



# The Works and Thoughts of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, as “*Bundo Kanduang*”, Towards Modernity in Women Education Within an Islamic Education Perspective (1318 H - 1388 H/1900 M – 1969 M)

Women’s disparities and injustices in obtaining adequate education become the background of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah to modernize women’s education. This is a library study that uses a historical approach. The data were obtained from various references through a documentation method, and the collection technique used was accumulating, analyzing, and selecting as the goal. Once the source was identified, the descriptive-analytical analysis was carried out using historical reinterpretation; therefore, all data are collected, reduced, analyzed, and concluded. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah is an independent warrior and woman educator who has built many women education institutions dedicated to upholding women’s dignity in all aspects of life. The blend of curriculum among religion, Arabic, and general science is known as tripartite education. The teaching system is classical with a boarding system and provides three certificates.

**Keywords:** Rahmah El-Yunusiyah; *Bundo Kanduang*; Modernity; Islamic Education

Disparitas dan ketidakadilan perempuan dalam memperoleh pendidikan yang memadai menjadi latar belakang Rahmah El-Yunusiyah untuk memodernisasi pendidikan perempuan. Artikel ini merupakan hasil penelitian studi pustaka yang menggunakan pendekatan sejarah. Data diperoleh dari berbagai referensi melalui metode dokumentasi, dan teknik pengumpulan data yang ketat. Setelah sumber diidentifikasi, penjabaran deskriptif-analitis dilakukan dengan menggunakan reinterpretasi historis. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah adalah pejuang dan pendidik mandiri yang telah membangun banyak lembaga pendidikan yang didedikasikan untuk menegakkan harkat dan martabat perempuan dalam segala aspek kehidupan. Perpaduan kurikulum antara agama, bahasa Arab, dan ilmu umum dikenal dengan istilah pendidikan tripartit. Sistem pengajaran yang diterapkan merupakan system pendidikan berbasis asrama.

**Kata Kunci:** Rahmah El-Yunusiyah; *Bundo Kanduang*; Modernitas; Pendidikan Islam

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## Introduction

Ranah Minang is a region located in West Sumatera Province. It is famous with its religion because anyone claiming to be *Mingangkabau* is automatically a Muslim. However, not everyone from West Sumatra is a Muslim. It is because Minangkabau people have their own philosophy as Minangkabau people, "*Custom of Basandi Syarak, Syarak basandi Kitabullah*" or what it referred to as "*ABS-SBK*"<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>; thus, it is clear that the role of an Islamic scholar is very significant in building Minangkabau<sup>4, 5</sup>

Minang, West Sumatera is a region known for producing local, national, and international figures as well as Islamic Scholars. It can be seen from its history with figures who come from Minangkabau, West Sumatera, such as Syeikh Muhammad Saa'd al-Khalidi Mungka (1859-1920), Syeikh Khatib Al-Minangkabauwi (1860-1916)<sup>6</sup>, Syeikh Muhammad Dalil Bayang (1864-1923), Syeikh Muhammad Khatib 'Ali (1863-1936), Syeikh Thahir Djalaluddin al-Falaki (1869-1956), Syeikh Muhammad Djamil Djambek (1862-1947), Syeikh Sulaiman ar-Rasuli Candung (1871-1970)<sup>7</sup>, Syeikh Muhammad Djamil Jaho (1875-1940), Syeikh Mudo Abdul Qadim Belubus

(1875-1957), Syeikh Muhammad Zain Simabur (w. 1957), Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (1879-1949), Syeikh Harun at-Tobohi Pariaman (w. 1959), Haji Abdullah Ahmad (1879-1949), Syeikh Ibrahim Musa Parabek (1882-1963), Syeikh Abdullatif Syakur (1886-1963), Angku Mudo AbdulHamid Hakim (1893-1959), Syeikh Muhammad Thaib Umar, Zainuddin Labai El-Yunussi,<sup>8</sup> Syeikh Muhammad Yunus, Ruhana Kudus<sup>9</sup>, dan Rahmah el-Yunusiyah (1900-1969).<sup>10 11</sup>

Syeikh Khatib Al-Minangkabauwi is a well-known reformer of Islamic education in Minangkabau, West Sumatera. He is also an Islamic Scholar who spent years in Mecca with his students: Syeikh Muhammad Djamil Jambek, Syeikh Muhammad Thaib Umar, Syeikh Abdullah Ahmad and Syeikh Abdul Karim Amrullah, known for a long time as *Kaum Mudo*, who desired to reform Islamic Education in the Minangkabau region of West Sumatera<sup>12</sup>.

The reformation of education is also carried out by women in Minangkabau, West Sumatera. It is pioneered by a female Islamic Scholar, Rahmah el-Yunusiyah. Minangkabau societies show deep respect towards women. They protect

<sup>1</sup> Iswandi Syahputra, "New Media, New Relations: Cyberstalking on Social Media in the Interaction of Muslim Scholars and the Public in West Sumatra, Indonesia," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 34, no. 1 (2018): 153-169.

