

## Social media and public participation of Tablighi Jamaat's women

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**Abstract** Since the study of women in the Tablighi Jamaat (JT) has been actively promoted by various layers and circles in the academic environment, a thesis has also been gradually obtained, strengthening the position of most JT women who live in private and domestic spaces. This study was born from an investigation into the teachings of JT, which are quite strict in regulating the ethics of women's interactions. Also, JT women, like followers of the reformist Islamic movement, do not have a history of good relations with Western products such as social media. The conditions obtained by various previous studies became unstoppable when discussing the women of JT in Temboro Village, Magetan. In this village, which is the central headquarters of JT in East Java, women are often found participating in public spaces and familiar with social media, which is a Western product. By using the post-Islamism theory and ethnographic method, the writer hypothesises that JT Temboro women go through a separate negotiation process related to JT's teachings with the decision to participate in public spaces, one of which is influenced by their intensity with social media.

**Keywords:** social media; Tablighi Jamaat; women; participation; public area

### INTRODUCTION

Tablighi Jamaat (JT) as one of the transnational movements or communities that entered Indonesia in 1952 has been widely approached from various points of view, including how the role of JT women in their daily lives (Hilmy, 2011). Several studies related to JT women in various regional contexts by scholars have been conducted and resulted in data showing that JT women are inhabiting more domestic spaces than public spaces. Although several studies examine the role of JT women, this role has several limitations such as da'wah activities and the need to be accompanied by a mahram (a family that is related by blood and is prohibited from being married). Meryem F. Zaman is one of the JT researchers. She stated in her study that the biggest role of JT women is to encourage their husbands to be involved in JT's da'wah journey. The ideal Islam for JT women also means their sacrifice to leave their families and play a role in the da'wah movement with their husband's (Zaman, 2019). In the context of the Temboro

community, Yon Machmudi and Putih Kusumah Ardhani emphasized the line of difference between here (female *pesantren*<sup>i</sup> figure) JT Temboro Village and JT Temboro women who are ordinary citizens. Nyai Temboro Village devotes more of its role as part of JT by participating in various da'wah activities Fields (Machmudi & Ardhani, 2020). Seyed Mohammad Hosein Akramiyan and Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseinizadeh reinforce the reason that the large portion of JT women's participation which focuses more on da'wah is influenced by JT's grammatical-textual values which withdraw from politics. (Akramiyan & Hosseinizadeh, 2020). JT's anti-political attitude was later called by Frenando W. Pool the subjectivity of secularism. Taking the landscape in Joygram, West Bengal, Pool defines JT's secularism as a political ideology that separates religion and worldly as well as non-discrimination based on religion. (Pool, 2020). The non-discriminatory attitudes of JT women are largely inspired by the Sufi tradition that becomes their ideological negotiation tool. As observed by Sukron Ma'mun et al, JT women prioritise peace in their da'wah methods (Ma'mun dkk., 2020).

The literature on JT women also emphasises the strict position in which they are described as being rightly on the path of community teachings, requiring them to always stay in their respective homes and minimise all outdoor acts. (Sikand, 1999). JT women in several areas with the South Asian context also described by Barbara Metcalf are rarely seen at ceremonial and traditional events such as weddings, which are commonly the domain and space of women. Instead, the existence of these JT women was replaced by men to minimise contact with *ajnabi* or foreign groups (Metcalf, 1996). Referring to JT's teachings, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandahlawy as the initiator of JT also did not indicate his aspirations for JT women to participate in the movement, he claimed was an Islamic movement purification. Indeed, there is a narrative stating that Muhammad Ilyas tried to meet the mufti Kifayatullah Dehlavi to ask for a fatwa<sup>ii</sup> so that JT women are allowed to increase the intensity of their activities outside the home, but his efforts met with opposition from Mufti Dehlavi (Khan, 2018).

A study shows the involvement of JT women is more concerned with their participation in routine da'wah activities that have become written regulations in the JT community such as *taklim* (a kind of recitation activity) and *masturah*. The genealogy of the term *masturah* can be traced from the combination of the words *mastura* and *aurat*. The meaning of *mastura* in Urdu means a thing hidden beside the word *aurat* which emphasises everything that cannot be seen. (Meijer, 2010) About the etymological definition of *masturah*, the word *masturah* was then used to refer to the idea of alienating women from the Tablighi Jamaat where they were not allowed to carry out activities outside the supervision of men of the Tablighi Jamaat. In the current development of the Tablighi Jamaat, *masturah* was later understood as the da'wah activities of the Tablighi Jamaat women in women's circles while still being accompanied by the supervision of the male Tablighi Jamaat

(Begum, 2016). The involvement of JT women in other activities such as *taklim* has been carried out by Bulbul Shiddiqi by taking the background of Bangladeshi society, which also shows that the farthest scope for women's involvement is still in the smallest sphere of society, namely the family field (Siddiqi, 2012). Regarding the Indonesian context, in the case of the women of JT Jakarta, Eva F. Amrullah's research reveals a perspective that is almost the same as Siddiqi's in which she photographed the activities of urban JT women conscious commitment to run their agency on *taklim* activities. By claiming their activities as an attempt to gain paradise in an age of destruction, JT Jakarta women are engaged in religious activities as well as to show independence accompanied by the understanding that JT women are not always in the shadow of authority (Amrullah, 2011). However, the variety of research on JT women as the authors describe still describes women who are engaged in social activities that are insulated and have limited space and interaction.

