

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In this final chapter, this study presents the most important findings of my study. This study also put forward policy recommendations and suggest directions for future research. As indicated in Chapter One, the main objectives of this study were; (1) to discuss the historical background of Malay women's position in the 20th century; (2) to discover the existence of the Malay writings in the 20th century that concern on women issues; (3) to analyse the religious texts concerning women which mainly related to the emancipation of women that have been interpreted by the Malay male scholars; (4) to propose the guideline for the emancipation of women within the Malay context that is relevant for all generations. This study will thus structure this chapter in relation to the objectives mentioned.

The first objective has been achieved as explained in Chapter Two. By referencing the previous studies that discuss Malay women's situation, the chapter observed how women's issues were raised in the early of the 20th century. The present study finds that the status of Malay women differed during the colonial era and after independence. Women did not have the formal education they needed, nor were they engaged in the social and economic activities that they should have been throughout the colonial era. The Malay community believed that women were better suited to staying home and managing household chores. However, after the formation of numerous groups fighting for women's rights, the scenario changed and the group became more

active after independence. Throughout the discussion, the study has found that the emergence of activism and Malay women's struggles, similarly the emergence of Malay male scholars that fought for the emancipation of women in Malaya.

The second objective has been achieved and explained in Chapter Three. The chapter mainly focuses on the Malay male scholars' writings concerning women in the 20th century. This study selected the five of Malay male scholars' writings discussing women directly or indirectly. Based on the analysis conducted on the selected Malay writings, it was found that the selected Malay male writings shared significant similarities in the idea of emancipation of women in three aspects; education, work opportunity, and leadership. Throughout the discussion of the chapter, four factors influencing the idea of emancipation may be found including education as the main focus in Malaya, the rise of Islamization and reformation, the feminism and nationalist ideology, and the emergence of women's movement. Interestingly, the emancipation in the Malay male scholars' writings have positively impacted women in three critical sectors: education, economics, and politics.

The third and fourth objectives has been accomplished following Chapter Four. In the chapter, analysis study on the religious texts from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the Malay male scholars' writings. Every Qur'ānic verse and Ḥadīth related to women is selected and discussed. Interestingly, this chapter provided tables with the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīths that are relevant to women in the selected Malay male scholars' writings. Throughout the analysis, this study discusses the Qur'ān and Hadith's interpretation of scholars in addressing the issues of the emancipation of women. The scholars concur that women have the right to engage in

educational, political, and economic activities under *Shari'ah*. They also agreed that women could participate in social affairs based on their capabilities and skills. Based on the interpretation of selected male Malay scholars in the emancipation of women, this study was proposed a guideline in empowering women in three aspects; (1) Empowering women in the education sector; (2) Empowering women in the social economy; and (3) Empowering women with work-life balance.

In conclusion, the four main objectives of this study were achieved and this study produced a summary of findings that will be discussed in the sub-topic 5.2 as below:

5.2 Summary of Findings

The finding of this research can be summarized in the following points:

First, this study found that the selected Malay male scholars focused on writing on the women's issues beginning in the early 20th century onwards. The study discovered that Malay religious works in *Jawi* dominated by male authors were among the first to cover women-related issues. Despite the short amount of writing, the commentary on women's issues raised by it has a significant impact on positively bringing up women's issues. None of the writings on women were written by female scholars directly.

According to the previous study, numerous local and foreign researchers have shown interest in studies on the contributions and works of Malay scholars in general.

Nevertheless, prior research have examined a wide range of educational, social, political

and other issues. Furthermore, it has been discovered that few studies that examine the perception of Malay scholars from the perspective of gender and women. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the women's issue in the male Malay's writings.