<sup>2</sup> Rina Febriana Yusutria, "ROBOHNYA LEMBAGA PENDIDIKAN SURAU," *Jurnal Kependidikan dan Keagamaan* 2, no. 1 (2018): 118-133.

<sup>3</sup> Yusutria, "LOCAL WISDOM OF 'MALAMANG AND MANJALANG MINTUO' IN THE PERSPECTIVES OF CULTURE, SOCIAL, AND RELIGION IN MINANGKABAU WEST SUMA," *Ibda' Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya masyarakat*. 18, no. 2 (2020): 305-317.

<sup>4</sup> Eka Putra Wirman, "Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi; Icon Tholabul Ilmi Minangkabau Masa Lalu Untuk Refleksi Sumatera Barat Hari Ini Dan Masa Depan," *Jurnal Ulunnuha* 6, no. 2 (August 2019): 161-175.

<sup>5</sup> Saharman Saharman, "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau," *Turast : Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian* 6, no. 1 (August 2018): 93-104.

<sup>6</sup> Nadia Nur Indrawati, "Peran Syekh Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi (1860-1916 M) Dalam Islamisasi Nusantara," *TAMADDUN* 4, no. 1 (2016): 117-200.

<sup>7</sup> Saharman, "Surau Sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau," *Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2017): 53-75.

<sup>8</sup> Sarifudin Rahendra Maya, Muhammad Sarbini, "Studi Literatur Pada Buku Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2019): 259-277.

<sup>9</sup> Kori Lilie Muslim Nurfarida Deliani, Nazhiratul Khairat, "Gerakan Emansipasi Ruhana Kuddus Dalam Memperjuangkan Kesetaraan Pendidikan Perempuan Di Minangkabau," *HUMANISMA: Journal of Gender Studies* 03, no. 02 (2019).

<sup>10</sup> Nafilah Abdullah, "Rahmah El-Yunusiyah Kartini Padang Panjang (1900-1969)," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama* 10, no. 2 (2016): 51-82.

<sup>11</sup> Apria Putra, "Ulama Dan Karya Tulis: Diskursus Ke-Islaman Di Minangkabau Awal Abad 20," *FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan* 1, no. 2 (2017): 134-147.

<sup>12</sup> Arnelis Arnelis, Marjohan Marjohan, and Syahniar Syahniar, "Usaha Kaum Mudo Minangkabau Dalam Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pelayanan Bimbingan Dan Konseling," *Konselor* 5, no. 3 (2017): 194.





women and do not treat them arbitrarily<sup>13</sup>. Women in Pre-Islamic era were always positioned second to men and as objects, because women were created from men's ribs<sup>14</sup>. They were also considered as worthless, priceless, and low creatures, not only in terms of thought but also in terms of daily behavior. However, after the advent of Islam, it upheld women's dignity and value, earning them respect and adoration<sup>15</sup>. Also, based on Minangkabau custom level, women hold central position due to their matrilineal custom system,<sup>16</sup> or the fact that an individual lineage originates from their mother<sup>17</sup>. According to their custom, women also have dominant position in inheritance, field and land distribution system<sup>18, 19</sup> and women are the pillar of country who will give birth to the next generation. Based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, they were given opportunity to pursue education and teaching in order to claim their rights. It is certainly aimed to elevate them to the status of Allah's ummah and caliph on earth by always obeying Him according to Rasullullah. Thus, they become "*insan kamil*" or human beings who have faith to practice all Allah's commands in building Islamic society<sup>20</sup>.

Women who are mature and married will become "*Bundo Kanduang*" or a symbol of honor and exemplary of womankind because it becomes the source of science and wisdom that teaches customs to their offspring. Minangkabau

women are expected to maintain and struggle for their land and inheritance. As a result, they are almost prohibited to leave their hometown. If they are unable to find work, women are permitted to work at the nearest local market<sup>21</sup>. Meanwhile, the societies believe that their proper places are in kitchen, at well, and on bed (3R). However, the reality make Minangkabau women aware who "*bundo kanduang*" is.<sup>22,23</sup>.

According to those accounts, Rahmah el-Yunusiyah as "*bundo kanduang*" of Minangkabau established an Islamic education institution, Diniyyah Putri Padang Panjang College. It is aimed to reform women education by incorporating it into curriculum, materials, systems, and methods used in the institution.

### Research Method

The research method used in this study is a literature review with a historical approach, which analyzes the literature critically and in depth and serves as a guide for exploring new sources of knowledge and for deducing existing knowledge. Through a historical lens, literary sources related to the history of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah's thoughts were collected and classified in the form of primary or secondary data. The method was then called a heuristic method (Dudung Abdurrahman, 2011). The data were analyzed descriptively through historical reinterpretation in order to collect all data. Data

<sup>13</sup> Syaifullah Chaidir, "Peranan Institusi Perguruan Diniyah Puteri Padang Panjang, Sumatera Barat Dalam Pendidikan Wanita" (UNIVERSITI MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Moh Muhtador, "Otoritas Keagamaan Perempuan (Studi Atas Fatwa-Fatwa Perempuan Di Pesantren Kauman Jekulo Kudus)," *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 39.