Starting from a variety of research on the manifestation of JT women's ideology, there seems to be a shift when the author looks at the activities of JT women in Temboro village, Magetan Regency, East Java. Temboro village can be said to be a place with quite rapid JT activities. Almost the majority of women their wear closed clothes with a predominance of dark colours. The claim used by the Temboro community is the preservation of the Prophet's social culture. So do not be surprised if Temboro Village is then called Medina Village (Yusuf, 2017). Of course, this condition is quite opposed to several studies on veiled women as done by Yuyun Sunesti. She points out that what is easy to understand about veiled women, in general, are their social tendencies. Women in the veil usually reject any form of active participation that can lead to mingling with the opposite sex. The tightly closed body condition also makes them mark the density of activities that intersect with the public world. Restrictions on the public world have finally led to veiled women in striking differences in social patterns compared to women who are not veiled (Sunesti, 2012).

On the other hand, in almost every corner of Temboro village, you will also find veiled JT women. They carry out their daily activities, either trading, teaching or just socialising among their fellow citizens. The activities of JT women in Temboro Village differ greatly from the theoretical discourse in research related to veiled women. There is a difference between veiled women who are affiliated with the JT group. They do not exclude themselves from all social activities such as trading in the form of food stalls, clothing stores, buying, and selling in markets or even going out into public spaces without a mahram.

Starting from the various actions taken by JT Temboro women in the public space, it can be understood that there are different applications behind the general understanding of the identity of JT women. The analysis of the shift that leads to more flexibility in the participation of JT Temboro women in the public space is the focus of

the author, especially because the writer has a hypothesis that there is the influence of social media that shapes the peculiarities of women's public space participation in Temboro. Today, social media theory has moved forward because social media has the dramatic potential to change the pattern of relationships between individuals and the environment in which the entire society lives. (Lewis dkk., 2010). The rampant use of new media such as Instagram, Whatsapp, Youtube, Facebook and various entertainment in Indonesia, of course, cannot be ignored by its existence for all groups, including JT Temboro women. (Rivers, W. L., Peterson, T., & Jensen, 2008). The phenomenon that illustrates the recognition of Islamists to modernity that they had avoided can be identified using the theory of post-Islamism coined by Asef Bayat. The condition that Little John calls a global village allows anyone to use the media social like a space with no distance limit and bring anyone who is in a far distance (Littlejohn, 1996). Therefore, it becomes interesting to study the case of the involvement of JT Temboro women in the public space which makes them able to break the standard dogma that exists in JT women in general. It is mainly the author's attempts to analyse the role of the media social in shaping the peculiarities of their behaviour about the public space.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study took a location setting in Temboro Village, Magetan Regency, East Java. Since this type of research is field research, the first thing researchers do is pay close attention to JT women's phenomenon in Temboro Village. This step was taken by visiting Temboro Village as the research location and enriching understanding from print and online media. As a follow-up, the researcher then met with Temboro Village officials to further confirm JT women's discourse as the focus of the researcher's research. After obtaining adequate data, the researchers also enriched the initial data with online means, namely enriching information from the internet world.

As the concept of qualitative research, this study puts forward the naturalness of collecting data about JT women when it has collided with social media. The purpose of this study is to present another face of women's active involvement in terms of concepts, paradigms and social experiences, all of which are summarised in the culture of the JT community in Temboro Village, Magetan Regency. To align the objectives with the nature of the research, the researcher uses the ethnographic method to examine individual behaviour in *setting* particular cultural and social life Fields (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). The researcher's task as an ethnographer here is to explore the answers to each problem of why and how something can happen in the socio-cultural context of JT women in Temboro Village.

With the ethnographic method, the researchers collected data from the beginning of August 2020 to the end of January 2021. The women

of JT in Temboro Village are quite diverse based on their livelihoods, as the researcher summarises in table 1.

**Table 1.** Tablighi Jamaat’s Women Profession in Temboro Village

Profession	Grand Total
Grocery dealer	39
Village Apparatus	3
Student	728
Laundress	25
Housewife	430
Enterpriser	994
Total	2.219

Source: Temboro Village Profile of Kelompok Kerja (Pokja) (2019)

Researchers stepped in and were directly involved with the informants studied, namely the Temboro Village community, especially women, the majority of whom were JT members. Furthermore, the researcher also plays a role as a participant in several daily activities of JT women such as in the trade sector, *taklim* (recitation), effort *home industry* and also in the agricultural sector practised by local people. Researchers also see the importance of *useverstehen*. In this case, the researchers also physically assimilated some of JT women's attributes, such as the use of the veil and clothes that are usually long, covered and have distinctive dark colours. Supporting the data in this study is secondary data in the form of additional information from informants who know first-hand what the role of JT women is in the public space which indicates the influence of social media. These informants were obtained from village officials and informants who were relatives of the female family members of JT Temboro. In addition, secondary data were obtained by researchers from articles, books and academic research works related to the research theme.

