

# CONTRIBUTION OF SITI WALIDAH IN THE NATION CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH 'AISYIYAH MOVEMENT

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**Abstract-***Siti Walidah is a reformer, the founder of 'Aisyiyah, and also promoter of the nation character building. Her contribution in the efforts to establish the nation character has been manifested in formal and informal education, and social movement since 1918. She also did a breakthrough in her era by setting up 'Aisyiyah along with its various activities, particularly the initiative in providing Islamic education for women. The movement is guided by the Quran and Sunnah in the framework of the nation character building with Prophet Muhammad as the role model. The guideline of the movement is beautifully reflected in 'Aisyiyah Mars, which is still amendable until now.*

**Keywords:** *Contribution, 'Aisyiyah, Character Education, Mars 'Aisyiyah*

**Abstrak-***Siti Walidah merupakan seorang tokoh pembaharu, pendiri gerakan 'Aisyiyah dan peletak dasar model pembangunan karakter bangsa. Kontribusi Walidah dalam membangun karakter bangsa melalui pendidikan formal, pendidikan informal dan gerakan social sejak tahun 1918 telah membuahkan hasil bagi bangsa Indonesia. Mutiara pemikirannya diwujudkan dalam gerakan 'Aisyiyah melalui berbagai macam kegiatan. Ia bergerak aktif di bidang pendidikan Islam untuk kaum perempuan. Gerakannya senantiasa berpedoman pada Alquran dan sunnah dalam kerangka membangun karakter bangsa dengan meneladani Akhlak Rasulullah SAW. Panduan gerakannya tertulis indah dalam lagu mars 'Aisyiyah, yang berkemajuan hingga sekarang.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Kontribusi, 'Aisyiyah, Pendidikan Karakter, Mars 'Aisyiyah*

## A. Introduction

Character education has been continuously promoted and infused within education since the pre-independence of Indonesia. The main goal of the program is to create the best nation. One of the leaders who pioneered character education is Siti Walidah who has initiated the program through formal education, informal education and social movements. Her involvement in striving for the participation of women in formal and informal education is closely related with the struggle for women's rights. At the same time, the presence of 'Aisyiyah as a prolific movement to establish character building is devised and reflected in the 'Aisyiyah Mars. The song keenly expresses the vision, mission and ideology of 'Aisyiyah, and serves as a symbol of the movement.

Despite of her copious contribution, the name of Siti Walidah is less popular and familiar in the society. References about her, both in literature and public media, are still limited. Likewise, the history of her active role in *Persyarikatan* Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah is rarely discussed.

The present study attempts to find out: what are the contributions of Siti Walidah in the nation character building? To what extent is her achievement through 'Aisyiyah in the nation character building? The first section will explain a short biography of Walidah while the second will explain her contribution in the nation character building. The purpose of this study is to academically describe the realization of the nation character building through 'Aisyiyah. In addition, it practically aims to demonstrate the magnitude of Islamic character education for the nation.

## B. Theoretical Framework

In Islam, character is called *akhlaq*. Etymologically, the term *akhlaq* comes from the Arabic word which is a plural form of *khuluq* or *khulq*, which means "morality", "temperament", "behaviour", or "character." Terminologically, it can be defined as the pervasive nature of the soul.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Quran mentions that religion is a custom and moral character.<sup>2</sup> Al-Ghazali distinguished *khalq* as human physical

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<sup>1</sup>In his book entitled *Ihya 'Ulumud-din*, Imam al-Ghazali stated "Character is a term for a firmly entrenched form in the soul from which actions emanate with ease and facility, without need for reflection or deliberation." Similarly, Ibn Maskawaih and Ibrahim Anis stated similar definition in *Al-Mu'jam al-Wasith*.

<sup>2</sup>"This is not but the custom of the former people" (Surah Ash-Shu'ara/26: 137).

aspect and appearance and *khuluq* the character and inner disposition.<sup>3</sup> *Khuluq* covers the material and spiritual aspects, yet the last aspect may be actualized and maybe not. Thus, it should be emphasized that not all human attitudes and behaviours are perceived as character.<sup>4</sup>

Islamic characters are those in accordance with Islamic teachings and values. It is a moral system based on belief in the Quran and Sunnah. The Quran as a source of knowledge has provided life guidance to human. Islam also guides people to perform certain acts in addressing the worldly affairs. It is evident that the Islamic teachings will never oppose human nature, neither the condition nor the capacity. Islam also compels people to have faith and practice the Sunnah of the Prophet, including his speech, behaviours, attitudes, and personality.<sup>5</sup> Allah grants privilege and magnificence to the Prophet Muhammad and makes his Sunnah the second source of Islamic law. Islam also reaffirms that the character of a believer determines the degree of one's faith.

The character of the Prophet Muhammad was the Quran as narrated by Aisyah RA that the Prophet's character is the ideal role model for all Muslims.<sup>6</sup> It is in line with the main mission of the Prophet, which was to perfect the moral character of mankind.<sup>7</sup> Ibn Qayyim reasserted that the character of the Messenger of Allah is the amalgamation of faith and moral character. In Islam, character has an exceptional position, including the mission of the Prophet, the degree of faith, the merit of worship, and the added value in goodness.<sup>8</sup>

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Also, "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (Surah Al-Qalam/68: 4). It is explicated by Sudarno Shobron in *Studi Islam 1*, (Surakarta: LPIK UMS, 2015), p. 95 that two verses reaffirm two matters, *first* character as a single form (*khuluq*), *second* the most essential of Islamic teachings is the habituation of practices.

<sup>3</sup>*Khalq* is the human physical aspect and appearance. Meanwhile, *khuluq* is the character and inner disposition. It is the representation of human's psychological condition without involving the birth element.

<sup>4</sup>Character is done repeatedly without any reflection or further consideration.

<sup>5</sup>Surah An-Nur/24:54, "Say, "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away- then upon him is only that [duty] with which he has been charged, and upon you is that with which you have been charged. And if you obey him, you will be [rightly] guided. And there is not upon the Messenger except the [responsibility for] clear notification." See Hamdani Bakran Adz-Dzakiey, *Psikologi Kenabian*, (Yogyakarta: Fajar Media Press, 2010), p. 47.

<sup>6</sup>Surah Al-Ahzab/33:21, "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often."

<sup>7</sup>In a hadith, Anas ibn Malik narrated the Prophet's character was the Noble Quran, "I was only sent to perfect moral character." (Malik ibn Anas).

