

**DOI:** 10.51192/almubin.v8i1.1688

# GENDER AND FAMILY WELFARE; ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the new trend of the transformation of women's roles from the 19th century to the present, a number of issues have emerged within religious communities, causing women to face ethical and psychological dilemmas. Therefore, this study aims to describe gender and family welfare; the Islamic perspective on the transformation of women's roles in the era of globalization. This research applies the library research method with a philosophical approach and analyzes the data using an interdisciplinary perspective. The findings of the study are as follows: First, through education and the development of communication technology, both women and men have equal opportunities to access information, which allows for equality between women and men, both inside and outside the household. Second, spiritually, socially, economically, and politically, Islam, through various verses in the Qur'an, has allowed women to become modern individuals by engaging in activities just like other human beings. Third, family empowerment can be achieved by building the principle of Tawhid; making the Our'an the guide for family life; using the criteria of faith and piety as measures of success; fostering friendly, polite, and gentle behavior within the family; and nurturing a balance between modernity and spirituality in the family. In principle, all families desire modernization, happiness, and faith. In realizing a modern family full of happiness, a woman occupies a key position.

**Keywords**: Family, Gender, Globalization, Islamic Perspektive

### INTRODUCTION

The growth and development of increasingly modern times provide space and also opportunities for women to be more creative and productive in accordance with the professions they pursue. A woman's abilities continue to be developed so that they can be used and applied in daily life. Modernization in various aspects has brought about significant changes, and it is not impossible for everyone to have equal opportunities to master various fields in life, including women. (Muhajir, 2005) If we reflect on the historical reality as informed by various literatures, we can see how women were treated. For example, among the Jahiliyyah society, they buried their daughters alive out of shame or fear of not being able to provide for them. Similarly, in Hindu society, at certain points in history, slavery was seen as a fundamental principle. In fact, a good wife was considered a woman whose mind and body were always in submission. (Badawi, 1976)

The same thing was experienced by women in the Christian world before Islam, as described by John Stuart Mill in his writings on 'The Subjection of Women'. A wife was still essentially a slave to her husband, and as far as legal obligations were concerned, a woman's status was no different from that of what are commonly referred to as slaves. (Mace, David, 1960) In France, two centuries before Islam, women were considered to have no right to speak. In fact, some sects allowed fathers to sell their daughters. (Abdullah, 1992) The status of women in Roman civilization also reflects a similar situation. In Roman law, a woman was completely dependent. Women were not allowed to hold civil office, could not adopt children or be adopted, and could not make wills or contracts. At a time when women were considered to be like slaves, the Prophet Muhammad SAW, clarified by



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stating that women are the sisters of men. This historical fact illustrates how Islam elevated women to a noble position, something that had never happened throughout history before. (Ibrahim, 1985)

The explanation of the historical reality above shows the fate of women in certain religions and cultures during the pre-Islamic era. This situation began to improve, at least starting around the end of the 19th century, with the formation of a series of laws regarding Women's Property Rights in Marriage in 1870, which were later refined in 1882 and 1887. (Ibrahim, 1985) Indeed, the greatest revolution in the last hundred years has been the transformation of the status of women in society, both in terms of social position and from a cultural perspective. This occurred after the awareness of humanity regarding the role of women in communal life. (Stacey, 1981)

In Indonesia, for example, in the past decade, there has been a noticeable trend showing the transformation of women, manifesting in the form of equal rights, duties, and roles with men in various aspects of life. (Ashari, 2024) This includes the emergence of terms such as career women, professional women, working women, and even various studies on gender, as part of the women's awakening phenomenon. (Anugrah & Mahmud, 2023) This new trend arises not only as a logical consequence of the development of science, technology, globalization, and the women's liberation movement, but also due to an extraordinary awareness of how Islam and other religions give proper recognition to the existence of women. (Utami, 2019)

The role of women has become more evident with the desire to address family poverty. Women have started to change their lifestyle by going out of the house to work in order to meet the increasingly high cost of living. Some research studies, for example, have shown that in 2010, the number of female workers/employees in Jakarta was 2.84% higher than the number of men in similar jobs. This research report indicates that the role of women has greatly changed, from being a housewife to becoming a worker. Gender differences no longer serve as an obstacle for women to engage in activities just like men. Not only as workers, women today have also become important in the field of politics. As a consequence, when a woman has important responsibilities in society, the division of labor in the family and household between women and men will shift. In Java, for example, women have a double role, both privately and publicly. In Javanese society, women not only play the role of household managers but also serve as the economic support for the family.

