

A Rhetorical-Legal Hermeneutic: Representations of Women in the Qur'an through Balaghah and Their Implications for Islamic Law

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Abstract

This study addresses contested interpretations of women's status in Islamic law by innovatively applying Balaghah (Quranic rhetoric) to analyze gender representations in the Quran. Using rhetorical analysis of kalam khabari (declaratives), kalam insha'i (directives), and kinayah (metaphors), we systematically examine verses concerning inheritance, testimony, and women's rights. Our findings reveal that the Quran's linguistic structures consistently affirm gender equality, contradicting patriarchal readings - particularly through its deliberate use of rhetorical devices in key verses (e.g., Q 4:7, Q 2:282). The study's novelty lies in developing a Balaghah-based framework for Islamic feminist jurisprudence, demonstrating how Quranic rhetoric inherently safeguards women's dignity. This provides: (1) a new methodology for gender-sensitive Quranic exegesis, and (2) textual evidence for reforming patriarchal legal interpretations. These findings are significant for contemporary Muslim societies, offering a Quran-grounded approach to aligning Islamic law with gender justice principles.

Keywords: Representation of women, Islamic law, the verses of the Quran, Balaghah science.

Introduction

As half of the world's population, women have always been an exciting and complex topic of discussion. Various issues surrounding women, both Gender and sex, continue to colour social and cultural dynamics in different parts of the world.¹ Women's issues cover everything from gender equality, sexual discrimination, and violence against women to reproductive rights.² In various parts of the world, women still face various forms of oppression and injustice caused by factors such as patriarchal social and cultural constructions, as well as the lack of women's access to education, health, and economic opportunities.

Despite Islam's foundational principles of gender equality (e.g., Qs. An-Nisa: 32; Al-Hujurat: 13), Empirical studies continue to show that women in many Muslim-majority societies face systemic challenges such as economic marginalization, restricted political participation, and gender-based violence that is sometimes culturally or religiously justified.³ These contradictions stem not from the Quran itself but from interpretative biases rooted in patriarchal traditions⁴ and literalist readings of texts divorced from their socio-historical context.⁵ This misunderstanding about the representation of women is rooted in various factors, such as misinterpretation of texts and rigid and literal textual interpretation of verses of the Quran relating to women, without consideration of the social and cultural context at the time the verses were sent down.⁶ Patriarchal cultural influences: The influence of patriarchal cultures that dominate various aspects of life, including religious interpretations, trigger biased and unfair interpretations of women. Political and social interests: Misinterpretations of the

¹ Sukanya Paradkar et al., "‘Mostly Women’s Issues’—Gender Differences in Community Responses to a Large-Scale NGO Programme to Prevent Violence against Women in Urban India," in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 107 (Elsevier, 2024), 102997.

² Irma Durrotun Niswah, "Women Empowerment and the Islamic Perspective: A Review," *Journal of Islamic Economic Literatures*, 2022.

³ Norani Othman, "Muslim Women and the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism/Extremism: An Overview of Southeast Asian Muslim Women’s Struggle for Human Rights and Gender Equality," in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 29 (Elsevier, 2006), 339–53; Berfin Çakın, Saskia Glas, and Niels Spierings, "Polarization, Religiosity, and Support for Gender Equality: A Comparative Study across Four Muslim-Majority Countries," in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 103 (Elsevier, 2024), 102880; Im Halimatusa’diyah and Windy Triana, "Sexism and Women’s Access to Justice: Feminist Judging in Indonesian Islamic Judiciary," in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 103 (Elsevier, 2024), 102883.

⁴ Lulu Mubarakah, "Wanita Dalam Islam," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 6, no. 1 (2021): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jish.v6i1.7378>.

⁵ Sarifa Suhra, "Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Al-Ulum* 13, no. 2 (2013): 373–94.

⁶ S.M. El-Awa, *Textual Relations in the Qur’an: Relevance, Coherence and Structure*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2005), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203014486>.

representation of women in Islam are often used for specific political and social purposes, strengthening corrupt power structures and marginalizing women.⁷

As a result of this misunderstanding, women in various parts of the world suffer from restricted access to education and employment, physical, sexual, and emotional violence, early and forced marriages, injustice in the legal system and marriage, and inequality in political participation and leadership. According to the UN Women report entitled "The World's 50 Worst Places to be a Woman 2022"⁸, women in various countries still face various forms of discrimination and injustice, such as inequality in pay and employment opportunities, domestic violence, women's marginality in religious interpretation, and low representation of women in politics.⁹ This misunderstanding about the representation of women in Islam is not only detrimental to women but also impedes the progress and development of society as a whole. Women's potential and extraordinary talent are inhibited, and society loses their valuable contribution.¹⁰

The role and representation of women in Islamic law, as regulated in the Quran, has been a subject of significant and complex discussion throughout history. As the primary source of law and morality in Islam, the Quran provides comprehensive guidance on women's rights and responsibilities in various aspects of life. From economic rights to status in the family and society, the Quran recognizes and respects the position of women as individuals with equal value and dignity to men.¹¹ The verses of the Quran referring to women often affirm the principles of equality, justice, and protection of women's rights.¹² For example, women were given the right to own and manage property, inheritance, and participation in social and political life.¹³ In addition, the Quran regulates the rights and obligations in marriage and the mechanisms of protection from injustice and oppression.¹⁴

⁷ Abdulai Abukari, "Education of Women in Islam: A Critical Islamic Interpretation of the Quran," *Religious Education* 109, no. 1 (2014): 4–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2014.868203>.

