or title is considered more valuable, so her *mahr* should be higher, as it shows respect to her family.”²⁴ Although honoring women through *mahr* is encouraged, a view strongly tied to lineage can lead to gender inequality, as a woman’s value is assessed based on her family background rather than on Islamic principles that emphasize fairness and simplicity in marriage.

Provision (Housing, Clothing, and Emotional Needs)

In Simpang Kiri, *provision* is generally understood as the material support provided by the husband, covering necessities like housing, money, and food. Mr. Hermanto expressed, “In my view, a husband’s provision is mainly about money or housing, and that sufficiently meets our needs.” This perspective highlights that the community tends to focus more on the material aspects of provision, often overlooking other essential areas, such as clothing, emotional support, and spiritual well-being, which are also part of the husband’s obligations.

²² Qutb, Hardie, and Algar.

²³ Kamali.

²⁴ Interview with Mrs. Sederhana, February, 2024

According to Karim,²⁵ the concept of provision in Islam encompasses broader well-being, including emotional and spiritual support a husband should provide to his wife. However, the findings show that this understanding has not been fully adopted in Simpang Kiri, potentially causing imbalances within marital relationships. Mrs. Samsinar stated, "Provision is enough if my husband can provide food, spending money, and housing. For other things, I don't ask much."²⁶ This statement reflects the community's perception that physical needs are central to provision, while other needs are regarded as less significant.

Another study also suggests that an imbalance in fulfilling provision needs may lead to dissatisfaction within the household, particularly if a wife feels she is not receiving sufficient attention from her husband, especially in terms of emotional support.²⁷ This perception is further reinforced by local customs that define the husband's role primarily as a material provider, with less emphasis on the emotional well-being of the wife. Consequently, this limited understanding can create tensions within the household and negatively impact the quality of the marital relationship over time.

Education of the Wife

Providing religious education to one's wife is one of a husband's responsibilities in Islam. However, in Simpang Kiri, this responsibility is often delegated to religious figures or institutions outside the household. Mrs. Sederhana remarked, "My husband's educational background is not religious, so he cannot teach me about religion. But he allows me to seek knowledge outside."²⁸ This finding suggests that many husbands feel they lack the capacity or time to provide direct religious guidance to their wives, leading to a reliance on others for this responsibility.

Qutb notes that religious education within the family is crucial for establishing a harmonious household grounded in Islamic teachings.²⁹ This includes the husband's guidance to his wife in religious understanding, which strengthens Islamic values within the family. However, in Simpang Kiri, it appears that husbands' role in religious education has not been fully realized. Studies argue that religious education within the family should not be solely entrusted to external figures or institutions but should also be a husband's duty, as part of his spiritual leadership in the family.³⁰

²⁵ Fatimah Karim, 'The Rights and Responsibilities of Spouses in Islam -', *Islamweb*, 2024 <<https://en.islamweb.net/the-rights-and-responsibilities-of-spouses-in-islam>>.

²⁶ Interview with Mrs. Samsinar, February, 2024

²⁷ Le Yang, Ziqi Yang, and Jingjing Yang, 'The Effect of Marital Satisfaction on the Self-Assessed Depression of Husbands and Wives: Investigating the Moderating Effects of the Number of Children and Neurotic Personality', *BMC Psychology*, 11.1 (2023), p. 163, doi:10.1186/s40359-023-01200-8; Lesley L Verhofstadt, Gilbert M D Lemmens, and Gaëlle Vanhee, 'Relationship Distress: Empirical Evidence for a Relational Need Perspective BT - Systemic Research in Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy and Counseling', ed. by Matthias Ochs, Maria Borcsa, and Jochen Schweitzer (Springer International Publishing, 2020), pp. 281–98, doi:10.1007/978-3-030-36560-8_16.

²⁸ Interview with Mrs. Sederhana, February, 2024

²⁹ Qutb, Hardie, and Algar.

³⁰ Ubudiyah, 'Tanggung Jawab Suami Sebagai Kepala Keluarga Dalam Islam', 2023 <<https://jabar.nu.or.id/ubudiyah/tanggung-jawab-suami-sebagai-kepala-keluarga-dalam-islam-gJDQw>>; Siti Halimah Putung and Raihanah Azahari, 'Kepemimpinan Suami dalam Perspektif Islam: Fungsi dalam Memperkokuhkan Institusi Keluarga', *Jurnal Syariah*, 28.2 (2020), pp. 127–56, doi:10.22452/js.vol28no2.1.

The community's dependence on local religious figures or institutions for religious education highlights a limited understanding of the importance of religious knowledge as a foundation for an Islamic household. As Mr. Darmin stated, "I know religious education is important, but we tend to send our children to religious classes because we ourselves do not know enough."³¹ This indicates that limited religious knowledge among husbands often results in a lack of religious guidance within the family, which affects the comprehensive religious understanding of wives and children.