<sup>8</sup>"The most perfect believer in faith is the one who is best in moral character

As the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad has the best character among the Prophets and other Apostles. History records the accomplishment of Prophet Muhammad in spreading Islam was related to his good moral. He had a perfect character known as the Nature of the Apostles. The distinct characters of the apostle are *siddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*.

*Siddiq* means Truthful. The Messenger of Allah had been a role model of being truthful by upholding truthfulness in each word and deed. He revealed every Revelation of Allah. He emphasized the importance of truthfulness to his people, since Allah promises an abundant reward to those who are truthful. Truthfulness leads to honesty and righteousness and they lead to Paradise.<sup>9</sup> As revealed in QS. Al-Maidah/5: 119, Allah will say: "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment."

*Amanah* means "The Trust", or fulfilling or upholding trust. The Messenger of Allah exemplified his character as "The Trust" one as God commands on QS. An-Nisa/4: 58. This character is compulsory for every Muslim, because faith is never perfect without it. The Messenger of Allah was known among the Qurayshas in Mecca as a man of integrity and was called *al-Amin* (the trusted one).

*Tabligh* means to convey, delivering the message or revelation. The Messenger of Allah was merely commanded to convey whatever he received, without reducing, adding, or altering the Words of God.<sup>10</sup>

*Fathanah* means "Knowing", a character which positioned the Messenger of Allah as the leader of religion and of state. It has a universal meaning that includes intellectual, emotional, and spiritual

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(al-Tirmidhi). "...and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing..." (Surah Al-Ankabut, 29: 45). "There is nothing in the Balance heavier than the good morals" (al-Tirmidzi).

<sup>9</sup>Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**You must be truthful.** Verily, truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man continues to be truthful and encourages honesty until he is recorded with Allah as truthful. And beware of falsehood. Verily, falsehood leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to the Hellfire. A man continues tell lies and encourages falsehood until he is recorded with Allah as a liar" (Muslim).

<sup>10</sup>He said, "Knowledge [of its time] is only with Allah, and I convey to you that with which I was sent; but I see you [to be] a people behaving ignorantly" (Surah Al-Ahqaaf/46: 23).

astuteness. The Prophet was able to devise solid strategies in propagating Islam, in battles, and at government affairs. His character assisted him to solve problems by assessing the opportunities and risks at the same time.

Ali ibn Abi Talib RA narrated the attitude and appearance of Prophet Muhammad. Among his characters is that his words were the truest among all people. He was very gentle and the most charming in every relationship. Hasan ibn Ali RA also narrated, "I once asked my uncle, Hid ibn Abi Hala RA, one of those who had proficiency in narrating the Prophet's characters. I asked: Tell me the way the Prophet spoke. My uncle answered: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) is a man of great agony. He always contemplated anything (even almost) never had time to rest. He was a silent person (not speaking much), unless it was necessary. Always opened and ended up a conversation in the name of Allah SWT. The fruit of the conversation was meaningful, the words were bold, and nothing was vain nor poorly understood. He never offended nor insulted. The blessings of Allah SWT were counted even a little. In addition, he never rebuked food and drink, nor did he ever praise them. It was not the world that makes him rage and he was never angry with the world. If there was any violation of truth, there was nothing that would be able to manifest his anguish until he could win that truth. He would not be angry if only because of him, nor would he defend himself. When he pointed to something, he pointed it with his whole hand (not solely by pointing). When he was amazed, he turned his hand. When he talked, he connected his hands and put his right palm to his left thumb stomach. When he was angry, he did not turn his face, while if he was happy, he closed his eyes. His big laugh was just a smile. When he laughed, it was lovable like a snowflake (his white teeth)."

Be grateful for all the blessings of Allah, Prophet Muhammad always performed *zikr* and *istighfar* even though he has been guaranteed to go to Paradise. He was the most courageous and agile person in all circumstances, yet he was considerate. Islamic character is not a conditional-situational morality. The values of good and bad as well as praiseworthy and dishonourable are applicable on all aspects of life. All human will be held accountable for their words and deeds. "I have left behind *me two things, of you cling to them you will never go astray. They are the book of Allah and my Sunnah*". They will have an ultimate bliss when living based on those Scriptures.

As the perfect role model, Prophet Muhammad elevated the existence of human toward the perfect one (*Insan Kamil*). The great exemplary may be derived from his life, from birth to his death. Perfection can be

emulated by people throughout the ages. His moral characters are the best role model for character building. He never did anything wrong or committed disgraceful acts. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah is the noblest man, the one and only man in the history of mankind. In order to emulate the righteous life of Prophet Muhammad, the education for the Muslim community should be directed to the establishment of individuals with moral character. Additionally, the progress in education realm should be balanced with religious values and moral character to create perfect human (*Insan Kamil*) with an integrated intelligence. The attempt for this aim is manifested in a concrete model of character education.

Besides *akhlaq*, characters are also called “ethics” and “morals”. They refer to good and bad values, attitudes and behaviours of humans. However, each term has particular meaning in accordance with its specification. Diverse parameters and viewpoints influence the definition of the terms although they are similarly positioned as assessment. The benchmarks of *akhlaq* are the Quran and the Sunnah, of ethics is the reasoning, and of morals are customary values. They are also dissimilar to personality—which is more emphasized on the nature of human without any assessment.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the truth of *akhlaq* is unconditional and absolute, while the other terms are relative, comparative, temporal, and tentative.

Character is not instantaneous; it is an amalgamation of particular variables over time. It is the result of the evolution of human life. It is constructed by a repetitive action in an inestimable period, which is then adopted and becomes a habit.<sup>12</sup> The elements in character building are divided into two: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include genes or heredity, mindset, motivation, conscience or instinct and life experience while external factors include education and the environment.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the most influential processes occur within family, schools, and the environment. The process is initiated since one’s birth coincided with the development of child psychology to adulthood.<sup>14</sup>

*First*, character education is commenced from the family and parenting style. Family occupies a central position and parents as the

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<sup>11</sup>See Abdul Mujib, *Kepribadian dalam Psikologi Islam*, (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo, 2007), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>Presented by Prof. Dr. Zainuddin Maliki in general lecture entitled “Pendidikan karakter di era disrupsi” organized by Islamic Studies Education Program, UMS, on March, 13, 2018.