⁸ "The World's 50 Worst Places to Be a Woman 2022," UN Women, 2022.

⁹ "Content Analysis," Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, n.d.

¹⁰ Çakın, Glas, and Spierings, "Polarization, Religiosity, and Support for Gender Equality: A Comparative Study across Four Muslim-Majority Countries."

¹¹ Rina Suryani, *Perempuan Dalam Islam: Studi Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Universitas, 2021).

¹² Mia Nurmala, Umi Sumbulah, and Yayan Nurbayan, "Ideal-Normative and Socio-Historical Approaches to Gender Equality Verses: A Study of Riffat Hassan's Thought," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 1 (2023): 235–58, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss1.art9>. *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 1 (2023): 235–258, <https://doi.org/10.37010/lit.v5i2.1475>.

¹³ Lilis Asmawati, *Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Quran* (Bandung: Mizan, 2021).

¹⁴ Siti Nurhayati, *Hak-Hak Perempuan Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Islam, 2021).

According to Islam, all Muslims, both men and women, are born pure. Apart from that, God dedicates women to a whole letter in the Quran.¹⁵ Women have a high position in Islam, and gender compatibility is present in the words of God, Qs. An-Nisa: 32. According to Kadivar in Haneef et al.¹⁶¹⁷ Islam becomes a women-centred reform and can use the egalitarian principles in the Quran with which all misogynistic views can be reconstructed and overthrown.¹⁸ They are the equality of mankind in creation and fear (Qs. Al-Hujurat: 13), the equal reward and punishment in the Hereafter (Qs. (An-Nisa: 1), equal rights of husband and wife (Qs. Ar-Rum: 21), equality in the sight of God (Qs. An-Nahl 97), and so forth. Moreover, what matters most to him is that justice is good and injustice is wrong.

While scholars like Hoppen & Vanz¹⁹ and Daharis²⁰ have convincingly demonstrated how socio-economic changes empower Muslim women's public roles, their frameworks remain incomplete. These studies predominantly attribute gender disparities to external factors: cultural norms, economic systems, or political structures while overlooking the Quran's *internal* linguistic architecture. For instance, when analyzing contested verses (e.g., Qs. An-Nisa: 34 on marital dynamics), existing research rarely engages with how *balaghah* particularly devices like *majaẓ* (metaphor) or *kinayah* (allusion) could subvert patriarchal readings by revealing context-dependent meanings. This omission is striking because classical tafsir (exegesis) including the works of Al-Zamakhshari in *al-Kashshāf* and Al-Rāghib in *al-Mufradāt* relies extensively on *balaghah* as an interpretive framework. In contrast, contemporary gender-focused tafsir, as seen in the works of Riffat Hassan and Amina Wadud, tends to prioritize ethical or socio-historical approaches while seldom incorporating systematic rhetorical-linguistic analysis.²¹

¹⁵ Sartaj Ahmad Bhat, "Status and Rights of Women in Islam," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* 12, no. June (2023): 5 (4), <https://doi.org/10.2023/ijmer>.

¹⁶ Said Sikandar Shah Haneef, Saidatolakma Bt Mohd Yunus, and Mohammed Farid Ali Al-Fijawi, "Muslim Feminists' Reading of the Quran: A Juristic Analysis on Family Law Issues," *Mazāhib* 17, no. 1 (2018): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v17i1.1056>.

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¹⁸ Othman, "Muslim Women and the Challenge of Islamic Fundamentalism/Extremism: An Overview of Southeast Asian Muslim Women's Struggle for Human Rights and Gender Equality."

¹⁹ Natascha Helena Franz Hoppen and Samile Andréa de Souza Vanz, *The Development of Brazilian Women's and Gender Studies: A Bibliometric Diagnosis, Scientometrics*, vol. 128 (Springer International Publishing, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-022-04545-w>.

²⁰ Ade Daharis, "The Role and Position of Women in the Family According to Islamic Law: A Critical Study of Contemporary Practices," *Literatus* 5, no. 2 (2023): 382–87, <https://doi.org/10.37010/lit.v5i2.1475>.

²¹ Sayed Sikandar Shah Haneef and Mohammed Farid Ali Al-Fijawi, "Muslim Feminists Reading of the Quran: A Juristic Analysis on Family Law Issues," *Mazāhib*, 2018, 1–22; Nurmala, Sumbulah, and Nurbayan, "Ideal-Normative and Socio-Historical Approaches to Gender Equality Verses: A Study of Riffat Hassan's Thought."