The researcher chose informants based on the professional background of the woman JT Temboro. This background determines how broad the public participation of women in Temboro Village is as well as seeing the extent of the role of social media in influencing their activities. 8 women from JT Temboro became informants in this study. From the results of the grouping, the informants with the following professions were obtained: 3 *pesantren* teachers, 2 students, 1 trader, 1 village apparatus and 1 housewife. Based on the grouping of informants in this study, the researcher used the Analysis Interactive model of Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman which grouped qualitative analysis activities into four parts. The four sections sequentially include data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Review of the History of the Arrival of the Tablighi Jamaat in Temboro**

The history of the Tablighi Jamaat (JT) movement can be traced from a village of Mewat in India as the first place where it grew and developed until it spread widely to various other parts of the world. It was Muhammad Ilyas Al-Kandahlawi, a Muslim who founded JT in response to the condition of Islam which he considered slumping in 1916. The downturn of Islam was initially thought to be the impact of the weakening of the Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. This condition was further exacerbated by the fall of the Mughals. at the end of the 19th century when the British Empire occupied India. The transition of power to British hands gave rise to tensions and conflicts between Hindu-Muslims and led to the conversion of Muslims who were previously Hindu in the 1920s (Reetz, 2006).

Seeing the state of Islam in Mewat, Ilyas al-Kandahlawi, who was appointed as the imam of the Nizamuddin mosque in 1918, thought of various spiritual innovation efforts. Ilyas then went on a pilgrimage in April 1926 and felt the Prophet Muhammad's signal to determine with certainty an Islamic movement that could be disseminated to the public. (Haq, 1972). Arriving at Mewat, Ilyas' first step in preaching was to build a school and mosque but later he admitted that it was not optimal. It was only in 1934 that Ilyas invited all prominent figures such as the elders and land rulers of Mewat to call on da'wah activities together (Masud, 2000). From here, the Tablighi Jamaat moved in preaching until it spread and reached the State of Indonesia, especially in this case Temboro Village.

The arrival of JT in Temboro occurred in the 1980s when a group of JT members visited the Al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School which was built by Kyai Mahmud and Kyai Ahmad Shodiq in the 1950s. The JT Jamaat from Pakistan was headquartered in Manisrejo Village, Madiun, but was sent to Temboro by a Kyai who is none other than Kyai Mahmud's teacher. The meeting, which was described as only about two hours between the JT congregation and Kyai Mahmud, apparently left a deep impression and encouraged him to accept and apply JT teachings in Temboro village. This is as revealed by Marni (to maintain the confidentiality of the informant's identity, the author has disguised all the names of the informants), one of the residents as well as the santri of Pondok al-Fatah. Marni spends most of her time daily studying at the al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School. He lives with his mother, siblings and also one of his aunt's nuclear family at his grandmother's house. As a student, he knew a lot about JT's history from the lessons he received at the al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School. To the writer, Marni said as follows:

"The asbab only lasted two hours. Because the two hours (JT Temboro) could be this big. Because of his thoughts on Kyai Mahmud. After that, the mosque (Pondok al-Fatah) looks full

every time even though the original is not. It seems because of Mbah Yai Mahmud's *karamah* (miracle). " (Marni, 10-08-2020)

The process of JT's history is continuing, supported by the fact that Kyai Uzairon Thoifur Abdillah, who is the son of Kyai Mahmud, has intersected with JT's teachings during his study in Egypt. Along with the complete understanding of Kyai Mahmud and Kyai Uzairon about JT, tabligh was established as the official practice of the al-Fatah Temboro Islamic boarding school in 1989.

### **The Transformation of Farmers into Madina van Java Residents**

Currently, at several points, Temboro Village still consists of rice fields surrounding residential areas and the Al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School. This condition confirms that the identity of the Temboro people is closely related to the agricultural sector. The area around the *pesantren* is also in the form of land planted with various plants such as sugar cane and rice.

Social-religious changes began to be felt when Kyai Uzairon and several figures from the al-Fatah *pesantren* travelled independently to people's homes and introduced JT's ideology to the Temboro residents. This situation was reinforced by the rapid development of Pesantren al-Fatah which required building expansion due to the relocation of state schools such as junior high and high schools outside Temboro village. The transfer of several educational institutions was carried out by the *pesantren* with the argument that the land located in Temboro village was cleared.

The effect of sterilising Temboro Village from state schools seems to have had an impact on the rapidity of the al-Fatah Islamic boarding school so that a wider field is needed. Some of the rice fields, which are located adjacent to the *pesantren*, have been bought by the *pesantren* or implemented a land swap system. From the proceeds from the sale of land, the activities of Hajj and Umrah activities of the population have increased even though when they returned from Makkah, they had to lose the rice fields that became their livelihood. Even so, residents began to be familiar with the JT-style lifestyle and consider the application of these teachings a blessing.

Along with the incessant preaching carried out by *pesantren* figures among the population, gradually those who were initially opposed to the ideology of India began to change. Likewise, with Temboro women. Those who were originally just ordinary peasants with a makeshift head covering slowly learned to wear a headscarf following the *pesantren* figure who was already veiled. Some of the routine recitation activities known as *amal maqomi* are held by the *pesantren* and attended by residents according to their schedule.

Helmi, one resident admitted that the process of changing the Temboro population from abangan farmers to Medina van Java was very fast. Helmi is a native of Temboro who is about 60 years old and works

as a trader in the market every day. She stated that the name Medina village did not originate from the Temboro residents but it was the outside community who gave this nickname.