3. The Influence of Customary Practices on the Understanding and Implementation of Spousal Rights and Obligations

Customary traditions in Simpang Kiri District play a dominant role in shaping the community's understanding and practices within the household. Village Head Darna noted, "Community habits are more influenced by local customs than by the Qur'an, so people only have a general understanding of spousal rights and obligations." This statement indicates that customary norms still serve as the primary reference for defining the roles and responsibilities of spouses, often creating a gap between traditional values and Islamic teachings.

Ahmed in his book mentions that in many Muslim communities, customary practices often take precedence over Islamic guidance in shaping gender roles.³² This strong influence of tradition leads many in the community to adapt religious teachings to local norms, which may sometimes diverge from the principles outlined in the Qur'an. For example, the husband's role as the head of the family is primarily viewed as fulfilling material needs rather than providing spiritual and emotional leadership, leading to an imbalance in the implementation of spousal rights and obligations.

The implication of this dominance of tradition is a tendency to adhere to traditional household practices without a deep understanding of justice, compassion, and equality in marriage, as taught in Islam. Additionally, Siaddio and Yenti in their study shows that the strong influence of custom often acts as a barrier to integrating more inclusive and profound Islamic values within family life.³³ This predominance of tradition can result in key Islamic values in marriage, such as justice and compassion, being overlooked in daily household practices in Simpang Kiri District.

Furthermore, from a theological perspective, Islam honors and values men and women equally before Allah.³⁴ However, in practice, the strong influence of custom can obscure this principle of equality, especially when women's roles are confined to domestic duties in accordance with prevailing traditional norms. This illustrates that although Islam

³¹ Interview with Mr. Darmin, February, 2024

³² Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (Yale University Press, 1992).

³³ Sidiq Siadio and Endri Yenti, 'Pengaruh Intervensi Hukum Adat Minangkabau terhadap Prinsip dan Praktik Hukum Islam', *JISRAH: Jurnal Integrasi Ilmu Syariah*, 4.2 (2023), p. 207, doi:10.31958/jisrah.v4i2.10139.

³⁴ Farhan Iqbal, 'Gender Equality in Islam |', *The Review of Religions*, 2020 <<https://www.reviewofreligions.org/22430/gender-equality-in-islam/>>; Hauwa Ibrahim, 'Women, Islam, and the Law: Womanism, Shari'a, and Human Rights in Africa', in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*, ed. by Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola (Springer International Publishing, 2021), pp. 2117–31, doi:10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4_137.

teaches gender equality, its implementation within society is often constrained by the dominance of patriarchal customs.

Therefore, efforts are needed to reconstruct the community's understanding of spousal rights and obligations in a way that aligns more closely with Islamic teachings. This can be achieved through comprehensive and contextual religious education, emphasizing not only ritual aspects but also the moral and ethical values in marriage. Moreover, the role of religious leaders and institutions is crucial in educating the community to understand and apply Islamic teachings holistically, without distortion by customs that contradict Islamic principles. Thus, integrating positive aspects of both Islamic values and local customs should be continuously encouraged, while practices that contradict Islamic teachings must be reevaluated. This approach is essential to ensure that spousal rights and obligations are understood and implemented fairly and equitably, in line with the Islamic principles of justice, compassion, and equality within marriage.

C. Conclusion

This study examines the community's understanding and application of spousal rights and obligations, specifically through the lens of Surah Al-Nisa', verse 34, in Simpang Kiri District, Subulussalam City. The findings reveal that the community's grasp of these rights and obligations often remains basic, significantly influenced by local customs. While there is general recognition of a husband's duty to provide and a wife's obligation to obey, this understanding is primarily derived from brief religious discussions rather than comprehensive interpretations of the Qur'anic verses.

In practical terms, local customs exert a substantial influence on household practices, particularly regarding *mahr* (bridal gift) and provision. For instance, the value of the *mahr* is frequently determined by social status or family lineage, in accordance with local traditions, rather than by the flexible agreements encouraged in Islamic law. Furthermore, the husband's provision typically emphasizes material needs, often neglecting the emotional and spiritual well-being of the wife—critical aspects of the husband's responsibilities as outlined in Islamic teachings.

This strong influence of local customs is also evident in religious education, where the responsibility for providing religious guidance to the wife is frequently delegated to local religious leaders or institutions. Consequently, the husband's role in this aspect is often overlooked. This gap underscores the need for a more inclusive approach to religious education within the community—one that encompasses the spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions emphasized in Surah Al-Nisa', verse 34.

Ultimately, this study illustrates how customary influences significantly shape family practices in Simpang Kiri District, which may lead to misunderstandings or incomplete implementation of Islamic teachings on spousal rights and obligations. To address these challenges, a collaborative effort is essential, involving religious institutions, community leaders, and local government. Such collaboration should aim to provide broader access to Qur'anic interpretative resources and foster comprehensive religious education. These initiatives would help deepen the community's understanding of Islamic teachings regarding family life, thus promoting harmonious marriages aligned with Islamic values.

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