The disconnect grows wider when examining cross-cultural studies. Works like Sangidu rightly note how "religion and culture interact" to subordinate women, but they treat textual analysis and social practice as separate domains.²² In doing so, they miss a critical opportunity: to show how Quranic rhetoric, if rigorously excavated through *balaghah*, could *disrupt* the very cultural paradigms that justify inequality. Consequently, they miss the critical opportunity to demonstrate how Quranic rhetoric, when rigorously analyzed through *balaghah* especially by applying the theory of *naẓm* (textual coherence and rhetorical order) as developed by Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, alongside devices such as *kināyah* (allusion) and *tashbīh* (analogy) could disrupt the cultural paradigms that sustain inequality. Without this crucial linguistic lens, academic discourse remains trapped between theological idealism ("Islam is egalitarian") and sociological realism ("but patriarchy persists"), with no methodological bridge to reconcile these perspectives.²³

The science of *balaghah*, with its three core components - 'ilm al-ma'ani (semantics), 'ilm al-bayan (rhetorical devices including tasybih, majaz, and kinayah), and 'ilm al-badi' (stylistics) - offers a powerful framework for uncovering the Quran's layered meanings.²⁴ When applied to key verses like Al-Ahzab: 35 (affirming spiritual equality) or An-Nisa: 7 (on inheritance rights), *balaghah* reveals how patriarchal interpretations often flatten the text's nuanced rhetoric. For instance, a *balaghah*-informed reading of *qiwamah* in An-Nisa: 34 could reinterpret it as contextual responsibility rather than absolute male authority.²⁵ Other verses that particularly benefit from this approach include An-Nisa: 19, An-Naml: 23, and An-Nisa: 25, where linguistic analysis can recover egalitarian dimensions obscured by literalist readings.

While *balaghah* has long been central to classical Quranic exegesis, its potential as a tool for gender-sensitive reinterpretation remains startlingly underutilized. This raises three critical questions: First, how might the systematic application of *balaghah*'s rhetorical devices [particularly majaz (metaphor), kinayah (allusion), and tasybih (analogy)] uncover egalitarian meanings in verses traditionally read as patriarchal, such as An-Nisa: 34? Second, what socio-historical factors have enabled patriarchal interpretations to dominate despite the Quran's linguistic complexity? Finally, can a *balaghah*-informed methodology reconcile the apparent tension between Islam's theological equality and its

²² Sangidu et al., "Islam and the Tradition of Gender: Exploring the Intersection of Religion and Culture in Indonesia," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 2 (2024): 47–56, <https://doi.org/10.61707/mekpfr87>.

²³ Andrew. Rippin, *The Qur'an and Its Interpretative Tradition* (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

²⁴ Rizki Abdurahman et al., "The Urgency of Integrating Character Education Values in Balaghah Learning/أهمية دمج قيم تعليم الشخصية في تعلم البلاغة," *Alsuniyat: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya Arab* 7, no. 1 (n.d.): 188–206.

²⁵ Yayan Nurbayan, "Metaphors in the Quran and Its Translation Accuracy in Indonesian," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8, no. 3 (2019): 710–15.

patriarchal implementations in Muslim societies We hypothesize that patriarchal interpretations of Quranic verses about women particularly those used to justify gender discrimination (e.g., An-Nisa: 34) result from *literalist misreadings* that ignore *Balaghah's* nuanced rhetorical devices.²⁶ By systematically analyzing *kalam khabari* (declarative statements), *kalam insha'i* (imperative/interrogative modes), and *kinayah* (metaphors) in key verses (e.g., Al-Ahzab: 35, An-Nisa: 7, 19).

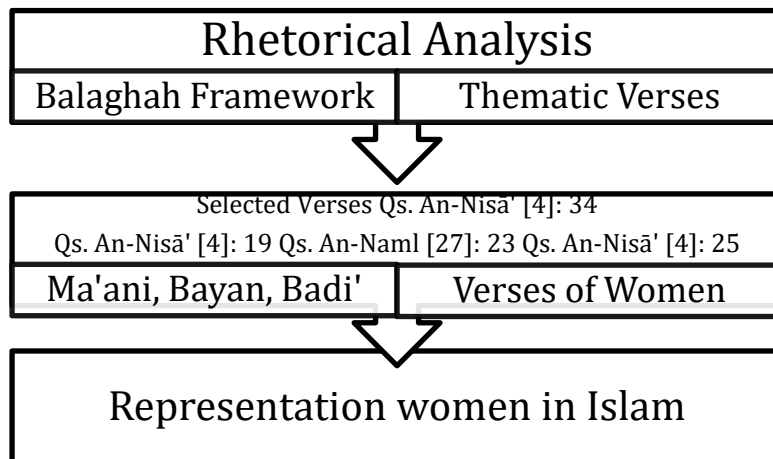
This research uses a qualitative rhetorical analysis method, which is focuses on how messages are delivered, and with what (intended or actual) effects of verses in the Quran about woman.²⁷ The method combined with *Blaghah* textual analysis (m=Ma'ani, Bayan, and Badi'). It also focuses on the analysis, understanding, and synthesis of existing literature in a particular field of knowledge or topic.²⁸ With *Balaghah*, the research uses thematic (*maudhu'i*) and linguistic to isolate gender-related verses and decode their rhetorical devices. The data collection technique used is documentation, namely by reviewing various sources such as books, journals, existing research and other literature that is relevant to this research. The verses selected based on thematic approach and explicit mentions of the words. The data analysis technique used is content analysis, which determines the presence of certain words, themes or concepts in *Balaghah* as an analytical framework.²⁹

²⁶ For example, the verse An-Nisa: 34 ("ar-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala an-nisā") is often interpreted as a divine endorsement of male authority. Classical interpretations such as those by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi take "qawwāmūn" to mean male superiority or leadership over women. However, these readings often disregard the rhetorical function of *kināyah* and contextual indicators in the verse. Contemporary scholars like Amina Wadud and Nasr Abu Zayd have challenged these readings by emphasizing the verse's social context and rhetorical ambiguity, arguing that *qiwāmah* is more accurately understood as context-bound responsibility rather than unconditional male dominance.

²⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology*, ed. Margaret H Seawell, 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publication, 2004).

²⁸ Shalshabilla Putri, Eka Wahyu Hestya Budianto, and Nindi Dwi Tetria Dewi, "Bank Bukopin Syariah Dan Konvensional: Studi Pustaka (Library Research) Dan Bibliometrik VOSviewer," *Research Gate*, 2023, 1–30.

²⁹ Columbia University, "Content Analysis," *Mailman School of Public Health*, accessed July 3, 2024, <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/content-analysis>.



This chart presents a structured approach to reevaluating key Quranic verses about women by employing the science of *Balaghah* Arabic rhetoric. At its core, this framework seeks to uncover the nuanced, often overlooked egalitarian dimensions of the Quran by examining its linguistic and rhetorical devices. The selected verses: An-Nisā' (4:34), An-Nisā' (4:19), An-Naml (27:23), and An-Nisā' (4:25) serve as critical examples where traditional patriarchal interpretations have dominated, despite the Quran's inherent call for justice and equality. Central to this analysis are the three pillars of *Balaghah*: *Ilm al-Ma'āni* (semantics), which deciphers the contextual meaning of sentences; *Ilm al-Bayān* (rhetorical devices), which explores metaphors (*majaz*), allusions (*kinayah*), and analogies (*tashbīh*); and *Ilm al-Badī'* (stylistics), which highlights the Quran's aesthetic and persuasive power. Together, these tools allow for a more dynamic engagement with the text, moving beyond rigid, literalist readings that have historically justified gender disparities.

For instance, An-Nisā' 4:34 can be reinterpreted through *balāghah* to reveal *qiwamah* not as an absolute privilege, but as a contextual responsibility shaped by the socio-economic realities of 7th-century Arabia. Similarly, An-Naml 27:23, which narrates the story of Queen Bilqis, underscores Islam's recognition of female leadership when viewed through its rhetorical emphasis on wisdom and diplomacy. Applying this framework, the chart outlines not only a methodological path for gender-inclusive exegesis but also highlights how classical rhetoric can reframe interpretive paradigms. Ultimately, this visual and analytical tool reinforces the study's central claim: that socio-historically shaped interpretations may obscure aspects of the Qur'an's egalitarian message. A rhetorical reanalysis grounded in *balaghah* thus offers a methodological bridge to reconcile textual ideals with lived realities, and to reclaim Islam's ethical and inclusive spirit.

The steps include (1) choosing the type and the theoretical context of the data, (2) explaining the purpose, (3) deciding how to analyze the information, (4)

deciding on how to interpret the data, and (5) applying the results of the interpretation.³⁰

Discussion

After conducting research from various primary and secondary sources, the researcher obtained the representation of women in Islamic law, especially in the verses of the Quran through the science of balaghah, namely *kalam khabar*, *kalam insya'* and *kinayah*. Below are several verses that will be discussed regarding *kalam khabar*, *kalam insya'*, and *kinayah* relating to the representation of women in Islamic law.

Perspective of the Balaghah Science in the Verses of the Quran on the Representation of Women in Islamic Law

The Quran is a book in which instructions and guidance from the word of Allah brought by the Prophet are included. This book uses Arabic, which is recognized as having a high level of balaghah and sensitivity in its hermeneutics, as well as a very rich variety of language and vocabulary.³¹ Balaghah science consists of three scientific studies, including Ma'ani science, bayan science, and badi science. In this research, the focus of the study of balaghah science used is *kalam khabar* and *kalam insya'* (study of ma'ani science) and *kinayah* (study of bayan science). Because the three *uslub* balaghah are contained in the verses of the Quran regarding the representation of women in Islamic law. The following is an explanation and example of *kalam khabari*, *kalam insya'* and *kinayah* in the verses of the Quran.

According to Al-Hasyimi *Kalam khabar* is an expression that contains truth or lies, judging from the expression itself. One example in the *kalam khabar ibtidai* is found in Qs. Al-Qariah: 5 (وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمُنفُوشِ) in this verse contains *kalam khabar ibtidai* because of the absence of *taukid* and its purpose as *Faidhatul Khabar* (news) to people who don't know, that on the Day of Resurrection the mountains will fly like cotton because the day is so terrible Domsday can separate those that join and then scatter when flying in the air.³²

³⁰ Ailin Sheydayi and Hashem Dadashpoor, "Conducting Qualitative Content Analysis in Urban Planning Research and Urban Studies," *Habitat International* 139 (2023): 102878.