"People like me in the village do not understand the news, but outside, they say, there is a lot of Temboro, the village of Madinah. Only when looking at Youtube understands that outsiders call this village the village of Medina. Indeed, religious broadcasting here is too fast. I am right when MI (currently the respondent is around 60 years old) is not like this, still mixed with men and women, not wearing a headscarf either. " (Helmi, 22-09-2020)

### **Taklim and Yasinan Women Group: Tabligh Jamat in the Middle of Islamic Locality**

All the activities of JT residents of Temboro Village are manifested not only in the personal sphere but in a social environment where it finds its construction on gender differentiation between men and women. Women as the dynamic local group receive teaching and development of *tabligh* understanding in separate forums, namely *yasinan* and *taklim*. It can be said that the reflection of the solidarity of the Temboro people can be seen, one of which is from their compactness in attending the *yasinan* and *taklim* which are held every week according to the *mahalah*; segmentation of resident groups based on mosques around their homes.

*Yasinan* and *taklim* which are generally adopted by all Indonesian Muslims contain different elements in the locality of the Temboro community (Nasir, 2019). If generally these two activities reflect the assimilation between Islamic dogma and local culture, in Temboro *yasinan* and *taklim* at the same time become a forum for deepening the teachings of JT. In the *taklim* which was triggered two years after the adoption of JT teachings, the whole activity was centred on the reading of charity which is the primary book of JT members. In line with *taklim*, *yasinan*, as the name implies, presents the reading of the Yaasin letter with a dissimilarity which lies in reading several parts of the book of *Fadhilah Amal*. Another thing that JT Temboro's two women's communal space activities can break is the control of the forum which opens the widest possible opportunity for all citizens, regardless of whether they are *santri-abangan*<sup>iii</sup> or non-native.

### **Khuruj and Masturah As Ideology Unification and Uniformity**

Adherents of the JT ideology are doing their best to guide and bring back the life that the Prophet exemplified during a period they call pure Islam. So that this power is not seen as utopian, Temboro residents reconcile the ideals and realities that their organisation has adopted by practising the da'wah *Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* as taught by the Prophet Muhammad in their two important activities namely *khuruj* and *masturah* (Ali, 2010).

*Khuruj* became a term for JT's da'wah journey to spread Islamic teachings outside their area both nationally and internationally with a



certain frequency and duration of time. Almost the majority of JT activities are 'gender literate' including *khuruj* which are specifically intended for men, on the other hand, *masturah* activities as a da'wah movement are only practised by JT women even though they are still under the control and supervision of *rijal* parties (men. Highlighting *khuruj* and *masturah* activities) Under the authority and direction of the Al-Fatah *pesantren* officials, the board of the mosque for each paper usually goes around the village to invite the men of Temboro Village to perform *khuruj* during certain terms starting from three days, seven days, four months and even a year. This activity also influences female family members of the population who perform *khuruj* to participate in *masturah*, apart from of course getting directions from *yasinan* and *taklim* which are routinely followed every week. Al-Fatah Islamic boarding school has a significant role in maintaining JT's da'wah traditions such as *khuruj* and *masturah*. The direct impact of the role of the *pesantren* revolves around the provision of special holidays for *ustadz* and *ustadzah* to carry out *khuruj* and *masturah*.

Moreover, the male *santri* are obliged to participate in *khuruj* with village men in the hope that young cadres will emerge who are familiar with JT's religious rituals. Al-Fatah Islamic boarding school has a significant role in maintaining JT's da'wah traditions such as *khuruj* and *masturah*. The direct impact of the role of the *pesantren* revolves around the provision of special holidays for *Ustadz* and *Ustadzah* to carry out *khuruj* and *masturah*. Moreover, the male *santri* are obliged to participate in *khuruj* with village men in the hope that young cadres will emerge who are familiar with JT's religious rituals. Al-Fatah Islamic boarding school has a significant role in maintaining JT's da'wah traditions such as *khuruj* and *masturah*. The direct impact of the role of the *pesantren* revolves around the provision of special holidays for *ustadz* and *ustadzah* to carry out *khuruj* and *masturah*.

The JT women's *masturah* activity in this case in the context of Temboro Village emphasises a set of principles whereby women keep moving in a limited space and are under supervision. The clear regulation from *masturah* talks about the requirements for the possession of a male mahram that can accompany da'wah trips outside the region or the country. Judging from the mahram requirements, even women JT Temboro village have more limited space than their public activities and participation while in the village. This considers the placement of *masturah* participants in a house under the supervision of men, the shopping process they are also represented in, and the series of activities that are also set by the men during the *masturah* activity.

### **Reflections and Attributes of JT Women**

Temboro village women are an important element of the continuity of all the activities of the population, especially to emphasise the identity of the village that adheres to *Tablighi*. In connection with the existence of the al-Fatah Islamic boarding school, Temboro Village is a destination

for JT women from inside and outside the city of Magetan, the majority of which have a multiplicity of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This fact makes the face of the Temboro woman's personality so heterogeneous, but it is in the singularity of the *tabligh* community arena. On average, indigenous women behave as *anshors* and are open to immigrants who are *muhajirin* in this regard. Apart from being an indication of the success of JT's preaching in Temboro Village, the economic stretching factor in which immigrants are one of the pillars of the village community's economy also deserves to be considered.

Both JT women who have status as natives and immigrants are immersed in interactions that seem to remove the boundaries and boundaries between them. The implementation of *taklim* and *yasinan* are two activities that reflect the integration of the women of Temboro Village in the framework of the *ukhuwah* they build. Public space interactions such as buying and selling transactions, visits to children with the status of Islamic boarding school students or even just talking to greetings on the street strengthens the collapse of disparity among women in Temboro Village.