The success and progress of a nation cannot be separated from the role of women. When women's roles are carried out well, the country will not face overly complex problems. Women play an important role in shaping the righteousness of families, instilling values and functions (norms, social, education, and economy). Women are the primary agents in realizing a better future, thus creating situations and conditions that have a positive impact on national and state life. In the new trend of women's awakening from the 19th century to today, several issues have emerged among religious communities that often cause women to face what is called ethical and psychological dilemmas. The emergence of these problems is the main reason why this article increasingly finds its urgency. First, the image of women is often in conflict with their involvement in politics, as it is seen as inappropriate for women. Second, the level of education for women is still relatively low, resulting in limited participation in academic institutions and research. Third, there is a simplistic perception that religious teachings (including Islam) are descriptive toward women. (Utami, 2019)

This issue, especially the last one, certainly requires a more serious answer, as it raises a very fundamental problem: women face difficulties in positioning themselves as human beings living in a



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modern era, where respect should be earned based on achievement, not prestige or lineage. On one hand, religious (women) communities must adhere to their religious teachings. On the other hand, they must become modern individuals with characteristics such as dynamism, activism, independence, and a high regard for achievements. A mistake in positioning themselves in the modern world can have fatal consequences for both their own existence and their families.

Several studies have been conducted to examine gender issues and family welfare, such as: Gender Transformation in Multicultural Families (Damiri, 2023); Work Ethos and Work Culture of Malay Women in the Era of Globalization (Lemiyana et al., 2024); Transformation of Women's Roles in Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era (Mohammad Akmal Haris, 2024); The Existence of Women's Economic Development in the Era of Digitalization (Utami, 2019); The Interaction Between Social Change and Islamic Family Law; A Case Study on Women's Role in Decision-Making (Ashari, 2024). Some of the studies mentioned above have provided general information on gender and the role of women in various aspects of life. However, research focusing on Gender and Family Welfare; Islamic Perspective on the Transformation of Women's Roles in the Era of Globalization has yet to be studied and reported. Therefore, this article seeks to explore an appropriate understanding of the nature of modernity and the religious guidelines regarding the position of women and their role in achieving family welfare in the era of globalization, which is absolutely necessary. The results of this study are expected to complement previous information and can serve as a guide for women in positioning themselves.

### **METHODS**

This article applies the library research model using a philosophical paradigm through observation, elaboration, and explanation, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of Gender and Family Welfare; Islamic Perspective on the Transformation of Women's Roles in the Era of Globalization. (S.Praja, 2002) The paradigm referred to in this article is the paradigm that views the existence of certain systems and values in religiosity and modernity, as well as the view that the philosophical systems and values that live in a society are inseparable from certain interests aimed at preserving the systems and values they believe in.

The data used in writing this article are sourced from bibliographic data. The obtained data will then be analyzed using an interdisciplinary approach (employing historical, psychological, and sociological perspectives). (Hasan, 2002) The collaboration of these three approaches is expected to explain the phenomenon of Gender, Islam, and Modernity within society, as well as the social factors that influence it. Once the data is available, it will then be analyzed in depth. With the various methods and approaches used, the author hopes to obtain a clear and logical narrative related to the focus of the study.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The issues that women have often faced throughout history generally focus on three main problems: **First**, the character of women, including their ability to form relationships with their peers, both of the same sex and the opposite sex. **Second**, the rights and responsibilities of women, both within the family and in modern society. **Third**, related to ethics and morality in the broadest sense of the term. In fact, all of the issues faced by women are connected to these matters. In their life