This study has identified that there are more than twenty (20) *Jawi* manuscripts, directly and indirectly, addressed women's issues in the 20th century. However, there are only five Malay writings were chosen in this study, and the selection criteria included the manuscripts' publication dates, which ranged from the early 20th century's 1900 to 1960, being written in the *Jawi* script, and having Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīths that addressed women's issues. The preparatory works on which this study focuses on; *Kitab Adab Perempuan* written by Ahmad bin Ya'qūb (1891-1959), *Kitab Alam Perempuan* written by Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad al-Hādī (1867-1934), *Risalah Seruan Kepada Jenis Yang Lembut Perempuan-Perempuan* written by Abdullāh 'Abdurrahmān (1876-1950), *Tafsir Nur al-Ihsan* written by Haji Muhammad Sa'id bin Umar (1854-1932), and *Baḥr al-Madhī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī* written by Mohamed Idris Abdul Raof al-Marbawi (1896-1989).

The selected writings – was addressed the same message – concerning the emancipation of women. The writings could be regarded as one of the initiatives to discuss on the emancipation and empowerment of women in Malaya either directly or indirectly. They emphasized that women have rights in their personal sphere and home management, but at the same time, they need to be educated to have rights in the public sphere based on Islamic teachings.

The content of the scholar's writings referred to two religious texts, the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth since the sources discuss all aspects of human needs and provide solutions

for every sector of human life. These two sources of Islamic teachings have already highlighted that men and women have equal rights, Islam does not accept discrimination between men and women because both are created from a single source which the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth affirm. Even though men and women both have different responsibilities, Islam never minimizes or prioritizes one side.

The second findings is vital to show that Islam serves is a teaching for all people, regardless of gender. The fight for the emancipation of women requires the role of all parties; men's contributions are crucial in elevating the significance of women's emancipation as a fight for equality and the abolition of patriarchal subordination as defined by Islam. The modifications benefit everyone and uphold the reality that Islam has always protected women's rights and eliminated discrimination against them. Even though Malaya has always discriminated against women, as long as it is not motivated by religion, it is not completely unfettered. This fight for women's emancipation is an effort to empower women based on religious principles that male scholars in Malaya struggled to achieve.

Third, the finding of this study also encountered the importance of women's empowerment, which should not be as a slogan only without practical guide that can assist women regardless of religion, ethnicity, and races. Therefore, the guideline provided in this study is essential for all women to empower themselves based on the Islamic worldview highlighted by the Malay male scholars. Furthermore, the empowerment of women's guideline proposed in this study also suggests that factors contributing to personal development such as having a purpose and vision, being conscientious and self-reflection; the ability to perform human agency, pursuing higher

education and broadening one's religious knowledge, having access to media and technology, being exposed to variety of life experiences, being financially independent, engaging in all facets of life, and acting as a role model are all factors that positive impact on women empowerment.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

There are several opportunities gained from this study that allows some extensive research in the future. This study recommended the following insights for future research:

First, it is limited to several Malay male scholars who published their works between the 1900 to the 1960. Since the study was limited to five of Malay male scholars whose publications appeared in early 20th century, it was not possible to research more scholars other than the selected scholars. Thus, it opens more exploration to other scholars that have not been selected in this study, particularly those who published their writings after 1960s.

Second, this study also limited to Malay male scholars whose writings only favor women's issues for the specific reasons mentioned above. Therefore, future studies can investigate on female scholars who have significant contributions in publishing works on many matters. Moreover, it is undeniable that numerous female scholars also emerged in the early of 20th century, such as Wan Fatimah al-Kalantani (1820-1913), Raja Aisyah binti Sulaiman (1870-1925), Hajah Khadijah binti Abd al-Rahman (1871-1935), Aishah binti Muhammad Salleh (1871-1933) dan others.

Considerably, many future studies can be produced by analysing the female scholars' point of view on women's issues.

Third, thousands of Islamic manuscripts and writings that have not been studied yet, particularly by male or female Malay scholars either male or female scholars. This would be a fruitful area for further work on many issues, which include gender, marriage, family, parenting, and many others that have close connection with women's issues. The concept of women's emancipation also could be explored further if the analysis can cover many different published and unpublished works in the Malay world.