The aggregation of the identity of JT Temboro's women can be seen from the physical attributes they display daily. Entering Temboro Village also means witnessing a homogeneous scene where most women are dressed all in black from toe to head in open spaces that are accessible to the naked eye. This portrait of attributes that explains many things including the affirmation of gender between men and women can be found in almost all sectors, both domestic and public. The all-black appearance claimed by JT Temboro's woman as an illustration of the Prophet's wife's clothes resembling the colour of a crow is also complemented using a burqa (face-covering veil). The physical appearance character of JT Temboro's woman is a symbol supporting the concept of a style that is compatible with Islam according to JT's ideology. This is despite the assumption that their dress is not necessarily a sign of piety. This is evidenced by Sumirah, a respondent who decided to use the burqa to avoid the social pressures that come upon her as the wife of her husband who has done a lot of *khuruj* activities. Sumirah works as a food seller at the Temboro market. She explained the reasons why he wore the veil as admitted by Sumirah:

"My husband often participated in preaching and came out for three days or four days. It's been a long time coming. Well, sometimes my friends like to say: 'your husband has been preaching for a long time. But how come you are not veiled? I feel embarrassed by myself for a long time.'" (Sumirah 15 – 02-2021)

### **Participation of Women Tablighi Jamaat Temboro in Public Spaces**

Some of the existing literature on the discourse of JT women on average presents a perspective that understands that most JT women are stuck behind the four corners of their house (Sikand, 1999). In other words,

their movements are completely limited without knowing the outside world and as if they are in a cage except for religious moments such as the preaching of *masturah*. Metcalf's research on the landscape in South Asia also reveals the minority and even the absence of JT women's participation in ceremonial and traditional events such as weddings, which are commonly the domain and space of women. Instead, the existence of these JT women was replaced by men to minimise contact with the *ajnabi* (foreign) group (Metcalf, 1996).

Some of the results of extracting data on women above appear to have shifted slightly when paying attention to the progress and existence of JT women in Temboro village. The case of JT women's involvement in various public sectors in Temboro Village presents another reality and becomes *sui generis*. Temboro Village presents the reality of women and the public world as if they are united instead of being separated and are not forbidden to be in it. In some communal dimensions such as markets, for example, there will be found women who are persistent in selling without being accompanied by a mahram but still heeding *tabligh* attributes such as wearing a veil. It seems like a veil is mandatory, no matter how *abangan* they are, it is not uncommon for some women to wear pants, but their faces are not left open without a veil.

Not only in the market, in almost all Temboro Village, but there will also be many JT women who drive vehicles such as motorbikes independently without being accompanied by anyone. The general values and ethics of the *tabligh* association become very loose and different when looking at JT women, such as the case of those who came to the equestrian training arena on their own and left for the Islamic boarding school in their vehicle. It's just that it is necessary to pay attention to the social ethics between men and women that remain at certain limits, such as the prohibition of having seclusion for couples who do not have brotherly ties. The greatness of setting Temboro Village lies in the number of agents who can detect the above statuses so that it is immediately known if there is a violation of *tabligh* dogma there.

As the writer has stated above, the opportunity for JT women's freedom of movement is greater when they are in Temboro Village. The masculinity's inhibition of women contributing to the outdoors is also not very applicable and even approaches the opposite. A woman JT Temboro Village even mentioned that her husband had a compromising attitude when he made trade transactions in the market. From this woman's case it was later discovered that the shift in the breadwinner of the *Tablighi* family was quite steep because her husband took her to the market to trade there every morning and would be picked up again when her merchandise had run out. Contrary to the previous case of the woman JT Temboro, Latifah, the JT woman who works as a village official said that she applies the concept of ladies first in her family even though she is active in several *Tablighi* activities:

"For example, my husband, *Bapak* is not confident if I do not go first. Yes, that's right. Isn't it like this, if there is anything I must go first, be told to go first? "I'll follow from behind", he said. - Jukne the language. (instead of being restrained), it's okay." (Latifah,01-11-2020)

Judging from the two different patterns between the two cases of JT women, it is appropriate to suspect the existence of external factors that triggered their flexibility in interacting in the public sphere. A deepening of the socio-cultural background in Latifah's person, for example, reveals the condition of her growth amid a family with general or non-religious education even though she is in the circle of Tablighi Jamaat. Latifah has the status of a permanent employee of a government institution at one of the Temboro Village offices. He received regular access to continuing interacting with the outside community who came from non-Tablighi circles for many years. This behaviour is then uniform with the theoretical concept which claims that in heterogeneous networks (McPherson dkk., 2001).

### **Muslim Community, Women and Social Media**

One of the vital functions of social media rests on its potential to influence public principles, behaviour, preferences and opinion (Burton, 2007). So far, many perceptions have been debated regarding the function of social media centring on the debate whether society is under media control or vice versa. Although it seems clear that everyone is more or less affected by the rapid development of the media is behaving in society. Research also shows that the impact of the media social among Muslims is the production of more diverse religious narratives (Campbell, 2010). This condition is in line with the theory used by Nurul Atiqah Mohd Azlan. et al, who examined the role of social media among Malaysian Muslims. Azlan and his colleagues use Denis McQuail's theory which reveals the various forms of mass media organizing that have an impact on the society (Azlan dkk., 2020). Likewise, it cannot be denied that attitudes towards new media are very much influenced by social, cultural, and political backgrounds, especially religion (Gee, 2005).