<sup>13</sup>See Heri Gunawan, *Pendidikan Karakter Konsep dan Implementasi*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup>See Abdul Majid, *Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam*, (Bandung: Rosdakarya, 2012), p. 16-20.

first party in educating a Muslim. Al-Ghazali suggested the method of child education as a very substantial. Children conditioned on good morals will grow on it. Vice versa, if conditioned on evil ways, they may also become a beast.<sup>15</sup> Parents are the role model for their children—whose innocence will adopt the model.<sup>16</sup> It is their main responsibility to demonstrate good characters to children. Therefore, the direction and guidance of parents is tremendously required. The Quran explains the appropriate way to educate children as conducted by Luqman al-Hakim. He taught children with patience and in a sustainable manner. The first knowledge conveyed to his children was about monotheism, worship, and character.<sup>17</sup>

*Second*, the factor of peer influence. Muslims are just like a body, when one part becomes sick the whole body gets weak. Islam teaches about friendship and brotherhood. Furthermore, a Muslim shall pay attention in selecting companions.<sup>18</sup> Friendship based on the same faith will motivate people to remind each other in kindness. Al-Ghazali claimed that essentially, people will imitate their close companions. Meanwhile, what is generated from a friend will affect oneself, as illustrated in a hadith: Narrated Abu Musa: *“The example of a good companion (who sits with you) in comparison with a bad one, is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith’s bellows (or furnace); from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof”* (Hadith Bukhori, 2101).

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<sup>15</sup>Imam Al-Ghazali in *Ihya 'Ulumud-din*, p. 62.

<sup>16</sup>“Every child is born in a state of *fitrah*. It is the responsibility of the *parents* to bring children as *Jew, Christian, or Zoroastrian*” (al-Bukhari, 1/1292; Sahih Ibn Hibban, 1/129; Al-Bayhaqi in Sunan al-Kubra, 6/11918).

<sup>17</sup>And (mention, O Muhammad), when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice.” [And Luqman said], “O my son! Indeed if wrong should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted. O my son! Establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination. And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. Verse 19: And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice. Indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.” (Surah Luqman/31: 13, 16-19).

<sup>18</sup>O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not spare you [any] ruin. They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breast conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason (Surah Ali-Imran/3: 118).

Selective in having friends does not necessarily forbid a person to associate with non-Muslims, yet the advantages and disadvantages of such an association must be reckoned. It is revealed in QS. Al-Zukhruf/43: 67, "Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous." The strongest influence of peers on children is experienced in adolescence, particularly during the transition from childhood into adolescence.<sup>19</sup>

*Third*, the environmental factor of the society. In addition to family, children have regular interaction with the people in their environment. Naturally, they have a propensity to adopt what they learn in their society. Society is a collection of individuals (including social media) that interact with each other so as to have collective awareness and spirit, as well as aspirations and needs. In the Quran, society is called *ummah* and *qaum*, while civilized society is called *balad* and *qarn*. Muslims has privilege as the best society as revealed in QS. Ali-Imran/3: 110, "*You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.*" People with good character are those who obey Allah SWT as commanded in the Quran and the Sunnah. But, the characteristics of a society can also be influenced by the government.<sup>20</sup> Policies issued by the rule practically transform the public actions. Their lifestyle is the actualization of rule of law and other regulations.

*Fourth*, the role of educators and formal education/school. They are the key for children to understanding knowledge and science. In addition, school is also a medium for inculcating moral characters. Educators or teachers are the role models, in which it is an effective strategy for the character building

## **1. The 18 Pillars of Character Education**

The definition of education is stipulated in on the General Provisions of Article 1 Paragraph 1 of Law No. 20 of 2003. It is stated that education is conscious and well-planned effort in creating a learning environment and learning process so that learners will be able to develop their full potential for acquiring spiritual and religious strengths, develop self-control, personality, intelligence, morals and noble character and skills that one needs for him/herself, for the community, for the nation, and for the State.

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<sup>19</sup>Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, including the physical, cognitive, and emotional changes. From the psychological aspect, adolescents have unstable high emotional power resulting in a volatile pattern of behaviour.

<sup>20</sup>Presented by Prof. Dr. Zainuddin Maliki in general lecture...



The word character comes from the Greek, *karasso* or *charassein* which means the basic 'blueprint'. In Latin, the character comes from the words *kharakter*, *kharassaein*, and *kharax*. In Indonesia Dictionary, character is defined as psychological traits, morals or manners that distinguish one person from others. Meanwhile, according to the Language Center of Ministry of National Education, character is innate, heart, soul, personality, character, behaviour, personality, nature, manners, temperament, or disposition. To have a character is to have particular personality, behaviour, nature, character, and disposition.<sup>21</sup> Character has similar meaning and essence to good character, disposition, morals, and manners. There is no significant difference since they are perceived as actions beyond human consciousness. Character is formed by certain elements and in a long process in which it is adopted and becomes a habit.<sup>22</sup>

Character is not solely about knowledge but also emotional aspects and self habits. The components of moral character include moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Character is perceived to be as significant as intelligence, some even claim it more important. Nevertheless, they can have an equally central position.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, success is gained not only by intelligence alone since it must be accompanied by a determined character formation.

According to the Ministry of National Education, character education is a systemically devised and implemented effort to inculcate students' values related to God Almighty, one-self, fellow human being, environment, and nationality imbued in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions in accordance with religious norms, rule of law, manners, culture, and customs. It is a conscious and planned effort to instil good values so that the values can be understood, perceived, experienced, and implemented by learners. The realization shall be

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<sup>21</sup>People of good or best character are those who tries to do the best things to the God, themselves, fellow, the environment, the nation, the country and the international world in general by optimizing their potential (knowledge) and consciousness, emotions and motivation ( feelings) simultaneously. See *Ketetapan Pendidikan Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Mengah Pertama, Karakter di Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah*, (Jakarta: Depdiknas, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>Scholars have proposed diverse elements in character building, namely genes, mindset, custom, advice, life journey, and family factors. The process endures by humans since birth coincide with the transition of child psychology to adulthood. It mostly occurs in the family, school, and the environment. See Abdul Majid, *Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam*, (Bandung: Rosdakarya, 2012), p. 16-20.