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journey, especially in this Postmodern era, women are required to carefully navigate the path of life they go through. At every moment, there is a tug-of-war between the demands of modernity and also the values they must adhere to as religious and also cultured individuals. (Savira et al., 2023) In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of religious guidelines regarding the position of women in the modernity, it can be explained as follows:

### Considering the Position of Women; A Perspective on Cultural Development

From a sociological perspective, the position of women is often viewed based on only one element of a society's culture. Ideally, the position of women should evolve alongside the development of other elements within the surrounding culture. As a result, the issues that women face often arise due to other elements within the culture that surrounds them. To understand the position of women in relation to the culture of society and the problems they face, it seems interesting to present the cultural development theories of the following sociological experts:

- 1. In the first stage, the culture of society in a particular area is generally still primitive, and the relationships between families are perceived as very close. All family affairs, including the position of women, are regulated according to tradition. In such a situation, if we observe, the position of women is in a very difficult and non-negotiable stance. The obligation to raise children, serve the husband, and manage the household are mandatory. Polygamy is considered normal, and women are not allowed to have rights over immovable property.
- 2. In the second stage, state law regarding marriage has been recognized, although it has not yet been effectively implemented. Customary law still holds significant authority. In this stage, each family has a household that functions as both a production and consumption unit. The position of women in this stage is only slightly improved compared to the previous stage.
- 3. In the third stage, at this point, state law regarding family matters is known to most educated people with a sense of morality. The existence of the family has been well-established. The position of women has received a more rightful place. For example, in decision-making, a husband seeks his wife's opinion. Polygamy is limited to those who can afford it, and both sons and daughters have equal opportunities to attend school.
- 4. In the fourth stage, the relationships between family members have begun to loosen, with each member having their own activities. Children who attend school are often not in the same place. At this stage, the presence of state law reaches its peak when compared to customary law. State law, which does not distinguish between men and women, begins to be fully implemented. In this stage, women attain the highest position; they are allowed to showcase their achievements and find their place in politics, government, and business. In fact, many women in this stage choose to live independently (single). In the fourth stage, it becomes increasingly clear that women are approaching a vulnerable point in terms of ethics and morality. Therefore, guidelines are needed to guide them, ensuring they remain on the right path, in accordance with their nature as women and as religious and cultured individuals.
- 5. In the fifth stage, the development of technology, information, and communication is becoming increasingly global, with civilization being viewed as a post-modern civilization. All daily activities are based on technology. The existence of technology requires high intellect, and in this regard, women have the same abilities as men. Based on this equality of ability, social interaction in



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general, including the relationship between men and women, becomes free (characterized by rationality, factuality, and pragmatism). (Wahyu Dahyoko et al., 2024)

When the stages of cultural development are analyzed in relation to the position of women, there is something very interesting: the position of women here becomes more independent compared to men. There are five reasons why women have become more dominant: **first**, technological tools provide women with freedom in performing household tasks; **second**, the development of industry provides household services; **third**, the use of technology in industrial development, which opens up a wide range of job opportunities, in which women are on equal footing with men; **fourth**, education helps lighten the responsibility of women in raising children; **fifth**, both women and also men have equal opportunities in accessing information through the expanding development of communication technology. The various reasons explained in detail above make it very possible to achieve equality between women and men, both inside and outside the household.

# Islamic Guidelines Regarding the Position of Women

There are two prevailing opinions regarding the position of women in Islam. The **first** opinion is the view that Islam has granted equal rights to both men and women in all matters. The **second** opinion is the view that Islam is the enemy of women, that Islam degrades the status and honor of women, along with many other statements that tend to undermine Islam. According to Muhammad Qutb, both of these opinions stem from a lack of understanding of the true essence of Islamic teachings. As a result, they deliberately confuse truth with falsehood. Islam places women in a very honorable position, and the religion greets women with gentleness. The gentleness of Islam and its positive view of women can be understood by examining how it views women from the spiritual, social, economic, and political aspects.