The essential elements that make up the media social presence amid individuals because everything in life requires communication and one of the most preferred supporting devices by them, including women, JT Temboro is the media social. The emergence of advanced technologies that improve media performance social allows all communication and access to the outside world more easily obtained. Social media also opens up opportunities for each individual to reconfigure how the traditional role of information dissemination and its implications for their participation in all walks of life (Tukur & Damri, 2016). At the level of religious communities such as the JT Temboro woman, social media allows them to be more informed about the outside world as well as to discuss religious and social issues. The clear evidence of the intimacy between the Muslim community and the media that is

supported, one of which is the internet, is the use of social media by teenagers in Muslim-majority areas as a means to achieve their goals, both material and spiritual (Echchaibi, 2018). Not to be left behind, the two largest Muslim communities in Indonesia, namely Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), are also utilising the internet network to maintain their authority amid intense competition. (Akmaliah, 2020). Another fact that describes the relationship between Muslims and new media is in the form of the intersection of cultures, identities and experiences between communities so that when referring to this line of thought, it is not impossible that JT Temboro's involvement also comes from their interactions with social media.

Dialectics between media social and the Muslim community can be seen from the role of the media as the root of awareness of all events and realities that occur both inside and outside their world. Social media those born from social networks are also often used and utilised by Muslims to spread their teachings. Not infrequently, some communities use social media to increase the mass and build interpersonal symbolic references to obtain a strengthening of their community's vision and mission (Mecham, 2017). As a strategy for gathering and disseminating JT teachings, in the context of the Temboro community itself, in general, you can find the use of social media such as the creation of several Facebook groups with several names, including the Al-Fatah Temboro Lovers Group, the Al-Fatah Temboro Islamic Boarding School and the Temboro Islamic Boarding School Family. As for the Instagram channel, there are accounts @alfatah\_temboro\_id, @temboro.info and also @cahtemboro which inform the various activities of al-Fatah students and members of the JT community both in the Temboro and public spheres. No kidding, the followers and members who are members of the Instagram account and Facebook groups with affiliations at JT Temboro have been followed by tens of thousands of followers (Lövheim, 2012).

### **Participatory Life Choices: A New Media Impact**

Highlighting some of the rules of JT as a community that Muslims present and the reality that exists in JT Temboro women who are so flexible in moving in the public space raises several things that deserve to be highlighted. Most JT Temboro women as part of the community who are closely connected to various social media seem to provide a distinctive face for women that is different from that of JT women in other parts of the region and the world. It seems worth reviewing the preferences of JT Temboro women amidst the social media siege that has also entered their village because of the rapid development of technology. Although social media is not the only factor in JT Temboro's women's participation in public spaces, however, based on studies on the influence and impact of social media on the lives of urban and rural Muslims, it is necessary to conduct further examination of this one factor. The research of several scholars related to new media and Muslim

relations presents results that at least support the thesis of the relationship between the acceptance of various new media and the privileges that Temboro women enjoy in the public space. Of course, without forgetting the fact that they are part of a JT organisation with strict rules on women's movements at the same time. The research of several scholars related to new media and Muslim relations presents results that at least support the thesis of the relationship between the acceptance of various new media and the privileges that Temboro women enjoy in the public space.

The daily representation of JT Temboro women is quite different from that of JT women in several other areas as has been researched by several scholars. Julia Koch, for example, observes the daily lives of JT women in the regions Thohoyandou, South Africa and found several realities about them, such as their involvement in collective and individual activities with personal space as the main option. Koch also portrays the mosque which is a masculine interpretation and emphasises that the position of women tends to private places such as homes and groups of recitation among women. The majority of South African JT women also work as housewives and even if they have spare time, they are prioritised to study religion in general and JT teachings in particular (Koch, 2017). Bulbul Siddiqi also did a deepening of the daily patterns of JT women by taking loci in Bangladesh. JT women in the context of Bangladesh apply the use of purdah (covering the entire body without leaving any limbs except the eyes which are also covered with a thin cloth) strictly and shut themselves up in their homes (Hossain & Kabir, 2001). The only practice of da'wah that keeps JT Bangladeshi women outside the home also cannot escape the scrutiny of men where this practice supports the idea of male eminence over women. In the division of labour that describes gender relations in the JT Bangladeshi society, it is also found that women on average work in areas that have less status there. Bangladeshi JT men are also slightly involved in domestic activities that are the responsibility of women in the hope that JT women there will be moved to leave their activities outside the home such as working. According to Siddiqi, it is very difficult to find JT women who are married to take part outside the home. Therefore, the character of a woman who is obedient and willing to stay at home is the main criterion for JT men in finding a partner (Siddiqi, 2012).

As for the results of the author's data collection among JT women, it confirms the initial hypothesis that there is a correlation between social media and the progress of JT Temboro women in the public space and it becomes one of the factors for the peculiarities of their behaviour. On average, JT Temboro women acknowledge the influence of their intimacy with the accounts on social media that surround them, especially in the process of personality growth and behaviour in society. Several public figures who walk around the media every day take a role in their choice of participating in the public space. Inayah, a native of Temboro Village, is one of the figures representing the reflection of JT

women who feels the impact of social media, especially when she sees her idol figure behaving on the media platform she uses. Inayah works as a teacher at the al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School. Apart from these activities, she is a housewife for one of her sons.