<sup>23</sup>Albert Einstein, who developed the theory of relativity, dropped out of school at age 15.

formulated specifically to be internalized within the school culture. As the program enrichment, principals and teachers should be able to position themselves as role models for children. The absence of teachers' participation will lead character education as a mere agenda.<sup>24</sup>

The aim of character education is to form children's character or personality so as to foster them into good people, good society, and good citizen. The criteria refer to certain social values imbued by the noble culture of the nation. Essentially, the nation character building should be based on the genuine culture of the nation. Montesquieu argued the character of the nation as the spirit of nationality. It is derived from the unity of moral character, mindset, and behaviour of citizens. It is the characteristic and identity of a nation that distinguishes one nation with another. In fact, it is reflected through the attitude and behaviour of the people in coping with law and life issues. In other words, the character of the nation will create a solid togetherness to achieve the vision and mission of the State.

Education is a vital component that plays a role in character building. Thus, the law and regulation on education must be updated continuously.<sup>25</sup> Its implementation has a significant role in advancing the civilization of the nation in the future. Moreover, the function of education is to form the character of a dignified nation.<sup>26</sup> It affirms that the prevailing national education program is not limited to knowledge, but balanced with the internalization of character values.<sup>27</sup> It is an actual

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<sup>24</sup>Mohamad Ali, "Pendidikan Karakter," *Harian Solopos*, April 2017.

<sup>25</sup>The basis of the character education guideline in primary and secondary schools, namely Law No. 20/2003 on National Education System, Regulation of Ministry of Education No. 22/2006 on Content Standards, Regulation of Ministry of Education No. 23/2006 on Graduates Competency Standards, Presidential Instruction No. 1/2010 on The Acceleration of the Implementation of Priority National Development state/stipulate/instruct the character building of the learners through education in schools.

<sup>26</sup>Article 3 of Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System. The national education functions to develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capacity, and is aimed to develop learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible.

<sup>27</sup>The Ministry of Education has developed a grand design of character building with a psychological and socio-cultural approach. It involves the development of the whole potential function of human (cognitive, affective, conative and psychomotor) in the context of socio-cultural interaction in a lifetime. The configuration of the character in such a context is classified

effort carried out by the government to realize the goals of national education. In overall, education is the most effective source in the development of the nation character education.

In 2011, the Ministry of Education published a guideline on the training and development of the nation character culture. It describes the 18 pillars of the nation character education, which is actualized through education in formal educational institutions. It incorporates the universal values which function is as the promoter, supporter, and filter of the learners' potential. The pillars of character education are: religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, bibliophilic, responsible, nationalistic, patriotic, appreciative, friendly/communicative, peaceful, environmentally friendly, and sociable. These values can be regrouped into religious, personal, social, and nationalism group.

*First*, the religious values group. Religious value is the character values related to the Divinity. The thoughts, words, and actions of an individual are always based on the values of the Deity and the religious teachings. Religiosity must be practiced in multi-dimensional basis hence the learners will realize the presence of God at every time. The sense will encourage them to perform the rights and obligations to Goad as well as to others.<sup>28</sup>

*Second*, the personal values group. The group includes honest, disciplined, hard-working, independent, curious, bibliophilic, and responsible, which are integrated into a solid character. All of these characters will be attached to an individual's soul with self-consciousness. Honest is a character based on the truthfulness, so as to be honest means can be trusted between words and deeds. Disciplined is a character that shows the behaviour of obedience and compliance to the order and the applicable regulation. Hard-working shows the sincerity or wholeheartedly in addressing various things. Independent is represented by attitude and behaviour of being able to stand alone or not depend on others in completing a task. Curiosity is the attempts to know more deeply and extensively from what an individual learns, perceives, and listens to. Responsible is the efforts done for one's duties and obligations. It ranges for one-self, others, society, environment, nation and state, and also to God. Nevertheless, it is distinctive from

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into: Spiritual development, Intellectual development, Physical and kinesthetic development, Affective and creativity development.

<sup>28</sup>See Mohamad Mustari, *Nilai Karakter Refleksi Untuk Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada, 2014), p. 74.

obligation, responsibility is more emphasis on voluntary attitude in doing something that becomes an obligation.<sup>29</sup>

*Third*, the social values group. It includes the characters of tolerant, appreciative, environmentally friendly, sociable, and friendly/communicative. Tolerant is a respectful attitude toward the diversity that exists within a society. The relatively heterogeneous Indonesian society leads to the assorted differences, including in attitudes, characters, mindsets, customs, tribes, cultures, races, and religions. Here, the education of diversity is required so as to promote tolerance against plurality among people. The character of environmentally friendly is reflected by the acts of preserving the natural environment by maintaining it clean and pollution-free. It also includes conservation efforts to restore degraded ecosystems. Furthermore, the character of sociable is a must for students as indicated by their caring attitude and consciousness to assist other people or communities in need.

*Fourth*, the values of nationalism. Among them are the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Attitude, world view, and national insights are compulsory for learners to instil a sense of belong, loyalty, care, and pride to the nation of Indonesia. The immense wealth of the nation includes the tribal, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic diversity. The sense of belonging to the homeland is the foundation of the rise of patriotism for citizens. Nationalism is included in character education to inculcate loyalty to the nation on students. It entails the development for life spirit and collectiveness for the progress of the nation. Furthermore, it is realized in appreciation such as the honour for national heroes, the pride in using local products, the consciousness to enjoy and preserve the nature, and so forth.

The 2013 National Curriculum has incorporated the values of character education as elaborated above, particularly in religious education, character education and civic education. Meanwhile, the character habituation is internalized through ceremonies, scout, spiritual activities, and other school programs.

Furthermore, the internalization of certain characters must be done in various methods and media. Yet the programs at school are insufficient, it must be integrated by activities at family and community environment. Thus, the yield will be more optimal.

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<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

## 2. *Nawacita* and The Efforts to Strengthen Character Education

*Nawacita* is the priorities of the government declared by President Joko Widodo and Vice president Jusuf Kalla. The discourse about this agenda has been massive since the 2014 presidential election campaign. *Nawacita* is derived from the Sanskrit words, *nawa* means nine and *cita* means goal. Basically, it means nine goals or ideals. As a grand concept, it is devised particularly to promote a sovereign, independent, and characteristic nation. Even so, its realization should be done systematically, initiated from the establishment to the acceleration of various aspects.<sup>30</sup> The agenda consists of nine central points that demonstrate the vision and mission of the campaign. The points included in the work-list are issues that should be solved sensibly and scrupulously.