<sup>15</sup> Rusli Takunas, "Dinamika Pendidikan Perempuan Dalam Sejarah Islam," *Musawa: Journal for Gender Studies* 10, no. 1 (2019): 23-44.

<sup>16</sup> Carol Davis, "Images of Minangkabau Women," *Indonesia Circle. School of Oriental & African Studies. Newsletter* 24, no. 69 (2014): 141-155.

<sup>17</sup> Masthuriyah Sa'dan, "Tradisi Perkawinan Matrilokal Madura (Akulturasi Adat & Hukum Islam)," *Ibda' Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 14, no. 1 (2016): 129-138.

<sup>18</sup> Lindayanti, "Perempuan Minangkabau Dalam Panggung Politik," *MOZAIK: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 10, no. 1 (2019): 1-10.

<sup>19</sup> Toni M, "SEJARAH PERKEMBANGAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI SUMATERA" (UIN Yogyakarta, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Ulandari prilia, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Agenda* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1-26.

<sup>21</sup> Dedi Arsa, "Perempuan Memberontak: Perlawanan Perempuan Minangkabau Terhadap Kolonialisme Belanda Di Sumatera Barat 1908-1942," *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 7, no. 1 (2017): 42.

<sup>22</sup> Rosniati Hakim, "Pendidikan Sumatera Barat Berwawasan Gender: Lintas Sejarah Tahun 1890 - 1945," *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 1, no. 2 (2011): 197.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, "Images of Minangkabau Women."





reduction is done in order to present, analyze, and conclude. (Mukani, 2016),<sup>24, 25</sup>

A critical analysis of the discourse and struggle of Rahmah el-Yunusiyah was also conducted, beginning with the conditions of social injustice prevalent in the society at that time. This is an important part because discourse has the potential to shape social structures and systems, including the birth of educational institutions. In line with what was conveyed by Norman Fairclough, discourse is a category that refers to certain ways of representing certain aspects of social life. For example, it helps to distinguish between different political discourses that exemplify inequality, disadvantage, and poverty (Norman Fairclough, 2001).

### Profile of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah

Rahmah el-Yunusiyah was a female independence warrior and educator<sup>26, 27</sup> who lived in three eras, including Dutch and Japanese colonial and independent periods<sup>28</sup>. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah was born in Kanagarian Bukut Surungan, precisely at Lubuk mata Kucing Street, Kanagarian Bukit Surungan, Padang City, West Sumatra on Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1900 or on the same day as Rajab 1318<sup>29</sup>. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah was born to Rafi'ah from the Sikumbang ethnical group, Negeri Bukit Surungan, Padang Panjang or who was known

by Ummi and a man named Syekh Muhammad Yunus, who was a great Islamic scholar (*qhadi*) in Pandai Sikat and an expert in astronomy and education reformer in West Sumatera<sup>30</sup>. His grandfather is Syekh Imaduddin, a well-known Tarekat Nasyabandiah Islamic scholar in West Sumatera<sup>31</sup>. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah is the youngest son of five siblings<sup>32</sup>. Rafiah and Syekh Muhammad Yunus had five (5) children: Zainuddin Labay El-Yunusi (1890-1924), Mariah (1894-1972), Muhammad Rasyad (1895-1956), Rihana (1898-1968), and Rahmah El-Yunusiyah (1900-1969)<sup>33</sup>.

The family influenced mindset of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah because she was a member of an outstanding and religious family with a strong religious background and knowledge. Thus, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah encountered no obstacle in attaining education. She was unlike other ordinary women. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah married Baharuddin Lathif, a preacher and young Islamic scholar from Sumpur Padang Panjang, when she was sixteen years old..

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah and Baharuddin Lathif's marriage lasted only for six (6) years because both divorced in 1922 and decided to live as relatives without children. Following her divorce, she avoided married and focused on devoting herself to the Islamic school she founded. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah passed away

<sup>24</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Revista Austral de Ciencias Sociales* 2016, no. 30 (2016): 203-222.

<sup>25</sup> Farid F. Saenong, "ISLAM VERNACULARISED : Islamic Studies Beyond Texts and Great Traditions," 2021, 30-31.

<sup>26</sup> Ari Febrianto, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah (1900-1969): Wanita Pejuang Dan Pendidik Dari Ranah Minang," *Analisis Sejarah* 03 (2013): 86-95.

<sup>27</sup> Ida Hidayatul Aliyah, Siti Komariah, and Endah Ratnawaty Chotim, "Feminisme Indonesia Dalam Lintasan Sejarah," *TEMALI : Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial* 1, no. 2 (2018): 140-153.

<sup>28</sup> Abdullah, "Rahmah El-Yunusiyah Kartini Padang Panjang (1900-1969)."