- 1. From a **spiritual** perspective, Allah SWT views the position of women as equal to that of men in terms of rights and responsibilities. This can be learned from several verses of Allah's words, such as: "So their Allah accepted their prayer, [saying], 'I do not allow the deeds of any of you to be lost, whether male or female." (Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 195). In another verse, "Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and believes, We will surely grant them a good life, and We will reward them according to the best of what they used to do." (Q.S. An-Nahl: 97; An-Nisa: 124).' Even more remarkable in the Islamic reform regarding the honor of women is that it does not place all the blame on women alone in the case of violating the command by eating the "khuldi" fruit in paradise; rather, Adam is also blamed (Q.S. Taha: 121), and both were forgiven (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 36-37; Al-A'raf: 20-24). (Mangkurat & Era, 2023)
- 2. From a social perspective, Islam places women in an honorable position, both during their youth and childhood. This can be seen in the repeated condemnation in the Quran of the practice of burying female infants alive during the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah) (Q.S. al-A'la: 16, al-Nahl: 58-59), Many hadiths of the Prophet also condemn it as an inhumane act. On the other hand, as a wife, women are provided with extensive guidance in the Quran, with some scholars even suggesting that the frequency of this guidance surpasses that of other women's roles. One of the key teachings of Islam regarding women is its focus on motherhood. Islam views the role of women in society, especially as a wife and mother, as the most sacred and essential, as this role cannot be replaced by anyone. However, Islam does not prohibit women from earning a living, if needed, as long as it



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is in line with their dignity as women. Professions such as nursing, teaching, and others are permissible, and there is no prohibition on benefiting from their talents (profes-sions). (Khairanis & Aldi, 2025); (Badawi, 1976)

- 3. From an economic perspective, one of the economic rights that women did not have before Islam was the freedom to make decisions, including the right to own money, land, or property. However, Islam grants these rights to women in a significant and empowering way.
- 4. From a political perspective, in Islam we see how women obtain their political rights, having the right to be elected and to vote in order to participate in public societal issues. Many examples are mentioned both in the holy scriptures (Q.S. al-Mujâdalah:1; al-Mumtahanât:10-12), as well as in the historical reality of Islam. (Malihah et al., 2024); (Rizki et al., 2024)

The guidance of Islam regarding women, as outlined above, seems to invite women to become modern individuals by engaging in activities similar to those of other people in general. However, they are required to maintain their dignity, morals, feminine dignity, and most fundamentally, their servitude to Allah SWT. For this reason, the synthetic approach to thinking and understanding Islam, as mentioned earlier, becomes even more relevant in addressing the issues of humanity, particularly Muslim women in the future, in an era full of modernity.

## The Effects of Modernity and the Necessity to Empower the Family

It is undeniable that the revolution in science and technology has greatly influenced human life systems and culture. The blessings of this revolution in the world of knowledge have made humans accustomed to a world that prioritizes a singular culture (Monoculture) and modernity as its main characteristics. However, it must be acknowledged that the current state of the world is at a point where it is impossible to return to the previous way of life (Point Of No Return). On one hand, the revolution in science has brought about numerous positive impacts (progress, convenience, and enjoyment of life), but it has also brought about negative consequences that have led to various life problems, including those within the family. (Damiri, 2023)

The development of industrialization and globalization will affect the state of society. Modern society will face various forms of problems, such as: people will be compelled to work harder, leading to a decrease in social and religious life, the glorification of materialistic values, and the loosening of social bonds, which were originally emotional, becoming functional based solely on work relationships. In such an era, many people experience existential frustration (the emergence of desires for power, pleasure, wealth accumulation, and so on). (Widyastuti, 2009)

The conditions mentioned above have led to an increase in criminal behavior, acts of violence, abuse of parents, suicide, drug addiction, divorce, promiscuity, and other forms of inhumanity. In such a position, society has been subjected to the side effects of modernity, resulting in deconstruction that causes the loss of maturity in values, a sense of obedience, role models, and the growing prevalence of cultural dislocation. Every individual and family will inevitably face the side effects of various issues brought about by modernity, as mentioned above. This is why families in society often experience rigidity, even helplessness, in facing the challenges of modernity. The further implication is the occurrence of divisions within society. Given the necessity for each family to navigate life in the era of modernity, various efforts are needed to empower families. The family is the backbone of any society, including modern society. (Suryaningsih & Sanjaya, 2024)



