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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## POLYGAMY IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: AN ANALYSIS OF AMINA WADUD'S FEMINIST THEORY

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### Abstract

Polygamy remains a controversial practice within Indonesian Islamic family law, where literal interpretations of the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, clash with modern gender equality norms articulated in Marriage Law No. 16/2019 and CEDAW. This study critically examines how multidisciplinary views, including law, biology, sociology, psychology, and economics, shed light on the issue. It highlights the harmful effects of polygamy on women, such as emotional trauma, financial disparities, and family conflicts. The study also analyzes Amina Wadud's feminist hermeneutics, which reinterprets the verse as a socio-historical contingency rooted in the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud to protect orphans, emphasizing the difficulty of applying the Qur'an, An-nisa: 129, in an egalitarian manner. Using a library research approach with primary sources from Wadud's works, "Qur'an and Woman" and "A Jihad for Justice", alongside secondary literature, the analysis illustrates her tauhid-centered, contextual methodology. This approach draws on Fazlur Rahman's double movement and maqasid shariah to construct patriarchal frameworks. The findings reveal polygamy as a form of institutionalized discrimination, advocating for monogamy to promote family harmony and calling for reform of KHI Article 57 through inclusive ijtihad to achieve substantive justice.

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### Introduction:-

Polygamy remains a contentious issue in contemporary Islamic family law. Its legal basis derives from the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, which provides conditional permission as a form of social welfare in contexts such as protecting orphans and widows. Indonesian Law No. 16 of 2019, amending Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, establishes a minimum marriage age of 19 for both men and women, reflecting principles of legal equality and constitutional protections for women (Yudhanto). The compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) imposes stringent requirements for polygamy, including Religious Court approval, the first wife's consent, and proof of financial capacity and material equity (Sumaelan). From an international law perspective, polygamy conflicts with gender equality standards under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Indonesia in 1984, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified in 2005 (Nurhidayatulloh). The CEDAW Committee's General Comment No. 21 (1994) identifies polygamy as violating Article 16 by creating

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hierarchical inequalities in marriage, including uncertainties in inheritance, maintenance, and custody rights, alongside emotional, psychological, and financial burdens for women. Consequently, States Parties like Indonesia face obligations to implement gradual reforms addressing these structural vulnerabilities (Ainiyah).

### **Literature Review:-**

Previous studies reveal diverse interpretive frameworks for the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, ranging from conditional permissibility to contextual restriction, Pitrotussaadah and Sayehu minchigan(Sayehu). Synthesize traditional and progressive views, noting Buya Hamka's of monogamy as madar al-shariah (core of Islamic law) versus Quraish Shihab's emphasis on Indonesia's social context, yet maintain polygamy's theoretical legitimacy under perfect justice, a condition contested by feminist scholars. Amina Wadud's hermeneutics, analyzed by Fitriani (Aulia Fitriani), Febriansyah(Aji Febriansyah), and Anam (Anam), fundamentally diverges from these positions. Comparatively, while Buya Hamka and Shihab, who operate within male-centric, historical grammatical exegesis that retains polygamy as an exceptional allowance, Wadud's tauhid-based, double movement method (Fazlur Rahman) rejects this as patriarchal residue, reframing the verse as a post-Uhud humanitarian contingency rendered obsolete by the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 129's, admission of the impossibility of justice. Existing literature documents these positions but rarely conducts a systematic comparison. Buya Hamka's moral prioritization lacks Wadud's structural gender analysis, and Quraish Shihab's contextualism stops short of her maqasid-driven deconstruction. This study addresses this lacuna through multidisciplinary synthesis, examining polygamy's psycho social economic impacts alongside Wadud's hermeneutics to bridge conservative progressive divides. How do multidisciplinary analyses of the effects of polygamy on women's dignity and family harmony in Indonesia? How does Wadud's feminist hermeneutics reinterpret the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, as socio-historical rather than normative?.

### **Research Method:-**

This study employs a qualitative library research approach, systematically reviewing primary and secondary sources to analyze Amina Wadud's feminist hermeneutics on polygamy. This method suits the interpretive nature of the topic, enabling deep textual and contextual examination without empirical fieldwork (Yasin). Data sources primarily include, Wadud's seminal works, Qur'an and Woman, and Inside the Gender Jihad, focusing on her tauhid hermeneutics and Qur'anic reinterpretations. Secondary, scholarly articles, books, and journals critiquing Wadud, multidisciplinary studies on polygamy, and Indonesian regulations. Data collection sources retrieved via purposive sampling from databases using keywords Amina Wadud polygamy, feminist hermeneutics An-Nisa: 3, polygamy multidisciplinary Indonesia, inclusion criteria peer reviewed, relevance to gender justice or maqasid shariah. Data analysis, content analysis with thematic coding hermeneutic principles, comparative exegesis, and socio-economic impacts. Triangulation via cross verification between Wadud's texts, classical tafsir Buya Hamka, Quraish Shihab, and empirical studies ensures validity. The double movement technique, historical contextual and contemporary application guides reinterpretation toward gender inclusive maqasid. This rigorous yields a contextual synthesis for reforming polygamy discourse (Firda) (Reni Dian Anggraini).