<sup>29</sup> Rohmatun Lukluk Isnaini, "Ulama Perempuan Dan Dedikasinya Dalam Pendidikan Islam (Telaah Pemikiran

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 4, no. 1 (2016): 1.

<sup>30</sup> Munirah, "Mahmud Yunus Dan Kontribusinya Dalam Perkembangan Studi Hadis Dan Ilmu Hadis Di Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2017): 275-294.

<sup>31</sup> Devi Wahyuni, "Kebijakan Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Refleksi Atas Kepemimpinan Rky Rahmah El Yunusiyah," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 38.

<sup>32</sup> Hairuddin Cikka, "Kesetaraan Hak Dalam Pendidikan (Studi Pada Sejarah Perjuangan Rahmah El-Yunusiyah Dalam Memperjuangkan Hak-Hak Wanita Dalam Pendidikan)," *Musawa* 53, no. 9 (2019): 222-252.

<sup>33</sup> Zusneli Zubir Ajisman, Bernard Meterai Efrianto, Linda Sunarti, Mukhlis PaEni Nuryahman, Rosmaida Sinaga, Undri, "Tokoh Inspirasi Bangsa," in *Tokoh Inspirasi Bangsa*, vol. 53, 2013, 1-592.





on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1960, or on 8 Dzulhijjah 1388 H, at the age of 68 years and two months. Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah was buried beside her house in her family cemetery in Lubuk Mata Kucing (Isnaini, 2016).

### Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah's Education

Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah's family had a big role in shaping her mindset and ideas. She possessed extensive religious knowledge and obtained religious education from her religiously devout family. Thus, it influences Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah's personality through her commitment to religious education and her awareness of prevailing social conditions, particularly regarding woman's education in Minangkabau.<sup>34</sup>

Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah attended elementary school for three years before learning the Qur'an with her father's student, Engku Uzair Malim Batuah, when she was six years old. When she was eight years old, she was guided by Zainuddin Labay El-Yunusi as her brother and Umu Rafiah as her mother who taught reading, writing, and mathematics. Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah developed an interest in reading as a result of her intelligence. Thus, she utilized the library of Zainuddin Labay al-Yunuatsi, which consisted of three rooms filled with book collections in various languages, including Dutch, Arabic, German, and France. Apart her diligence, she joined recitations from one *surau* to another in order to improve her religious knowledge.

On 10<sup>th</sup> October 1915, Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah's brother established Diniyyah

School to educate both male and female students. Young Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah, then 15 years old, attended the school. However, she was not satisfied with the education provided at the Diniyyah School<sup>35</sup> because the teachers did not discuss openly issues affecting women, despite the schools' dual enrollment of male and female students<sup>36</sup>. Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah and Zainuddin Labay al-Yunusi<sup>37</sup> were Ahmad Khatib's students who brought reformation into Islamic world<sup>38</sup>.

Rahmah's dissatisfaction with her education at the Diniyyah School prompted her to share the story with her female friends: Rasuna Said from Maninjau, Nanisah from Bulaan Gadang Banuhampu and Jawana Basyir (Upik Japang) from Lubuk Agung. Thus, it compelled the four women to deepen their religious knowledge outside the institution. They learnt at Surau Jembatan Besi founded by Syeikh Haji Abdullah Ahmad, which has since evolved into Islamic Religion Teachers Association (PGAII).. Furthermore, Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah also met Haji Abdoel Karim Amrullah, the father of Buya Hamka. She asked for his assistance in learning Arabic and many religious disciplines (*fiqh and ushul fiqh*), as well as in deepening recitation and discussion about religion and women's issues<sup>39</sup>. Besides, Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah also received instructions from Tuanku Muda Abdul Hamid Hakim, Syeikh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Syeikh Abdul Latif Rasjidi, and Syeikh Daud Rasjidi<sup>40</sup>.

Besides, Rahmah El-Yunusiyyah learned sports and gymnastics from a teacher at Meisjes

<sup>34</sup> Wildan Nuril, Ahmad Fauzi, and Seka Andrian, "Pendidikan Islam Bagi Perempuan Indigenus Indonesia," *At-Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial dan Kebudayaan* 12, no. 2 (2020): 216–227.

<sup>35</sup> Zainurni Zein and Abdul Salam, "Implementasi Khazanah Surau Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Modern," *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2019): 127–141.

<sup>36</sup> Aminuddin Rasyad, "Rahmah Al-Yunusiyyah, Mu'assisat al-Ma'had al-D1ruli al-Banat Badanj Banjarj-Sumatrah al-Gharbiyyah," *Studia Islamika (Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 4, no. 2 (1997).

<sup>37</sup> Putra, "Ulama Dan Karya Tulis: Diskursus Ke-Islaman Di Minangkabau Awal Abad 20."

<sup>38</sup> Rini Rahman, "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau 20 (Studi Kasus Di Sumatera Barat)," *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 53, no. 9 (2017): 1689–1699.