³¹ Mamat Zaenuddin and Yayan Nurbayan, *Pengantar Ilmu Balaghah*, ed. M. R. Arken, 1st ed. (Bandung: PT. Refika Aditama, 2007).

³² Randy Safii, Sriwayhuningsih R. Shaleh, and Chaterina Puteri Doni, "Uslub Kalam Khabar Dan Insya' Dalam Dialog Kisah Nabi Zakariyah Dalam Al-Qur'an," *A Jamiy: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 11, no. 2 (2022): 395, <https://doi.org/https://10.31314/ajamiy.11.2.395-406.2022>.

Furthermore, *kalam insya'* is an expression that cannot be judged as true or false,³³ because *kalam insya'* is divided into two: 1) *kalam insya' thalabi* which is an expression that contains a demand when the expression is uttered, and; 2) *kalam insya' ghair thalabi*, which is an expression that does not contain requests or demands.³⁴ One example of the *kalam insya'* is contained in Qs. Maryam: 6 (يَرْثِي) (وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا) in this verse contains *kalam insya' thalabi* by using *shigat amr* (command) in the word (اجْعَلْهُ), but the meaning is not a command, because it comes from the lower (human) whom It is addressed to a higher being (God) so that its meaning becomes a prayer request.³⁵

Kinayah is an expression related to the shift in meaning from denotative (*hakiki*) to connotative (*majaszi*) meaning, but the meaning can be taken from the denotative meaning.^{36,37} Furthermore, one example in *kinayah* is found in Qs. Maryam: 4 (رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ) in that verse the word (وَهْنُ الْعَظْمِ) which means my bones have become weak have *kinayah*. The *kinayah* meaning of this word is (ذهاب القوة) loss of strength because bones are interpreted as a source or support for humans to be able to form ideally.³⁸

The various concepts in *balaghah* above will be used as a basis for analysis in interpreting the Quran, in this case, Islamic law related to women.³⁹ Then, below is a *balaghah* science of several Quran verses regarding the representation of women in Islamic law, which will reveal the meaning of the Quran verses with the theme of women and Gender.

Table 1: Verses from the Quran regarding the Representation of Women in Islamic Law: Balaghah Science Perspective

No	Verse	Sentence	Theme	Uslub Balaghah	Pattern/ Kiasan	Objective
1	Qs. Al-Ahzab [33]: 35	إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ.. الْبَيْتِ	Equality in worship	<i>Kalam Khabar Thalabi</i>	<i>Taukid</i> (إِنَّ)	<i>Tabrikul Himah/ Provide stimulus</i>

³³ Ahmad Al-Hasyimi, *Jawabirul Balaghah Fil Ma'ani Wal Bayan Wal Badi'*, ed. Yusuf As-Samali (Kairo, Egypt: Maktabah al-Mishriyah, 1999).

³⁴ Al-Hasyimi.

³⁵ Safii, Shaleh, and Doni, "Uslub Kalam Khabar Dan Insyah' Dalam Dialog Kisah Nabi Zakariyah Dalam Al-Qur'an."

³⁶ Abdul Aziz Al Harbiy, *Al-Balaghah Al-Muyassarah* (Libanon: Dar Ibnu Hazm Beirut, 2011).

³⁷ Zaenuddin and Nurbayan, *Pengantar Ilmu Balaghah*.

³⁸ Opi Salamah and Ahmad Akbar, "Analisis Kinayah Dalam Surah Maryam Ayat 4, 20 Dan 50 (Studi Analisis Balaghah)" 8, no. 6 (2024): 393–96.

³⁹ Nurjannah, Nur Fadhlila, and Agussalim Beddu Malia, "Istifham in Surah Al-A'raf (Dirasatun Tahliyyatun Balaghiyyatun)," *Informatika Dan Sains* 14, no. 01 (2024): 630–42, <https://doi.org/10.54209/infosains.v14i01>.

2	Qs. An-Nisā' [4]:7	لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ...الْيَخ + وَلِّلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ...الْيَخ	Equality of economic and property rights	<i>Kalam Khabar Ibtidai</i>	-	<i>Faidhatul Khabar/ Newly discovered news</i>
3	Qs. An-Nisā' [4]:34	قَوَّامُونَ	Women in the family	<i>Kinayah</i>	الشَّخْصِ المَسْؤُولِ	<i>Tahsinul ma'na wa tajmiilibi/ Beautify the meaning</i>
4	Qs. An-Nisā' [4]:19	وَعَايِرُوهُنَّ	Protection from injustice	<i>Kalam Insya' Thalabi</i>	<i>Fiil Amr</i>	Give orders
5	Qs. An-Naml [27]:23	إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ	Women in public life	<i>Kalam Khabar Thalabi</i>	<i>Taukid (اِنَّ)</i>	<i>Faidhatul Khabar/ Newly discovered news</i>
6	Qs. An-Nisā' [4]:25	وَأَتَوْهُنَّ	Wedding	<i>Kalam Insya' Thalabi</i>	<i>Fiil Amr</i>	Give orders