One of the points of *Nawacita* that is relevant to the educational sphere is the eighth point, “the revolution of the national character through the policy of rearranging the national education curriculum by promoting the aspect of civic education”.<sup>31</sup> Essentially, Jokowi-JK attempt to make a breakthrough by initiated revolution of the nation character through education. It is the contemplation against the stagnation between expectation and reality in Indonesia. People fully realized the menace of moral crisis as resulted from globalization and the rapid technological advance.

As the embodiment of the *Nawacita* program, President Jokowi ratified the Government Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education. This regulation is devised by considering various issues related to the situation and condition of the nation. As a sophisticated nation, Indonesian people always uphold good character, noble values, wisdom, and morals.

Strengthening Character Education or *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (KDP)* is a movement under the liability of educational entity to strengthen the character of learners through harmonization of the spiritual, affective, intellectual, and physical development with the involvement and collaboration between educational unit, family, and community as the actor of the *Gerakan Nasional Revolusi Mental (GNRM)*. The objectives of KDP is to build and equip students as the Indonesian gold generation by 2045 with Pancasila and character education in order to face the dynamics in the future; develop a national education platform that puts character education as the main spirit

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<sup>30</sup>See Kerja Nyata: 2 Tahun Kerja Nyata Jokowi-JK in [www.kerjanyaata.id](http://www.kerjanyaata.id)

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

in the provision of education for learners with the support of public engagement through formal, non-formal, and informal education in accordance with Indonesian cultural diversity; and revitalize and strengthen the potential and competence of educators, educational personnel, students, communities, and families in the implementation of KDP.

### **C. Research Method**

This research used qualitative descriptive method, a scientific research that describes a social phenomenon from the point of view of participants.<sup>32</sup> It is an understanding in the social context, which is done naturally, toward a phenomenon in the form of behaviour, perception, action, and so forth.<sup>33</sup> The approach was a hermeneutic approach, an approach done by interpreting a specific situation into a comprehensible meaning. Here, the situation is a continuous social situation in association with the society, nature, characters, influence of thoughts and ideas of a figure.<sup>34</sup>

The data collection technique was the library research, which was conducted by collecting data and information from scientific works. Primary data were obtained from books, journals, notes, reports, and literature relevant to the topic of discussion. Subsequently, they were analyzed by using content analysis method or by drawing conclusions from the identification and interpretation of the content in the situation relationship based on various specific characteristics in objectively, systematically and generalist.

### **D. Discussion**

#### **1. Biography of Siti Walidah**

Siti Walidah was born in Kauman, Yogyakarta, in 1872 to Kyai Muhammad Fadil and Nyai Mas. She comes from a modest Muslim family and her father is a prominent Muslim leader and a member of Sultanate of Yogyakarta. Her family had a successful *batik* production house. She was nurtured in a pious environment and her father always underlined obedience and discipline in the implementation of Islamic teachings. Despite of her absence in formal education institution, she

<sup>32</sup>See Hamid Darmadi, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan dan Sosial: Teori Konsep Dasar dan Implementasi*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014) p. 90-115.

<sup>33</sup>See Haris Herdiansyah, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif untuk Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, (Jakarta: Salemba Humanika, 2012), p. 17.

<sup>34</sup>See Syahrin Harahap, *Metodologi Studi Tokoh & Penulisan Biografi*. (Jakarta: Prenada, 2014) p. 4-12.

received an austere education from her family. As a result, she had a broad insight and was active in religious studies.<sup>35</sup> It was supported by the socio-culture of Kauman, which was a special complex for the royal servants (*abdi dalem*) of religious affairs.<sup>36</sup>

Siti Walidah married her cousin, Muhamad Darwis (former name of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan), in 1889 when she was 17 years old. She was best known as Nyai Ahmad Dahlan after the marriage and had six children. K.H. Ahmad Dahlan is a prominent modernist reformer who invites people to return to the authentic Islamic teachings.<sup>37</sup> Siti Walidah always supported her husband in conducting religious teachings. She had a profound contribution to the society by pioneering 'Aisyiyah movement on April 22, 1917.<sup>38</sup> She was known for her advices, guidance and direction to the society. After her husband passed away, she actively continued the activities in both Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah.

Siti Walidah passed away at the age of 74 years old on Friday, 31 May 1946 at 1 p.m. in her house. She was buried in Kauman cemetery behind the Great Mosque of Kauman, Yogyakarta.

<sup>35</sup>Women were inferior and bound by norms in Javanese society. Thus, they had no freedom to move forward, instead they were only prepared to serve their husband/family. Likewise in Kauman village, women were not allowed to pursue formal education like men. See Ahmad Adaby Darban, *Sejarah Kauman*, (Yogyakarta: Tarawang, 2000).

<sup>36</sup>The officials of religious/Islamic affairs in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta lived in a complex specially designed for them called Kauman. The executive officer is called *Pengulu*. Meanwhile, *Abdi dalem* is the royal servants who work as officers in religious posts. There are two groups, namely the *abdi dalem santri* and *abdi dalem pametakan*. They regularly organize *pengajian* or recitals for the community. See Ahmad Adaby Darban, *Sejarah Kauman Mengungkap Kampung Muhammadiyah*, (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2010).

<sup>37</sup>See Alwi Shihab. *Membendung Arus: Respons Gerakan Muhammadiyah terhadap Penetrasi Misi Kristen di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1998) p. 125-155. The main factors that stimulate the establishment of Muhammadiyah are: a) The rise of the Islamic renewal movement from the Middle East in the early twentieth century in which the Indonesian people were still imbued by superstition, heresy, and myth, b) The response toward the established ideological clashes among Javanese communities, c) The development of Christian missionaries.

<sup>38</sup>'*Aisyiyah* is derived from the name of a wife of the Prophet Muhammad, Aisyiyah. It means follower or accompanist of Aisyiyah or the Prophet's wife. Muhammadiyah for followers of the Prophet Muhammad while the women's movement is called 'Aisyiyah. Aisyiyah is the role model for the struggle of the Muslim women. It implies the participation of both male and female members of *Persyarikatan* Muhammadiyah in promoting and upholding Islamic teachings. See Suratmin, *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan* (Jakarta: Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional, 1981), p. 62-63.

Considering her role and contribution to the nation, Siti Walidah was declared a National Heroine of Indonesia,<sup>39</sup> precisely on 22 September 1971<sup>40</sup> by President Soeharto with Presidential Decree No. 42/TK of 1971. The award was given particularly for her role in enlightening young women of Indonesia during her life. One of the proofs is the presence of 'Aisyiyah movement that has forged the enthusiasm of Indonesian women to have formal education and social contribution equal to men.