<sup>39</sup> Magdalia Alfian, "Rahmah El Yunusiah: Pioneer of Islamic Women Education in Indonesia, 1900-1960's," *Tawarikh: International Journal for Historical Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 55–66.

<sup>40</sup> Ulandari prilia, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam."





named Mej Oliver at Normal School (education school for teachers) in Guguk Malintang. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah then learned to sew and weave using a traditional loom (ATBM), which was popular among many Minangkabau societies. The machine was obtained from the Pandai Sikek and Silungkang weaving center <sup>41</sup>.

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah also improved her cooking skills and gained valuable knowledge about womanhood, sewing, and swimming from Djusair, Rosminanturi Gaban, and Sitti Akmar. Furthermore, she expressed interest in joining obstetrics course at Public Hospital Kayu Tanam, taught by her mother's sister, a midwife who assisted her birth and Sultan Syahrir's. She advanced health science and procedures for treating accident victims, which she studied prior to Japan's colonization of Indonesia. She studied it with six doctors, including Doctor Sofyan and Doctor Tazar at the Public Hospital Kayu Tanam, Doctor A. Saleh at the Public Hospital Bukit Tinggi, Doctor Arifin Payakumbuh, Doctor Rasjidin and Doctor A. Sani at Public Hospital Padang Panjang. It was discovered that she pursued it while performing medical practices three times a week <sup>42</sup>. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah was granted permission to establish a medical practice. She accomplished this after seven years of developing Madrasah lil Banat school <sup>43</sup>.

## The Background of Women Education Institution

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah was driven to build a women education as a result of the experience she had while studying at the school built by Zainuddin Labay al-Yunusi. As a brother, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah admired him for his ability to inspire, motivate, and support her dreams. Additionally, he mastered Arabic, English, and Dutch, enabling her brother to read numerous book references written in foreign languages, especially those pertaining to educational reform <sup>44</sup>.

Zainuddin Labay al-Yunusi founded Diniyyah School on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1915 with a classical system that utilized table, chair and blackboard <sup>45</sup>; <sup>46</sup>; <sup>47</sup>. It was aimed for male and female students with a co-educational system that combined male and female students in a single classroom. As a result, only a small number of female students expressed interest in studying. However, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah was dissatisfied with the teaching applied at Dinniyah School <sup>48</sup> because the teachers did not discuss openly issues faced by women despite it was designed for male and female students; the learning was also dominated by male students because the teacher was male <sup>49</sup>. Women suffered terrible fate during the Dutch colonialization era, whether it was due to their condition, position, lack of education, arbitrariness in marriage, and sexual violence <sup>50</sup>.

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah's dissatisfaction in obtaining education at Diniyyah School made

<sup>41</sup> Ajisman, Bernard Meterai Efrianto, Linda Sunarti, Mukhlis PaEni Nuryahman, Rosmaida Sinaga, Undri, "Tokoh Inspirasi Bangsa."

<sup>42</sup> Abdullah, "Rahmah El-Yunusiyah Kartini Padang Panjang (1900-1969)."

<sup>43</sup> Ulandari prilia, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam."

<sup>44</sup> Oga Satria, "Partisipasi Ulama Perempuan Dalam Penyebaran Islam Di Nusantara Melalui Pendidikan," *THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PEGON:: ISLAM NUSANTARA CIVILIZATION* 3, no. 2 (2020): 131–160.

<sup>45</sup> Rengga Satria, "Dari Surau Ke Madrasah: Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau 1900-1930 M," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (2019): 277–288.

<sup>46</sup> Zein and Salam, "Implementasi Khazanah Surau Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Modern."

<sup>47</sup> Nuriyatun Nizah, "Dinamika Madrasah Diniyah: Suatu Tinjauan Historis," *Edukasia : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 1 (2018): 181–202.

<sup>48</sup> Zein and Salam, "Implementasi Khazanah Surau Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Modern."

<sup>49</sup> Rasyad, "Rahmah Al-Yunusiyah, Mu'assisat al-Ma'had al-D1ruli al-Banat Badanj Banjarj-Sumatrah al-Gharbiyyah."

<sup>50</sup> Takunas, "Dinamika Pendidikan Perempuan Dalam Sejarah Islam."





her inform her three female friends: Rasuna Said from Maninjau, Nanisah from Bulaan Gadang Banuhampu, and Jawana Basyir (Upik Japang) from Lubuk Agung<sup>51</sup>.

Due to her family's religious upbringing, her activities in reformation movement, and her dissatisfaction with the educational opportunities available to women, she was motivated to uphold reformation, especially on women. She believed that women are the pillars of the nation and deserve the same level of education as men do, because in Islam education is an individual responsibility for both men and women<sup>52</sup>. She recognized that if women do not receive adequate education, danger would inevitably strike societies. She also believed that while men are household leaders, women are the leaders of their children in their husband's household. However, incorrect education imparted to a woman can wreak havoc on the lives of entire societies. Therefore, women should receive education in a prudent and appropriate manner (Isnaini, 2016).