QS Al-Ahzab [33]:35 presents a clear example of Qur'anic egalitarianism through its structured repetition of both male and female forms across a range of spiritual virtues submission, faith, obedience, truthfulness, patience, humility, charity, fasting, chastity, and remembrance of God. Linguistically, the verse is constructed in the form of *khabar ṭalabī* (declarative information with intended impact) and is reinforced through *uslub al-ta'kid* with the presence of the emphatic particle *inna* (إِنَّ) at the beginning of the verse. According to the science of *ma'ānī*, such emphasis is used when the addressee (al-mukhāṭab) is assumed to be in a state of cognitive hesitation (*mutaraddid al-dhibn*), necessitating reinforcement to affirm a truth. This device, along with the rhythmic parallel structure of the verse, functions as *tahrik al-himmah* a rhetorical stimulus to energize moral commitment culminating in the promised reward: “for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward” (لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ). Classical exegetes such as al-Zamakhsharī (in *al-Kashshaf*) affirm that this kind of enumeration is purposeful, reinforcing theological equality and rejecting the notion of male spiritual superiority. Thus, when analyzed through *balaghah*, this verse strongly contests patriarchal interpretations by positioning men and women as equal moral agents before God.

This verse (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:7) contains a declarative (khabar) sentence that conveys new information to the audience (khabar ibtidā'ī), as it contradicts pre-Islamic tribal customs that denied women inheritance rights. In balāghah, this makes the speech functionally informative (fa'īdah al-khabar) a rhetorical strategy aimed at rectifying unjust societal norms.

The verse uses repetition of the phrase:

"وَاللِّسَاءُ نَصِيبٌ" and "لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ" to assert equivalency (mutasāwiyān fī al-ta'bir). In the framework of 'ilm al-ma'ānī, this repetition is not redundant, but strategic: it serves as tawkid ma'nawī (emphatic reinforcement through meaning). The male and female are mentioned independently with their respective shares, dismantling male-centralized inheritance logic. The disjunctive style wa (وَ) instead of conjunctive ma'a (مَعَ) reinforces this distinct yet equal status.

The kalām is structured in a straightforward khabar ibtidā'ī mode, because the audience in 7th-century Arabia would not have expected such a statement. Hence, its purpose is not merely informative but transformative what al-Zamakhsharī in al-Kashshāf would call "ihdāth al-ta'ajjub" (creating surprise or shock) to awaken the recipient's awareness of a major paradigm shift. Further, the phrase "نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا" at the end affirms the inheritance as a divinely mandated portion (mafrūd) a technical term with legal connotation. From a stylistic (badī') perspective, this adds both legal gravity and rhetorical finality to the verse.

Tafsīr al-Rāghib (in al-Mufradāt) underscores that "nashīb" (share) denotes not only a portion but one with moral legitimacy, while Tafsīr al-Kashshāf emphasizes that the structure li al-rijāl ... wa li al-nisā' removes any doubt that women's right is derivative or optional. Thus, this verse exemplifies how Quranic rhetoric, via uslūb khabar ibtidā'ī and semantic reinforcement, radically introduces women as rightful heirs in a socio-economic framework that previously excluded them. The use of balāghah here demonstrates how rhetorical reform precedes and enables legal reform.

The phrase "الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ" (الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ) in Surah An-Nisā' [4]:34 is often interpreted as endorsing male authority over women. However, when examined through the lens of balāghah, particularly the science of kināyah, the term *qanwāmūn* derived from the root *q-w-m* (to uphold or maintain) functions not as an assertion of intrinsic superiority but as an allusion (*kināyah* 'an al-shakḥ al-mas'ūl) to a responsible caretaker. This kināyah beautifies the statement (*tahsīn al-ma'nā wa taz'yīnuh*) by presenting male responsibility within the family not as domination, but as a duty grounded in financial and moral accountability. The rhetorical device avoids blunt hierarchical terminology and instead offers a relational dynamic based on provision and protection.

As noted by al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshāf*, this verse is not a declaration of essential superiority (*tafḍīl dhātī*) but a functional arrangement (*nizām al-maṣlahah*)

shaped by 7th-century socio-economic norms. The verse, therefore, should be read as *khābar yurādu bihi al-inshā'* (a declarative form with instructive intent), a common feature in *ʿIlm al-Maʿānī*, which reflects the Qurʾan's pedagogical style.⁴⁰ Ultimately, through the application of *balāghah*, this verse underscores shared moral responsibility rather than fixed gender hierarchy. It invites reinterpretation aligned with *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, particularly the principles of justice (*ʿadl*), cooperation (*taʿāwun*), and the preservation of dignity (*ḥifẓ al-karāmah*).