## **2. Character Education Established by Siti Walidah**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Kauman was a religious complex imbued by conservative mindset. The religious life of its people was rigid traditional Javanese customs that opposed any foreign renewal. Consequently, the indigenous Muslims refused any objects and notion brought by the Dutch. They clinched the idea of the Dutch as the unbelievers and all things related to it. It included the language, fashion, culture, education, and other lifestyles. Therefore, young Muslims did not attend formal schools built by the Netherlands. Instead, they studied the Qur'an at home and mosque.

Moreover, patriarchal culture was still evolving in Javanese society. They still believed in the inferiority of women hence young women were not allowed to study in formal education because it violated the norm. Since young women were not permitted to go outside her house, they merely obtained domestic education from their parents. Likewise, Siti Walidah did not attend formal education due to this tradition and yet it did not hinder her to acquire knowledge and broad insight. The knowledge and guidance from her sophisticated parents was adequate. She became a proficient, skilled, diligent, obedient, disciplined, humble, and hard-working woman. Her intellectuality and network was eminent.

Acculturation occurs between Islam and Javanese culture while syncretisation occurs between Islam and Hinduism. The trace of former culture and traditions are bold in the practice of Islamic teachings. A merging of cultures is actually a natural phenomenon. Yet in the context of *aqidah* (creed), it can be a serious issue since numbers of tradition contradict the Islamic teachings. Superstitions, heresy and myth are poignant in all Javanese-ancestor worship.

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<sup>39</sup>See the provision in Law No. 20/2009 on Title, Decoration and Honors.

<sup>40</sup>See Suratmi, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan: Pahlawan Nasional, (Yogyakarta: Bayu Indra Grafika & Sulistiyanta), p. 104.



Therefore, 'puralization' is vital to uphold the authentic Islam. Only in the eighteenth century, Islamic reformers started to emerge in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup>

Siti Walidah was ardent in preaching since her childhood. She was outstanding for her rhetorical skill. She practiced it regularly since she was entrusted by her father to manage religious study in a small mosque called *langgar* Kyai Fadhil. She became tutor for the Qur'an recitation and demonstrated her talent in educating. Religious studies began to enlarge and children from neighbouring came to the *langgar*. Therefore, she was involved in the management and was practicing leadership simultaneously.

After Siti Walidah married K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, her involvement in Islamic propagation was intensified. Moreover, her husband was a Muslim reformer hence she always stood by his side especially in the early establishment of Muhammadiyah.<sup>42</sup>

Siti Walidah was a progressive thinker. She contested all Javanese tradition in that era, given the circumstance of people which positioned women as inferior group.<sup>43</sup> Discrimination against women led to their ignorance and backwardness. She insisted on the equal rights between men and women. As revealed in Surah Ali 'Imran (3): 195, Surah An-Nisa (4): 7 & 124, Surah An-Nahl (16): 97 & 125, Surah Al-Ahzab (33): 35 & 36, and Surah Fussilat (41): 33. The verses explain the duty of human to preach and become God's caliph on Earth. It implies the equal position of men and women since they are granted with the same potential and natural disposition by Allah (SWT). However, their duties cannot be equated. It should be accentuated that in the sight of Allah, people are equal, but they shall be side by side to complement each other.<sup>44</sup> In Muhammadiyah, women have special attention. As servants of Allah, they have equal rights with men, especially in the educational realm.

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<sup>41</sup>Heresy/*bid'ah* is the additional of a practice in *mahdhah* worship without any reference to the Islamic laws. Myth/*churafat* is the beliefs on something without any reference to the Islamic text (Quran and Hadith).

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, p. 29-30.

<sup>43</sup>Previously, Javanese community generally set up women as a subordinate group. They were strict onto traditional norms that perceived women as *kanca wingking* or partner in behind to accentuate women's inferior role, and *suarga nunut nekara katut* to express the role of husband in wife's afterlife. In overall, they were a dormant group whose duty is merely to serve husband/family. See Ahmad Adaby Darban, *Sejarah Kauman*, (Yogyakarta: Tarawang, 2000).

<sup>44</sup>See Dyah Siti Nura'ini, *Corak Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Aktivistis Perempuan: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Aisyiyah Periode 1917-1945*, (Yogyakarta: Pimpinan Pusat Aisyiyah, 2015), p. 130.

Siti Walidah overwhelmingly realized the duties and responsibilities of women as nurturer of the Earth. Yet she perceived women must own the asset of advanced science. Thus she gathered women in Kauman village and taught them religious studies, Qur'an recitation and the fundamentals of religion. Additionally, she provided academic lessons and domestic skills courses. The participants were women in diverse ages and occupations. Character of honesty became her main goal in educating *batik* workers and domestic assistants. Her aim was to build honest and confident workers so as to gain trust from others. Moreover, there was a wide space for the participants to be subjects in performing Islamic propagation. It is the renewal character of 'Aisyiyah when juxtaposed among women's movements of the early twentieth century.

Her versatility in conveying communicative religious studies led the expansion of the movement. The members were invited to explore the meaning contained in the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith. It was expected that the activity would raise the awareness of women about their rights and obligations in accordance with their role as wives, humans, servants of God, and citizens. Siti Walidah also instilled morals and manners by initiating and mobilizing charity of helping others on the basis of prudence and devoutness.

The activity of religious studies led by Siti Walidah was known as *Sapa Tresna*<sup>45</sup> in 1914, then officially declared as 'Aisyiyah on April 22, 1917. Siti Bariyah was the first general chairwoman while Siti Walidah became the adviser (*mubalighat*).<sup>46</sup> The movement developed and expanded to numerous regions throughout the country. The objective was then formulated, namely to uphold and revere Islam so as to realize a real Islamic society. Among the efforts are to strengthen worship and achieve moral characters.

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<sup>45</sup>*Sapa tresna* literally means "those who love". It implies those who attend the Quran recital have their own desire and fondness without any coercion. See Yusuf Abdullah, *Perjuangan dan Pengabdian Muhammadiyah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1989), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>Siti Bariyah binti Hashim Ismail was born in 1325 in Kauman, Yogyakarta. He graduated from the Neutraal Meisjes School and was an activist since the establishment of *Sapa Tresna*. She was directly pointed by Siti Walidah as the first chairman of the 'Aisyiyah in 1917-1920 and was re-elected in 1927-1929. She was a progressive leader at her time, among them establishing *Siswa Praja Wanita* as a seed of *Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah*, *Suara Aisyiyah*, kindergarten or Froebel and also the author of the articles in *Suara Muhammadiyah*. See Mu'arif and Hajar Nur Setyowati, *Srikandi-Srikandi 'Aisyiyah*. (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2011).