### **The Works and Thoughts of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah as "Bundo Kanduang" of Minang Area towards Reform in Women Education within an Islamic Education Perspective**

The works and thoughts of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah as "Bundo Kanduang" of Minang Area towards reform in women education within an Islamic education perspective can be seen in various educational institutions she established. It was her dissatisfaction with her education at the Diniyyah School, her family's religious

observance, and her role in reform movement, and her dissatisfaction with the educational opportunities available to women that motivated her to work on education reform, particularly for women.

When Rahmah El-Yunusiyah was 23 years old, he received support from Zainudin Labay (her brother) and her female friends at the PMDS (Diniyyah School Students Association) to build Madrasah lil-banat, which later became the pioneer of Diniyyah Putri School located adjacent to the Pasar Usang Mosque. Certainly, it's expected to provide women with the opportunity to obtain their rights of education<sup>53</sup>

Diniyyah Putri Education Institution was established on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1923<sup>54</sup>; <sup>55</sup>. It is Indonesia's first female Islamic boarding school, providing an opportunity for education<sup>56</sup>; <sup>57</sup>. The education institution was founded during the Islamic reform movement by young people who were enthusiastic about bringing reform and change to education during a time when women faced barriers to studying at modern school due to ambivalent attitudes towards custom and religion.

Furthermore, between 1925-1932, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah established an education institution with the goal of eradicating illiteracy, teaching housewives to read and write, and providing space for young women to study with tables, chairs, and blackboard. The school was known as Menyesal School<sup>58</sup>. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah also founded an institution to train female students to become religion teachers through a three-year education program. On 1<sup>st</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Zulmuqim, "Renewal of the Islamic Education of Minangkabau: Study of Education Thinking Abdul Karim Amrullah, Abdullah Ahmad And Rahmah El-Yunusiyah," *Al-Ta lim Journal* 22, no. 2 (2015): 155-164.

<sup>52</sup> Rhoni Rodin and Miftahul Huda, "Rahmah El-Yunusiyah's Dedication in Islamic Education For Women in Indonesia," *IJoASER (International Journal on Advanced Science, Education, and Religion)* 3, no. 3 (2020).

<sup>53</sup> Isnaini, "Ulama Perempuan Dan Dedikasinya Dalam Pendidikan Islam (Telaah Pemikiran Rahmah El-Yunusiyah)."

<sup>54</sup> Ahmadi Lubis, "Islamic School Integrated in Islamic Education History in Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya* 4, no. 2 (2018): 1077-1095.

<sup>55</sup> Nizah, "Dinamika Madrasah Diniyah: Suatu Tinjauan Historis."

<sup>56</sup> Ulandari prilia, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam."

<sup>57</sup> Mohammad Rizqillah Masykur, "Sejarah Perkembangan Madrasah Di Indonesia," *Al-Makrifat* 3, no. 2 (2018): 31-45.

<sup>58</sup> Ajisman, Bernard Meterai Efrianto, Linda Sunarti, Mukhlis PaEni Nuryahman, Rosmaida Sinaga, Undri, "Tokoh Inspirasi Bangsa."





February 1937, the institution was renamed Kulliyatul Muallimat el-Islamiyah<sup>59</sup>.

In 1938, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, as a woman who brought reform to women education, also established Yuniar Institute Putri, a public school that was equal to People's School during Dutch colonialism. Vervolgs School and Islamitisch Hollandse School (HIS), that was equal to Hollandsch Inlandse Scholl (HIS), were primary schools that used Dutch as the instruction language.

In 1940, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah established an institution to train men to become religious teachers for male students after a three-year education period. The institution was called as Kulliyatul Muallimin el-Islamiyah. In 1947, she founded four religious education institutions geared toward female students in other various forms<sup>60</sup>, including:

1. Education institution of Diniyyah Rendah Putri (SDR) with a seven-year educational program. It is comparable to government-built Primary School with a six-year educational program.
2. Junior High School of Diniyyah Putri Section A (DMP Section A) with a three-year educational program.
3. Junior High School of Diniyyah Putri Section B (DMP Section B) with a five-year educational program.
4. Junior High School of Diniyyah Putri Section C (DMP Section C) with a two-year educational program.

Junior High Schools of Diniyyah Section A, B and C are equivalent to Junior High School (SMP), with religion and Arabic as the primary subjects. In 1950, she founded Dinniyyah Putri School in Jatinegara and Rawasari, Jakarta. She also established Diniyyah Putri Academy, which offers a three-year educational program.

Diniyyah Putri Academy changed its status to Faculty of Islamiyah and became the Faculty of Diniyyah Putri Academy in 1967. Based on Decree of Minister of Religious Affair No.117/1967, the faculty had a "recognized" status, which placed it on an equal footing with the Faculty of Ushuluddin of State Islamic Religion Institute (IAIN) for Bachelor's Degree.