### **Research Results and Discussion:-**

#### **Getting to Know the Biography of Amina Wadud:-**

Amina Wadud was born Mary Teasley on 25 September 1952 in Bethesda, Montgomery, Maryland, United States. Her father was a Methodist minister, and her mother had African-Arab ancestry. She converted to Islam in 1972 and changed her name to Amina Wadud in 1974 (Wadud). Wadud earned her Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of Michigan, and taught at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Her first book, Qur'an and Woman, was banned in the United Arab Emirates for being controversial, but became essential reading for progressive Muslim activists (Kecia Ali). New way of thinking, her unique life experiences from a Christian family to Islam, from America to Malaysia, helped Wadud see weaknesses in traditional male-dominated Qur'anic interpretation. She developed tauhid hermeneutics, a method of reading the Qur'an that emphasizes equality between men and women. For the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, Wadud argues the verse was not a permanent polygamy rule but a temporary solution after the Battle of Uhud that is no longer relevant today (Wadud). Different from other scholars, Wadud uses Fazlur Rahman's double movement method, first to understand the historical context of the verse, then to apply it to modern times. This differs from Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab, who still permit polygamy under strict conditions of perfect justice.

**Amina Wadud's Feminist Hermeneutic Interpretation of the Qur'an An-Nisa: 3:-**

The interpretation method developed by Amina Wadud, is a hermeneutic approach that focuses on three important elements of the text. First, the background in which the text was written during the period when the Qur'an was revealed. Second, the grammatical structure of the text, and third, the text itself as a whole. These three elements are used to interpret the Qur'an, which is then organized through analysis from various perspectives, primarily based on context. Related to the context of discussing similar themes in the Qur'an, the use of the same language and syntactic structure present throughout the Qur'an, a strong commitment to the principles of the Qur'an, and the context of the Qur'an as the foundation of life's thinking (Nurhidayah). In addition to all that, Amina Wadud also applies a method of interpreting the Qur'an called the double movement based on the thinking of Fazlur Rahman. However, the message contained in the verses is not only bound to a specific time or historical context. Therefore, readers needed to understand the meaning and expressions of the Qur'an in accordance with the time and situation in which the revelation was sent down in order to determine its true meaning. In general, Amina Wadud's criticism of classical interpretations relates to the position of men and women. Amina Wadud believes that men and women are equal. Although there are differences between men and women when the Qur'an discusses the creation of humans, Amina Wadud argues that there is no fundamental difference in the value given to women and men. Thus, there is no evidence that women have more or fewer restrictions than men. The Qur'an does not position women as a version of men in the presentation of its main themes (M Alfatih Mubarakh).

**A Multidisciplinary Approach to Polygamy:-****Women are not just about biology:-**

The biological approach to polygamy refers to arguments that use scientific facts about biological differences between men and women to justify the practice. This approach often highlights variations in hormones, brain structure, and sexual drive, which tend to be higher in men, so that polygamy is considered a natural response to these biological needs (Nahari). Because the main difference between women is based on their ability to give birth, this is considered their primary function. The use of the word 'primary' has negative connotations because it implies that women can only be mothers. Therefore, all women's education must be aimed at shaping them into faithful wives and ideal mothers in preparation for this function. No term in the Qur'an indicates that giving birth is "primary" for a woman. There is no indication that raising children is her exclusive role. This shows that women (although certainly not all) are the only human beings capable of giving birth to children. This ability is essential for the survival of humanity. This function is primary only in relation to the survival of the human race. In other words, because only women can give birth to children, this becomes a top priority. Although the Qur'an does not limit women to being mothers, it emphasizes the respect, sympathy, and responsibility that must be given to women as creators of life. 'O mankind.....fear Allah, through whom you claim rights over one another, and (fear) the wombs (that gave birth to you).' (4:1) This verse is often interpreted as a sign of respect for women in general. Amina Wadud specifies this verse as a sign of respect for the reproductive abilities required of women (Wadud).