"There is mba (influence of social media), there is integration. Ma'am, if you know Lina Mukherjee (one of the influencers), she is from Kalimantan. At first, Lina was just a fan of Bollywood, India. Incidentally, since I was little, I liked India too. Well, Lina usually goes to India, where she doesn't just want to meet her idol but makes a business. He sells Indian-style clothes every time he goes there. So he sells (clothes) up to many kilometres, can carry up to four suitcases. The sale is very busy for those who buy it and the typical person Lina is ignorant of what people say. I think she is a woman's inspiration. I wish I could do more like him". (Inayah, 12-12-2020)

Khotimah also expressed a similar admission, who used social media to actively participate and earn more by selling online. As is widely known, one of the social media concepts rests on its agenda as a tool that helps the business field and becomes a tool to identify at which point its users can benefit. This concept is quite different from the traditional form where the media are only used to keep up with current developments around the world (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Khotimah also admitted that surfing in cyberspace gave her more enthusiasm to develop her abilities, especially when she saw other people's posts that showed their abilities in certain fields. However, Khotimah does not necessarily forget her status as part of the JT community, which should be so strict in maintaining relationships with the opposite sex:

"Yes, if you look at social media (Whatsapp), usually some friends update their status about their activities. I like to want and am motivated to be like him, for example, he is good at sewing because I always wanted to be able to sew. I also used social media for sales, but still, I limited my contacts, there were no male contacts who were not mahrams on my Whatsapp." (Khotimah, 12-12-2020).

Such is the rapid influence of social media for all circles such as JT women who have several regulations regarding the art of socialising and behaving in their community. It is true, as expressed by Marshall McLuhan, where the influence of the media is not only in its function as a mere messenger but the most visible is its technical effect in giving an impression on changing perceptions of something without meaningful conflict (McLuhan, 1994). What appears and adorns the social media screen has an attractive power for its users so that it often provides more motivation and desire to be able to do the same thing that users see. This is following Latifah's expression at a time when a writer about what the influence of social media was in her life. Latifah, a simple JT

woman with a complete family, is suddenly missing when she sees the achievements of her friends on social media and then encourages her to participate more actively according to her interests:

"I used to want to work, every time I see friends accepting work on social media, I am really sad. Finally, I said goodbye to my husband, I wanted to be active in one of the community organisations, my children are grown up too. Finally allowed." (Kulik, 28-11-2020).

The effect of social media was also felt by one of the *santri* who attended the al-Fatah Islamic boarding school as the only Islamic boarding school in Temboro Village and is the centre of JT activities. Liana, one of the village girls, said that social media has such a place among Temboro Village children as normal young people do. He also acknowledged that he knew a lot about the trends of young people through social media such as music and reading materials. In the field of music, Liana is quite familiar with the names of Korean boy groups and girl groups such as BTS, Blackpink, EXO, Icons, and Twice as well as being fond of anime that comes from Japanese culture. Liana also assumes that the teachers at the Islamic boarding school also adjust to the current fashion which is allegedly derived from the widespread use of social media:

"Yes, the bags, shoes, and clothes of the cleric are usually different. There is also a branded outfit. Usually, teachers who live in villages are more in line with the trend, maybe because they can see social media so they can follow it." (Liana, 22-12-2020).

What is experienced by some JT women in connection with the massive role of social media illustrates how several religious roles are taken over by social media, including in moving parts of society (Meyer & Moors, 2006). The experience of JT Temboro women with social media which has led to several shifts in attitudes and lifestyles is almost the same as the trend of migrating among Indonesian Muslim women studied by Intan Suciati et al. With The Communication Theory of Identity which was coined by Michael Hecht, it is known that identity is not generated independently but is formed through communication with other people both online and offline. (Suciati dkk., 2021). The influence of social media on individual participation also occurs in political cases such as the election of President Barack Obama in the United States (Effing et al., 2011). In short, it is understood that social media has the potential to dramatically change the relationship between individuals and society at large.

### **Negotiating the ideology of the Tablighi Jamaat with the social media**

The rules surrounding JT women, in general, should appear to contradict the form of women's participation in the public sphere in



general. JT women have strict rules regarding the relationship between the opposite sex and as much as possible avoid *ikhtilat* (Meijer, 2010). Therefore, the inclusion of *mahram* for JT women is quite crucial. Commitment to the rules regarding *ikhtilat* also leads JT women to adapt their daily life to stay on track. Clothing which is the criteria of appropriateness for JT women also emphasises that it is proper for the entire body to be protected with a tight covering, so should their attitudes and actions. One of the concepts of these attitudes is reflected in the practice of JT women's *masturah*, which requires a mahram, special occupancy for women, as well as the rules of da'wah that can only be done among women.

JT also places great emphasis on da'wah activities among women, both in the form of *masturah* activities and routine social practices every day. Emphasis on this aspect makes JT women have to be careful in behaving in society because exoteric factors play a major contribution in this regard. The responsibility of da'wah by JT women makes them have a bigger share of status as elitist da'wah or *daiyah* than other images. Unlike the Salafi group, which takes a long time to be given the 'green light' to preach Salaf, JT women are quite lenient and provide da'wah opportunities to anyone from JT members, whether they have studied the teachings of JT or members who are new members. The task of JT women as the bearers of the da'wah mission is what leads them to teaching activities of JT women in limited spaces and is required to maintain their behaviour in the public space because this is also part of their da'wah. According to the JT doctrine, the formulation of women's duties only revolves around full support for their families or husbands who are active in preaching such as in *khuruj* activities by increasing dhikr and prayers (Amrullah, 2011).