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, founder of Diniyyah Putri School in Padang Panjang, was awarded an Honorary Causa Doctorate with the title of "Syaikhah Hajjah Rangkayo Rahmah El-Yunusiyah" by the University of al-Azhar Kairo for her efforts in ensuring that women have the same access to education as men as mandated in the Qur'an and the Hadiths. She devoted herself to advancing women's opportunities in education and participation in the public as well as in the environmental and social sectors. She was motivated by the condition that resulted from women being denied equal access to traditional-patterned education and lack of access to work<sup>61</sup>.

### The Objectives of Founding the Institution

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah established the institution to empower Minangkabau women in a variety of ways, including as educators, social workers, mothers to their children, and spokeswomen with strong moral and character. She offered both various general and religious education programs. The goals of education reform were to motivate and develop a woman with a good character through an understanding of Islam. Women received three years of education to enable them to:

1. Take on the role of educator mothers in their households (primary);
2. Become educator mothers for their students at school (secondary);

<sup>59</sup> Elisabeth Jackson, "Education: Women's Religious: Indonesia," *BrillOnline.Com*, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Asni Furoidah, "Tokoh Pendidikan Islam Perempuan Rahmah El-Yunusiyah," *FALASIFA : Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (September 2019): 20–28.

<sup>61</sup> Ulandari prilina, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam."







3. Become a missionary in a society's organizations or social institutions <sup>62</sup>.

The primary objective was to develop Islamic women into competent and wise educators who bear full responsibility for the welfare of societies and nation in the name of Allah <sup>63</sup>. Because a mother is her child's first educator <sup>64</sup>. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah has a vision to uphold women's roles in various spheres, such as education and social employment. By doing so, they would be able to improve their welfare in societies, have good morals and obedience when performing religious services, and eventually become preachers who deliver religious knowledge to the next generation of women <sup>65</sup>.

The institution of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah was founded on the following principles:

1. As women, they uphold the degree and dignity through a great, good, and modern education grounded on Islamic principles.
2. As women, they are capable of discovering their individuality and acting independently in carrying out mandates and duties consistent with Islamic religion instructions.
3. As women, they are able to expand their missions as modern women, motivating them to provide educational facilities as required.
4. As women, they are productive and innovative *muslimah*.
5. As women, they develop new ideas and ways of thinking in order to produce tough women generations, teach them religion, and emphasize the critical role of religion in

building women's citizenship <sup>66</sup>, and creating visionary women <sup>67</sup>, especially in religious education in the Archipelago.

The works and thoughts of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah as "*Bundo Kanduang*" of Minang Area towards reform in women education from an Islamic education perspective is visible from: First, Motivation within Rahmah El-Yunusiyah to eliminate social disparities in women's access to appropriate education that exist in societies. Second, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah used education as a vehicle for change and as the basis for construction of dignified Muslim societies for women. Third, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah integrated religious and secular education in order to improve women's life qualities and intellectuality. As a result, they discover their true selves completely and independently while carrying out their religious responsibilities. It is proven with the establishment of Diniyyah li al-Banat (Diniyyah School Putri), which initially followed a *halawah* system. However, as time passed, it evolved into a modern educational system through the integration of religious and secular education. Thus, it can be said that the school is a modern educational institution that employs a classical teaching system, tiered seating, a blackboard, a table and books for students <sup>68</sup>. There is an assumption that Diniyyah li al-Banat (Diniyyah Putri School) is a half vocational school (*takhasus*), if not entirely <sup>69; 70; 71</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Takunas, "Dinamika Pendidikan Perempuan Dalam Sejarah Islam."

<sup>63</sup> Hakim, "Pendidikan Sumatera Barat Berwawasan Gender: Lintas Sejarah Tahun 1890 – 1945."

<sup>64</sup> Rodin and Huda, "Rahmah El-Yunusiyah's Dedication in Islamic Education For Women in Indonesia."

<sup>65</sup> Takunas, "Dinamika Pendidikan Perempuan Dalam Sejarah Islam."

<sup>66</sup> Muhtador, "Otoritas Keagamaan Perempuan (Studi Atas Fatwa-Fatwa Perempuan Di Pesantren Kauman Jekulo Kudus)."

<sup>67</sup> Arief Eko Priyo Atmojo, "Pesantren Dalam Budaya Pendidikan," *Ibda' Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2014): 172–184.

<sup>68</sup> Satria, "Dari Surau Ke Madrasah: Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau 1900-1930 M."

<sup>69</sup> Satria, "Partisipasi Ulama Perempuan Dalam Penyebaran Islam Di Nusantara Melalui Pendidikan."

<sup>70</sup> Rahman, "Sejarah Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau 20 (Studi Kasus Di Sumatera Barat)."

<sup>71</sup> Farid Muttaqin, "Early Feminist Consciousness And Idea Among Muslim Women In 1920s Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun (JIP) International Multidisciplinary Journal* 3, no. 1 (2015): 19–38.