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The presence of Islam also gives attention to the existence of the family, providing guidelines and specific rules that must be followed to strengthen its foundation and protect it from all negative influences that could weaken it. The guidance provided by Islam aims to encourage every individual to be aware of the divine norms/laws that must be actualized in forming an ideal family life. The strategic role of the family from an Islamic perspective is as a place to nurture children, to develop their physical, mental, and intellectual growth. Therefore, through various literatures, it can be understood that one of the missions of Islamic reform is to empower the family institution. The empowerment referred to in this context is the effort to equip each family institution with the ability to become a progressive family, in harmony with modernity, while still firmly holding on to Islamic values. (Suryaningsih & Sanjaya, 2024)

Empowerment of the family, based on its nature, can be carried out in two ways: **first**, an initial approach, where efforts from government institutions or other organizations are made to empower each family. This is done by creating a conducive environment for the establishment of a sakinah/ideal family. Additionally, the enforcement of strict and just laws against behaviors that harm the family, whether committed by individuals or other institutions, is essential. **Second**, a participatory approach, which involves efforts made by the family itself to improve its own situation. This participatory effort can be carried out in various ways, as explained below;

- 1. Building the principle of tawhid. This principle means making the belief in the oneness of Allah as both the foundation and a tool for evaluating family development, serving as the basis for every behavior of family members. A strong belief within oneself leads to the practice of dhikr in its broadest sense. Through dhikr, family members can experience peace and tranquility, and further, it can even sharpen their thinking.
- 2. Making the Qur'an a guide for family life. To make the Qur'an a guide means to follow all of its commands in organizing life. In addition to being a guide, the Qur'an also serves as a source of comfort for the troubled hearts of each family member. Allah's word (Q.S. al-Isra': 82): 'And We sent down in the Qur'an what is a cure and mercy for the believers, but it increases the loss for the wrongdoers.
- 3. Setting the criteria of faith and piety as measures of success. This serves as a reminder that every believer must prioritize a good work ethic and discipline in building the quality of their family institution. Because the life of a family is a struggle to work harder in finding success in the broadest sense.
- 4. Fostering attitudes of friendliness, politeness, and gentleness, which are essential for strengthening the resilience of the family institution in this era of modernity. This includes nurturing a more friendly, polite, and gentle social interaction, especially within the family. Gentleness, in this context, does not mean the absence of firmness, but rather ensuring that every rule and regulation is followed and enforced with gentleness.
- 5. fostering balance within the family, a balance between modernity and spirituality. This involves developing emotional intelligence in relationships, not only among family members but also with neighbors, coworkers, and the wider community. Disharmony in relationships can lead to many problems and a lack of productivity within the family. It is important to recognize and strive to make the family a pillar of society, both spiritually, economically, and also socially. Additionally, enhancing the ability of family members to gather information about global developments and



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human affairs can help foster a filtering capacity for each family member.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the family is the institution most affected by the influences of modernity. Therefore, in discovering the true function of the family, each family must be empowered so that it can become a resilient family, capable of contributing to the advancement of the nation and state, and possessing the resilience to anticipate the various negative effects of modernity. (Stacey, 1981)

## Modern Family, Women's Privileges and Position, and Their Implications

Basically, all families desire modernity, happiness, and faith. In religious terms, a modern and happy family is formulated in one key word: a sakinah family, as indicated in the Qur'an (Q.S. al-Rum: 21), "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought." In realizing a modern family full of happiness, a woman (mother) is considered to hold a key position. (Mangkurat & Era, 2023)

Through His words, Allah SWT implies that it is indeed women who play a significant role in realizing that happiness. In Q.S. al-Furqan: 74, it is stated, "And those who say, 'Our Allah, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." In explaining the meaning of this verse, the Prophet emphasized that 'Women are the pillars of the nation. If she is good, the nation will be good, and if she is bad, the nation will be destroyed.' From this position, the Prophet placed women as the most beloved beings, not only by humans (their husbands) but also by Allah SWT. (Khairanis & Aldi, 2025)