Following the development of the forum of religious studies, Siti Walidah and K.H. Dahlan initiated to design a school to learn writing and reading Arabic and Latin letters. It was held after Maghrib prayer hence called Maghribi school. The participants were those whose age mostly similar to Siti Walidah. They also established *Pawiyatan Muhammadiyah*<sup>47</sup> for children who did not go to public government schools, while additional religious studies were provided for children going to such schools.

In support the illiteracy eradication program, 'Aisyiyah initially published *Suara 'Aisyiyah* monthly magazine in 1926. It is a counterweight to *Suara Muhammadiyah*, the "male" version magazine. Furthermore, *Suara 'Aisyiyah* becomes a tool of propagation and medium to communicate programs and activities to public. Formerly, it used Javanese language and changed into Indonesian accompanying its popularity.

Siti Walidah also established an *internaat* or boarding school for girls. It was a breakthrough since boarding school was built solely for boys. It was done because she fully recognized the role of the younger generation, thus religious education and skills were a compulsory. Initially, she had to confront assorted standpoints from social value. But because of her eagerness, tenacity, and endurance, people started to entrust their daughters under her guidance.

The students in boarding school learned various fields, such as religion, womanliness, manners, ethics, association and domestic stuffs. Siti Walidah conveyed the materials plainly hence all students seized them. She inculcated discipline and responsibility to students. They must obey the order, pay a fine (2.50 cents) if they violated the order, explain why coming late, permit when leaving boarding school, and be on-time in prayer and study. She fostered responsibility by devising rule in which the students must clean their rooms every morning, perform the picket based on schedule, and use bathroom in queue. She educated togetherness by having meal with them and commencing it by prayer together.<sup>48</sup> She had special concern about students' health. To maintain their nutrients, protein, green bean porridge and fruits were served three times a week. Meanwhile, to maintain their stamina, they were required to take a nap.

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<sup>47</sup>*Ibid*, p. 31-32.

<sup>48</sup>See Suratmin, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan Pahlawan Nasional, (Yogyakarta: Bayu Indera Grafita, 1990), p. 41-45.

The educational system developed by Siti Walidah is known as *Catur Pusat*. *Catur* means four while *Pusat* means center. As the name implies, it brings together four centers of the educational components, namely: family, school/academics, community, and worship.

Siti Walidah was also prominent for her nationalism. Together with his husband and other national leaders, she struggled for the independence of the nation. In her old age, she still actively provided guidance to her companions, including Soekarno, General Sudirman, *Bung Tomo*, and K.H Mas Mansyur.

Approximately ten months before Siti Walidah passed away, Soekarno-Hatta proclaimed the independence of Indonesia. A day awaited by tens of millions of people to free themselves from the oppression. The preparation for Indonesian independence made the morning uproar as convinced by news from the radio broadcast. At that time, Muhammadiyah held the Tanwir Assembly in Yogyakarta and the consuls visited Siti Walidah's residence.<sup>49</sup>

Her heroic spirit is evident even though she has suffered ill at her old age. It was a tranquil moment and the mother of Muhammadiyah conveyed a mandate. The mandate is a will of the late K.H. Ahmad Dahlan that essentially states: "I leave Muhammadiyah to you." It implies the hope of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan for her to maintain Muhammadiyah properly. He also conjured up six outlines of *Khittah Muhammadiyah* that reaffirmed the devotion and struggle of Muhammadiyah. Subsequently, Siti Walidah closed her speech by giving a referee similar to her husband's will as follows:

"I leave Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah to you as the late K.H. Ahmad Dahlan entrusted them (to me). To entrust means to continue the struggle of Indonesian Muslims towards the better life of the nation based on the noble ideals of achieving independence"

### **3. Mars 'Aisyiyah**

As a women's movement, 'Aisyiyah has been enlightening this country for more than a century. Its accomplishment is obvious evidence. Intelligence, knowledge, courage, fighting power and exemplary are the keys that bring the success of 'Aisyiyah. It has endured experiences in its long journey. Its contribution in advancing women entails various fields, such as education, economics, health, social, legal awareness, political education, and

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<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*, p. 97-106.

women's empowerment. Its devotion has been reached every region in Indonesia, from Sabang to Merauke.<sup>50</sup>

The commitment and orientation of 'Aisyiyah is for guiding women to have religious consciousness and participate in organization; guide the younger generation into Muslims who are useful to the nation and state; strengthen morals, faith, and worship; uphold *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*; promote and renew education, learning, and culture and expand knowledge based on Islamic teachings; assist others in virtue; revere places of worship and charity; instil charitable awareness in society; promote the authentic Islamic teachings; consolidate unity in national development and undertake other endeavours in line with the vision and mission of the organization.<sup>51</sup> The programs, however, shall be done cooperatively by the entire involved parties.

*Mars 'Aisyiyah* reflects the noble ideals framed in the spirit of Siti Walidah to uphold Islam and build the country. The music is composed to describe the spirit of the movement's struggle. It is a provocative song with regular, fast, and stomping rhythm. Moreover, it is always presented in every parade or event organized by 'Aisyiyah. In fact, although the composer and the year of its creation are ambiguous, the song is embedded in the souls of the members. The lyrics are as follows:

*Wahai warga 'Aisyiyah sejati  
Sadarlah akan kewajiban suci  
Membina harkat kaum wanita  
Menjadi tiang utama negara  
Ditapak kakimu terbentang surga  
Ditanganmu-lah nasib bangsa  
Mari beramal dan berdarma bakti  
Membangun negara  
Mencipta masyarakat Islam sejati  
Penuh karunia  
Berkibarlah panji matahari  
Menghias langit ibu pertiwi  
Itu lambang perjuangan kita  
Dalam menyebarluaskan agama  
Islam pedoman hidup wahyu illahi  
Dasar kebahagiaan sejati*

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<sup>50</sup>Retrieved from [www.aisyiyah.or.id](http://www.aisyiyah.or.id)

<sup>51</sup>See Ensiklopedi Muhammadiyah.