Judging from JT's conception of female members who are part of the JT organisation and the practice of JT Temboro women's participation in the public space and confirmation of JT women's influence on social media, they are using a negotiation strategy between cultures and also the teachings of the Muslim community they live in. This negotiation process by examining several considerations of the benefits arising from their activities in the public space or the language of *ushul fiqh* pays attention to the *maslahat* besides the *mafsadat-an*. One form of benefit arising from the decision of JT Temboro women to increase their activities, one of which is to make time and energy-efficient without the need to depend a lot on their mahram. In addition to economic factors, JT Temboro women also expressed the stability and security of the village space which was seen as not giving a loss to their activities. This is as stated by Silvia, Inayah's teaching partner at the al-Fatah Islamic Boarding School. Just like Inayah, Silvia also has children and a husband. He is a native of Temboro Village and a graduate of an Islamic boarding school so he knows the quality of security in Temboro Village. Silvia told the author the following:

"It is the woman's place at home, but for now, you have to adjust it, right now if you keep being told to stay at home that's how difficult it is. Where do you have to wait for your husband to come home, especially if he works outside too? The important thing is we stay safe, don't cause harm to ourselves and others too. If it is a matter of living, it is the husband's right, it is the man who is obliged. Women have no obligation to help, (it is okay to want to help) as long as they don't endanger themselves, it's not easy to overwork, because there are men." (Silvia, 14-01-2021)

If the researcher relates the negotiation of JT Temboro's women with Asef Bayat's concept of Post-Islamism, reading this concept will be able to find the momentum of JT Temboro's women. The term Post-Islamism first appeared in Bayat's writing in 1996 entitled *The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society* (Bayat, 1996). The term refers to the case of the Iranian revolution in 1979 where after the revolution there was a massive Islamization process in every line of life of Iranian society. Islamism also means the rejection of various foreign cultures, especially western culture, which are destroying the authenticity and originality of Islam itself. Since the concept of Islamism has been echoed by the Iranian government, the practice of life is like that of puritans whose all aspects are strictly regulated. Women are encouraged to stay in their respective homes with limited movement and wear dark clothes that are tightly closed. Bayat described these conditions with busy days in which conventional banks were closed, foreign investment was lifted, polygamy was lax, and women were prevented from getting an education.

After describing the process of Islamism, Bayat presents a new argument that he calls post-Islamism. Bayat's use of the term is derived from the tendency of the tired struggles of the Islamists to uphold all forms of anti-modernity. Bayat's statement is based on the fact that Iranian revolutionaries who have always claimed to be an Islamist group have failed to deliver on their political promises and resulted in economic stagnation which led to opposition from civil society. Post-Islamism describes an inevitable relationship between Islam and the modern world, one of which in this case includes social media. In line with the development of the world, in Bayat's view, Iran must accept the fact that the process of Islamization is meeting its challenges, namely the culture of the modern world itself. Furthermore, He assessed that Islam will be able to live in two forms combined between Islamism and Post-Islamism in its way of dealing with modernity. In Bayat's view, Post-Islamism means an elimination of exclusive attitudes, monopolising truth claims, and only struggling with religious obligations and shifting to an attitude that is inclusive, flexible and can accept the dynamism of the modern world (Bayat, 2013).

At the end of the article, as stated in the theory of Post-Islamism, Bayat states that as he responds to modernity, so too is what happens

in regulations regarding social media. Islamists like JT who have believed in certain ideologies related to western products will have a way of accommodating various forms of novelty such as social media without giving up their Islamic identity. It seems that today's Muslim activities cannot be separated from western products such as social media. The results of a study examining Muslim Umrah activities also confirm that social media is a determining factor behind the choice of their Umrah travel agent (Muslima dkk., 2020). As described in a glimpse of the theory of post-Islamism, in the end, JT Temboro women also have their way of accommodating forms of public space participation that are closely related to new media as part of modernity.

## CONCLUSION

Since the concept of Islam Tablighi Jamaat (JT) began to emerge, since then it has also been present as a form of regulation regarding women's behaviour that is closed, exclusive and far from participating in public spaces. The women of JT in Temboro Village, as the group that apply the teachings of JT, should also not escape from several rules that Bayat considers Islamism. In fact, along with the development of civilisation and modernity, JT groups such as women in Temboro Village quite a lot participate in public spaces and tend to make peace with certain ways of accepting Western products such as social media.

The existence of tolerance limits for the use of social media by JT women which leads to their openness to public spaces is sufficient to prove the thesis of scholars like Bayat. The results of the research show that the negotiation of JT teachings with the participation of public spaces influenced by social media for JT women finally strengthens the concept of post-Islamism which denies anti-Western itself. The disclosure of the meaning of the concept of public space by the women of JT in Temboro Village shows a symptom of the relationship between reformist Muslims and modernity, instead of opposing each other but appearing to embrace each other.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> *Pesantren* – Traditional Islamic Boarding School, common on Java. Student of *Pesantren* called *Santri*,

<sup>ii</sup> Islamic legal running law based on Shariah Law.

<sup>iii</sup> *Abangan* refers to non-religious person