In Surah An-Nisā' [4]:19, the command “wa ʿāshirūhunna bil-maʿrūf” (وَاعْشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) “live with them honorably” adopts the rhetorical structure of *kalam inshā' ṭalabī* and employs a *fiʿl amr* (imperative verb) derived from the root (عاشر - يعاشر - معاشرة), which connotes intimate social companionship. This imperative form signifies not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative addressed to husbands to uphold respectful and kind relations with their wives. From the perspective of *ʿIlm al-Maʿānī*, the imperative here is not a mere grammatical structure, but a *ṭalab iltizāmī* a directive that requires committed execution. The term *maʿrūf* (well-recognized kindness), according to al-Rāghib al-Aṣṣḥānī, encompasses all forms of behavior that align with both reason and revelation, implying that the husband's treatment must be shaped by ethical and socially acceptable norms. Classical exegete Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī elaborates that *maʿrūf* in this context means fulfilling the wife's rights as mandated by God's teachings, including justice, protection, and kindness.⁴¹

From a *balāghah* perspective, this *fiʿl amr* reinforces both urgency and ethical elevation. As emphasized by al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshāf*, the Qurʾan's command here is not merely legalistic but pedagogical (*taʿdībī*), shifting the perception of women from objects of inheritance as was common in pre-Islamic Arab culture to subjects of moral engagement and dignity. The verse opens with a legal interdiction against inheriting women forcibly, and transitions into this moral directive, combining *ḥukm* (law) with *akhlāq* (ethics).⁴²

Therefore, through the use of *kalam inshā' ṭalabī* and the rhetorical force of *fiʿl amr*, the verse exemplifies how Qurʾanic discourse blends legal instruction with rhetorical grace to establish a family ethic rooted in mutual respect, dignity, and the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), especially *ʿadl* (justice) and *ḥifẓ al-ʿird* (protection of honor). The verse in Surah An-Naml [27]:23, particularly in the phrase “Innī Wajadtu imraʿatan tamliku-hum” (إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ), presents

⁴⁰ M al Zamakhsharī, “Al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl,” *Beirut, Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī*, 1986.

⁴¹ M al Zamakhsharī, “Al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl,” *Beirut, Dār Al-Kitāb Al-ʿArabī*, 1986.

⁴² Al-Ṭabarī, Abū Jaʿfar. *Jamīʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, Muʾassasat al-Risālah, vol. 8, p. 136–137.

a case of *kalam khabar ṭalabī* marked by the particle *inna* (إِنَّ) which functions as *ta'kid* (emphasis). This is part of the hoopoe bird's report to Prophet Sulaymān regarding the existence of a woman sovereign leading the people of Saba'. The use of *inna* here is not incidental; it performs a rhetorical function of *faidah al-khabar* providing new and surprising information and *tahqīq al-khabar* affirming its truthfulness.⁴³

From the perspective of *ʿIlm al-Maʿānī*, the insertion of *inna* signals the hoopoe's intent to underscore the reliability and urgency of the message. By using this emphatic declarative structure, the verse awakens the attention of the listener and provokes contemplation, especially since the idea of a female ruler would have been unexpected in a patriarchal society. Classical commentator al-Zamakhsharī notes in *al-Kashshāf* that the Qur'an employs this device to amplify rhetorical force and highlight speaker credibility.

Balāghah-wise, the verse does more than narrate an event; it subtly contests societal assumptions about gender and authority. The choice of the feminine noun *imra'ah* in conjunction with the verb *tamlīku-hum* (she rules them) illustrates a recognition of legitimate female leadership within a divine narrative. This rhetorical structure thus serves to shift perceptions, embedding within the verse a moral and social message: that political authority can justly be exercised by women, provided they are qualified and just.

Therefore, the *uslūb* in this verse not only conveys information but also initiates social reflection, using emphasis and stylistic nuance to elevate Queen Balqīs's leadership as morally and politically valid thereby challenging any rigid gender essentialism within Islamic discourse. The verse in Surah An-Nisā' [4]:25 contains the phrase "*Wa ankiḥū al-ayāmā minkum*" (وَأَنْكِحُوا) in its extended legal context, in which Allah commands believers to marry off those among them who are single. The word *wa ankiḥū* is a *fi'l amr* (imperative verb), forming a *kalam insha' ṭalabī* structure (requestive speech act), signaling a binding legal and ethical instruction. From a balāghah perspective, the imperative is not arbitrary; it carries the weight of *ṭalab ilzāmī* a demand that presupposes both divine authority and social responsibility.

Derived from the root *n-k-ḥa* (نَكَحَ), the verb *ankiḥū* is constructed in the causative form (*af'ilū*), denoting the action of facilitating or enabling marriage rather than merely commanding marriage for oneself. This highlights the communal and moral obligation placed upon male guardians or society at large to uphold the dignity of women, especially those who are unmarried or previously enslaved. In *ʿIlm al-Maʿānī*, this command structure is interpreted not only as legal

⁴³ Halimatusa'diyah and Triana, "Sexism and Women's Access to Justice: Feminist Judging in Indonesian Islamic Judiciary."

authorization but as a promotion of social virtue advocating the integration of women into marital life to secure social protection and moral stability.

According to classical exegesis, such as that of al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī, the command *ankihū* in this verse addresses male guardians (*awliyā'*) and aims to eliminate social stigma attached to marrying previously enslaved or lower-class women. It is both a legislative and rhetorical move: legislative in its legal implication, and rhetorical in its moral reformation of the audience's attitudes. As al-Zamakhsharī notes in *al-Kashshāf*, the Qur'an's use of imperative verbs in contexts of social justice elevates their rhetorical significance, framing them as *ta'dīb* (moral instruction) rather than mere administrative regulation.