Amina Wadud highlights this verse as an assignment of respect for the reproductive abilities required of women without diminishing respect for women as a group, but highlighting it from the perspective of the Qur'an. The importance of the function of bearing children, which is exclusively performed by women. The respect given to the fulfilment of this function helps explain how the Qur'an explicitly establishes functions for men that create balance in human relationships. No other function is exclusively given to one gender or the other (Wadud). Case study: Insanul Fahmi Poligamy Controversy. The high-profile case of Indonesian celebrity Insanul Fahmi exemplifies the psychological trauma, financial dependency, and familial conflict inherent in unauthorized polygamous arrangements. In 2025, Fahmi's attempt to marry actress Inara Rusli as a second wife without Wardatina Mawa's consent triggered severe emotional distress for the first wife, documented through viral audio recordings where Mawa expressed profound heartbreak and suicidal ideation ("kalbunyabakterirrisembilu"). Mawa subsequently filed police reports against both Fahmi and Rusli at Polda Metro Jaya for alleged adultery and zina, reflecting irreconcilable marital conflict. Financially, Rusli's precarious single mother status raising 3 children alone became Fahmi's stated rationale for polygamy, creating dependency dynamics typical of co-wife arrangements lacking legal protections under KHI Article 57. This case empirically validates the triad of depression, first wife's acute distress, economic vulnerability, second wife's instrumentalization, and structural conflict legal intervention, underscoring Amina Wadud's hermeneutic critique that polygamy institutionalizes familial injustice incompatible with maqasid shariah objectives (Gunatyas).

**The Status of Women in the Social Environment:-**

The approach to the status of women in the social environment of polygamy discusses how this practice affects the status, honour, and dignity of women in society. An individual or group can obtain or be given a higher status than others. The Qur'an mentions, for example, that by fighting in the way of Allah with wealth and soul or by migrating for the sake of Allah, one can obtain status. However, most degrees are obtained through undefined categories of "good" deeds. Distinguishing between individuals or groups based on "deeds" raises issues regarding the value of women in society and as individuals. Although the Qur'an distinguishes based on deeds, it does not assign a specific value to specific deeds. This leaves each social system to determine the value of various types of deeds as it sees fit. They always do so, and "every society distinguishes men's work from women's work". The problem is that men's work is usually considered more valuable than women's work, regardless of how arbitrary the division of labour is. On the one hand, it does not determine the actual value of specific deeds. This leads to the interpretation that the Qur'an supports the values of deeds determined by individual societies. In fact, the neutrality of the Qur'an allows for natural variation. However, with regard to the degree obtained through deeds, the Qur'an has established several points that should influence judgment in society. First, all deeds done with piety are more valuable. Second, "to men belongs a share of different rewards that are given based on what is done. It does not matter how actions are divided between men and women in a particular social context. Another implication of "a share of what is earned" is that whenever someone performs a task that is usually associated with another (Wadud).

**Post-War Polygamy: Multidisciplinary Cracks in Dignity and Hermeneutics Wadud:-**

Amina Wadud offers a fresh way to understand the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, about polygamy, arguing the verse came down after the Battle of Uhud, when many Muslim men died, leaving orphans and widows without support. This was a temporary emergency solution, not a permanent rule for men to marry multiple wives anytime (Wardana). She says classical scholars focus too much on the condition of justice fairness in money, time, and love. But miss the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 129, which clearly states that perfect justice between wives is impossible. Wadud's approach uses four simple ideas: first, tawhid means men and women are spiritually equal (Al-Hujurat:13); second, history shows it was for war times only; third, Islamic goals protect the family from harm, maqasid shariah; fourth, women should help interpret the Qur'an too, not just men (Muhammad). Classical scholars like Al-Shafi'i disagree, saying even imperfect fairness is enough, and point to Prophet Muhammad's marriages mostly to widows as proof that polygamy is allowed when conditions are met. Indonesian scholars Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab take a middle path: polygamy is theoretically okay but extremely hard in practice, so KHI Article 57 requires court permission and the first wife's consent. Wadud challenges this by asking, does consent really guarantee fairness when the Qur'an itself admits perfect justice can't happen? Her thinking pushes Indonesia to discuss whether current rules work or need to be changed, balancing classical texts with modern family realities without rejecting tradition outright (Eko Prasetyo Budi).

**Conclusion:-**

Multidisciplinary examination reveals that polygamy in Indonesia presents persistent challenges to women's dignity, familial harmony, and economic equity despite stringent regulatory frameworks established in Articles 56-71 of the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI). Amina Wadud's tauhid hermeneutics offers a contextual reinterpretation of the Qur'an, An-Nisa: 3, as a post-Battle of Uhud humanitarian contingency rather than universal normative prescription, grounded in ontological equality (the Qur'an, Al-Hujurat: 13), historical asbab al-nuzul, maqasid prioritization, and female interpretive subjectivity. This library-based textual study has limitations because it mainly uses existing interpretations rather than direct research with polygamous families.

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