Each lyric in *Mars 'Aisyiyah* has a lofty and important meaning for the movement. As implied by the first lyrics, this song is directed to invite all members of 'Aisyiyah for working, preaching and performing charity, sincerely. The members consist of board members and general members, at the central and branch levels in diverse regions, unified in this progressive movement. Subsequently, the second lyrics invite all members to realize their duty and be consistent. Their duty is divine since they enclose righteous deed, namely *to uphold the dignity of women*—which was previously less appreciated. With its reform movement, 'Aisyiyah represents itself in the archipelago which traditions mostly counter the Islamic teachings. In addition, the movement is the fortitude for the equity of social role between men and women.

The fifth lyrics imply that being the main pillar of the nation is the ultimate goal of 'Aisyiyah. In this context, this movement shall serve as pillar that stands firmly in an Indonesian national building. The condition of the pillar occupies a very crucial position in which it will affect the political stability of the country. Nevertheless, despite the pillar of a building is not always noticeable, yet it has great function to uphold the building.

The sixth lyrics represent the virtue of a mother, Heaven lies under the feet of the mother. 'Aisyiyah is dominated by women, mothers to the children, mothers for the successor of the nation, mothers to builders of civilization, and mothers to leaders of this country. The pleasure of the Lord is in the pleasure of a mother—who builds the basic character of her children. Mother has a central role in the nation character building. The ups and downs of a nation depend on the women. They are inevitably, the source of the rise of mankind's decency and morality. Children grow by gaining earliest education from their mothers. In the hands of a mother, the potential of a child's mind, body and soul, is nurtured.

The seventh lyrics imply the solicitation to provide charity and devotion to build the nation. Charity means any earnest effort without expecting any reward. It includes both material and spiritual contributions to advocate the national development. It is not directed to seek personal gain, instead it is entirely devoted for the public welfare. Siti Walidah has exemplified her sincerity and genuineness, patriotism and nationalism. Moreover, as the earliest and largest women's association, 'Aisyiyah has tremendous contribution to the nation, such

as the establishment of educational institutions from Early Childhood to Higher Education level, hospitals, and other social activities.<sup>52</sup>

Subsequently, 'Aisyiyah aspires to realize a real Islamic society, in which its people uphold the values of Islamic teachings contained in the Qur'an and as-Sunnah. Therefore, Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah attempt to eradicate all kinds of *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, and *churafat* within the society. It is the endeavor to create Muslim community living in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet for gaining the gift and grace from Allah (SWT). Eventually, the main purpose of mankind in doing all worship is to gain happiness both in this world and the Hereafter.

The sun banner is the symbol of Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah. The sun represents a light that continually emits light to illuminate the universe. The flag of sun surrounded by twelve lights demonstrates the objective to give light or hope to each region of the country. It is the symbol of the struggle and to exhibit that the green sun banner is a meaningful symbol of 'Aisyiyah. It is a hallmark presented in every event organized by the organization and a sign of pride to be known by the wider community who are less familiar with this movement. The symbol of movement used in disseminating Islamic teachings in the nation permeated by Javanese culture. Islam is a mercy to the world (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) revealed by Allah (SWT) from the Prophet Adam to the last Prophet and intended for to all mankind throughout the ages. Hence, Islam must be propagated by the successor of the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad. 'Aisyiyah is fully aware of its duty to elevate women's world view, because tranquility and contentment are attained only when humans actuate the teaching of Allah and His Messenger. The happiness is not merely in this profane world, but also in the Afterlife where there is no help other than Him.

Based on the interpretation, it can be concluded that the song is the corroboration of the movement. 'Aisyiyah is now flourishing and moving forward in serving its function as an Islamic movement, promoting *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* and the renewal of Islam in accordance to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Furthermore, Siti Walidah is increasingly recognized by the public as indicated by the creation of

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<sup>52</sup>See the official website of 'Aisyiyah. The Business and Charity and the contribution of 'Aisyiyah are various that cover the fields of education, women movement, economy, health, and social welfare. Currently, there are approximately 19,181 Early Childhood Education and Development (*PAUD*) also *TPQ*, midwifery and nursing academy, 568 cooperatives and 1,029 *Bina Usaha Ekonomi Keluarga* (*BUEKA*).

movie based on her true story. Released in theaters in August 2017, this movie contains moral values that can be a reference for strengthening character education. The 8<sup>th</sup> *Nawacita* declared by Jokowi-JK is actually an aspiration to follow the struggle of Siti Walidah, yet it has been still a utopia for this nation.

## **E. Conclusion**

Lately, the public is startled by the unbridled deviances with school-age children as the doers. The globalization seems to open the door for moral degradation. It is not solely the responsibility of the government, but all people in this nation. Recently, character education is highlighted by many parties ranging from the executive officials to pioneer activists as an alternative to solve this issue. It is perceived to be potential as a tool of continuous moral improvement. The more decent and civilized the member of a society, the higher the degree of the society and the civilization of the nation.

Character education aims to build character and mental of a society in order to have the value of independent competitiveness. The development is adjusted to the moral needs of a society. Nevertheless, the needs of an era are volatile in accordance with the continuous human development. It indicates that current theories may be less effective in the future.

The efforts carried out by Siti Walidah are linearly supported by the new programs from declared by the government. The establishment of Muhammadiyah was accompanied by the initiation of religious study group and later, 'Aisyiyah movement. The cornerstone of this movement is to uphold the dignity of women. It a tough time to raise women's movement, yet Siti Walidah and other earliest members successfully strived for the establishment of the organization. Such fighting spirit is expressed in *Mars 'Aisyiyah*.

The struggle of Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah is amalgamated in the endeavor of the nation to reach a just and prosperous society. The gait and achievement of 'Aisyiyah is demonstrated by the success of this movement in elevating the dignity of women, particularly in terms of character building.

Siti Walidah is a torch bearer of Islam amid the darkness of un-Islamic tradition. She made a breakthrough for appropriate education for women. The nurturer of character education in Indonesia who realized the significance of character building for women as investment to educate future generation. Great figure for the people of Indonesia,



*Lingga Wisma Cahyaningrum and Ma'arif Jamuin*

especially for Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah. The marvelous, everlasting hope and inspiration. The mother of Muhammadiyah who becomes the role model and guidance for 'Aisyiyah movement. It is depicted in *Nyai Ahmad Dahlan* the movie, a true story based-film filled by divine messages.

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