Based on the strategic position of women in realizing a modern and happy family, in navigating life in this postmodern era, every woman is required to carefully navigate the path of life, which is constantly influenced by the pull between the demands of modernity and religious and cultural values. (Savira et al., 2023); (Badawi, 1976) Another interesting aspect to discuss is the special rights granted by religion to women, as emphasized by the Prophet: "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother." Among women (mothers), the understanding of what the Prophet conveyed can have implications in three areas, namly:

**First**, a woman often becomes very egoistic when educating her children, believing she is always right, having authority over everything, and seeing others, including men (fathers), as always wrong. **Second**, there is a need to give respect to women (by being dutiful), offering them both material and spiritual support. **Third**, this hadith means that a woman is the giver of the winds of heaven within her family. Therefore, a woman (mother) can pass on or blow the heavenly wind to the entire family. If we were to describe the heavenly wind, it refers to: faith in Allah, gentleness and compassion, an atmosphere of mutual respect, a high work ethic, and a pure heart.

In line with the hope of the heavenly wind blowing, if a woman (mother) fails, then what will happen is the emergence of women's negative traits, such as; selfish, showing off, feeling self-righteous, powerful, etc. If this happens then in the family there will never be a heavenly wind blowing, this is what causes quarrels that end in the family breaking up, children losing affection, husbands cheating, and so on. (Muhajir, 2005)

The analysis above highlights the significant role of women in the continuity of family life across generations. This seems to be the main reason why religion (Islam) places women in a position



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of great dignity. Additionally, Muslim reformers have always fought for the emancipation of women. Through religious guidance, much has been conveyed regarding the position of women as human beings created by Allah Swt, who must serve Him. In this regard, both women and men are the same. Through the Ouran, Allah repeatedly explains the status of women as humans who have rights equal to those of men (Q.S. al-Nisa: 228), "And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men), as well as duties, and all of these should be fulfilled properly." Based on this, there is no prohibition for women to pursue careers, but they should not betray their dignity as women.

The experts have provided many formulations regarding the characteristics of a modern and happy family, and the features they refer to are as follows: Mutual respect and appreciation between husband and wife, leading to a harmonious and peaceful life. Loyalty and love for one another, bringing about tranquility and security, both physically and emotionally, which becomes the foundation of a lasting relationship. The ability to face all problems and difficulties with wisdom and prudence, without rushing, without blaming each other, and finding solutions with a calm mind. Mutual trust, avoiding actions that create suspicion and anxiety. Understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses. Consultation and deliberation. Willingness to apologize when wrong. Not complicating or tormenting the mind, but always open-hearted and receptive. The ability to secure a decent income for the entire family. All family members fulfill their responsibilities. The ability to enjoy a well-deserved vacation. (Nermawati, 2018); (Puspita, 2024)

### **CONCLUSION**

Everyone agrees that diversity must be acknowledged and addressed collectively, although inappropriate or unsuitable responses or behaviors will inevitably lead to conflict. The Qur'an serves as a guide for life, containing teachings and messages that are relevant to everyone. When the teachings of the Our'an are understood and applied within the framework of life's order, there are three main conditions. First, mastery of knowledge to the fullest. Second, justice must be strengthened to ensure human equality. Third, submission to the Almighty God. In the new trend of the transformation of women's roles from the 19th century to today, a number of issues have emerged within religious communities, causing women to face ethical and psychological dilemmas. Based on research on gender and family well-being, and the Islamic perspective on the transformation of women's roles in the era of globalization, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, through education and the development of communication technology, both women and men have equal opportunities to access information, which fosters equality between women and men, both inside and outside the household. **Second**, spiritually, socially, economically, and politically, Islam, through various verses in the Qur'an, has permitted women to become modern individuals by engaging in various activities like other human beings. Third, family empowerment can be achieved by building the principle of tawhid (the oneness of God); making the Qur'an a family guide; using faith and piety as measures of success; fostering kindness, politeness, and gentleness within the family; and nurturing a balance between modernity and spirituality within the family. In principle, every family desires both modernity and happiness, along with faith. In achieving a modern, happy family, a woman occupies a key position.



**DOI:** 10.51192/almubin.v8i1.1688

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