## Curriculum and Institution System

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah's intelligence, which includes reading books in multiple languages, comprehending religious teachings and knowledge, general knowledge, and traditional sewing and weaving skills, is incorporated into the curriculum through the blend of religion, Arabic language, and secular sciences<sup>72, 73</sup>.

Dinniyyah lil al-Banat (Diniyyah Putri School) began with 71 students, the majority of whom were housewives. They studied in Pasar Usang Padang Panjang mosque's study room (students sat while encircling the teacher). This activity took place over two-year period. They then moved to a two-floor house in Pasar Usang Padang Panjang area, where they added chairs, tables, and blackboard on a rent basis due to the lack of funds.. *Holaqoh* was phased out in favor of the classical system<sup>74</sup>. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah established an educational institution system that combined education obtained in the home and in the the society accepted by the school. Thus, it is known as a trinity education taught by female teachers. The *holaqoh* teaching system was replaced by a more classical system that made use of facilities such as tables, chairs, blackboard, and dormitory system<sup>75</sup>.

Rahmah El-Yunusiyah graduated and provided proof of completion for the alumni of education institution that were identified through the devison of three types of certificates: the first is certificate issued by the institution; the second is certificate issued by public or general education; and the third is Islamic education certificate recognized by the government. Therefore, students who attended her institution have the option of continuing their education at a public or Islamic college.

## Conclusion

Rahmah el-Yunusiyah was a female independence hero and educator. She founded a female educational institution out of a desire to reform the world of women education:

1. It is an experience that she had while studying at the school founded by Zainudin Labay al-Yunusi. It was aimed for male and female students with coeducational system that grouped men and women together in a classroom.

2. There were few women interested in in studying because they were dissatisfied with the teaching methods wherein the teachers were male and did not openly discuss issues faced by women.

3. Priority-scale school was targeted at men and women, and it had an effect on male-dominated learning.

4. Under Dutch colonialism, women suffered a terrible fate as a result of their condition, position, lack of education, marriage arbitration, and sexual violence.

The works and thoughts of Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, as "Bundo Kanduang" of Minangkabau Area, towards Islamic reform in women education are the following:

1. On 1st November 1923, Diniyyah Putri was opened as Indonesia's first female Islamic boarding school, providing significant opportunities for women to obtain an education.

2. Menyesal School was founded in 1925-1932 with the goal of eradicating illiteracy and teaching housewives and girls to read and write by providing them with a room, tables, chairs and a blackboard.

3. The establishment of Kulliyatul Mualimat el-Islamiyah on 1st February 1937 was aimed to train women to become religious teachers for females through a three-year educational period.

<sup>72</sup> Ulandari prilia, "Perempuan Di Sektor Publik Dalam Perspektif Islam."

<sup>73</sup> Masykur, "Sejarah Perkembangan Madrasah Di Indonesia."

<sup>74</sup> Febrianto, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah (1900-1969): Wanita Pejuang Dan Pendidik Dari Ranah Minang."

<sup>75</sup> Furoidah, "Tokoh Pendidikan Islam Perempuan Rahmah El-Yunusiah."





4. Yuniar Institute Putri, founded in 1938, was a public school comparable to People's Schools during the Dutch colonial period, such as Vervolgs School and Islamitisch Hollandse School (HIS) equivalent to Hollandsch Inlandes Scholl (HIS) or primary school by using Dutch as the medium of instruction.

5. The establishment of Kulliyatul Mualimin el-Islamiyah in 1940 was intended to train men to become male religious teachers with a three-year educational program.

6. The founding of religious educational institutions aimed at educating other females in 1947. They included 1). Educational Institution of Diniyyah Rendah Putri (SDR) with a seven year-educational program; 2) Dinniyah Putri Junior High School Section A (DMP Section A) with a three-year educational program; 3) Diniyyah Putri Junior High School Section B (DMP Section B) with a five-year educational program; 4) Dinniyah Putri Junior High School Section C (DMP Section C) with a two-year educational program.

7. Dinniyah School Putri in Jatinegara and Rawasari Jakarta were founded in 1950.

8. Academy of Diniyyah Putri was established in 1964, but its status was changed in 1967 when it became a faculty of Dirasat Islamiyah pursuant to the Decree of Religious Affairs of RI No.117/1967.

The objective of women education reform was to maintain their dignity through education until they developed a complete and an independent personality capable of carrying out mandate and expanding their mission as modern women. This was accomplished by preparing a woman who is productive, innovative, and capable of creating new ideas and thoughts leading to the creation of tough women generation who would teach their community with religion and play their religious roles strategic for building civilization.

The curriculum integrated religion, Arabic subjects, and secular knowledge or what is commonly referred to as a trinity education. Female teachers teach those subjects. Initially,

holaqoh was as a teaching system, but it was later replaced replaced by a classical system that made use of facilities such as tables, chairs, and a blackboard as well as a dormitory system. The school also provided the alumni with proof of completion in three forms of certificates, issued by the institution, the public education, and an Islamic education certificate recognized by the government.

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