Balāghah-wise, the imperative *fi'l amr ankihū* serves to empower the marginalized (specifically female ex-slaves) by shifting the burden of action to those in power free men or guardians. It is a strategic rhetorical device that promotes marriage as an ethical framework, not just a social contract, thereby embedding the values of dignity, responsibility, and care into Qur'anic legal discourse. The command in this verse thus underscores the Qur'an's aim to elevate women's social status and affirms their full participation in the legal and moral order.

Representation of Women in Islamic Law in Quran Verses through Balaghah Science

Islam makes it extremely clear that women should be positioned relatively and without discrimination in all spheres of life, including the social, professional, religious, and reward and punishment systems. Thus, women are portrayed in the following ways in the passages of the Quran that are a part of Islamic law:

1. Equality between Men and Women in Worship

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so,

and the men who remember Allāh often and the women who do so - for them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. (Al-Aḥzāb [33]:35)⁴⁴

The representation of women in this verse (QS al-Aḥzab [33]:35) contains *uslub kalam khabar ṭalabī* with *ta'kid* (تَكِيد), as well as *targhib limah* (persuasive incentive) in the sentence "li-yaghfira lahum wa ajran 'aẓīman" (لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا), which promises Allah's forgiveness and great rewards. This verse lists male and female believers side by side in their spiritual and ethical virtues *al-muslimīn wa al-muslimāt*, *al-mu'minīn wa al-mu'mināt*, etc. The use of symmetrical pairs in the verse signifies rhetorical balance and intentional equality.⁴⁵

This literary symmetry serves to refute traditional exegeses that have marginalized women's spiritual agency. Some early interpreters, such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī, reported narrations (*athar*) that the verse was revealed because women complained about their absence in earlier Qur'anic verses related to reward. While these interpretations acknowledged female spiritual inclusion, they often failed to highlight that the structure of the verse itself is a correction to male-dominant assumptions in both theology and law.⁴⁶

Using the principles of *balāghah*, especially *ta'kid* and *muqābalah* (contrastive parallelism), this verse linguistically dismantles any hierarchy between genders in matters of piety and divine reward. As *Ilm al-Bayān* affirms, the presence of *inna* at the beginning strengthens the epistemic weight of the statement. Thus, the verse is not merely informative (*khabar ḥaqīqī*), but strategically instructional *khabar yurādu bihi al-inshā'*, shaping ethical imagination and legal equality.⁴⁷

From the perspective of Islamic law (*fiqh*), this verse lays down a theological foundation for the equal legal capacity (*ahlīyyah*) of women in acts of worship (*ibādah*), reward (*thawāb*), and moral responsibility (*taklīf*). Therefore, any legal formulation that limits women's access to religious or spiritual merit must be evaluated against this Qur'anic structure. In this regard, the *balāghī* reading strengthens the legal position that men and women are equal before divine law, and challenges patriarchal misreadings.⁴⁸ This finding directly confronts those who have used selective or silent readings of verses to exclude women from

⁴⁴ Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan* (Jakarta: Lajnah Penstashihaan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementrian Agama RI, 2019).

⁴⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, **Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān**, vol. 22 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2000), 11–13.

⁴⁶ Al-Zamakhsharī, **al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq al-Tanzīl**, ed. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2009), vol. 3, 512.

⁴⁷ Dede Al Mustaqim, Dila Wasilah, and Afif Muamar, "Qira'ah Mubadalah Strategy in Encouraging Women's Political Participation in Indonesia" 1, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

⁴⁸ Amina Wadud, **Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35–38.

religious reward systems, by demonstrating that the Qur'an affirms full gender parity in spiritual agency through both form (style) and substance (meaning).

2. Women have Economic and Property rights

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ۚ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ ۚ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much - an obligatory share. (An-Nisā' [4]:7)⁴⁹

This verse employs *uslub kalām khabar ibtidā'i* with the rhetorical purpose of *faidah al-khabar* introducing new legal information that redefines existing norms. The construction “لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ... وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ” (“Men have a share... and women have a share...”) is a deliberate parallelism (*muqābalah*) that emphasizes equality in legal entitlement, reinforced by the declarative structure. According to 'Ilm al-Ma'ānī, this is a form of *khabar yurādu bihi al-inshā'* a declarative sentence intended to serve a legislative function, not just narrative. The term *naṣīb* *mafrūd* (a determined share) signals a binding command, not a symbolic gesture.

Classical and some contemporary commentators have interpreted this verse within a patriarchal framework, emphasizing the quantitative difference in inheritance (2:1 ratio) as evidence of female legal inferiority. However, this fails to account for the *maqṣidi* and *balāghī* dimensions of the verse. For instance, Ibn Kathīr states that the inheritance of women is lesser due to the financial responsibilities placed upon men.⁵⁰ However, this view overlooks the independent economic agency granted to women in Islamic law. Al-Ṭabarī, quoting al-Sha'bī, records the *asbāb al-nuḥūl* involving Tsa'labah's wife, whose complaint over unjust property distribution led to this verse's revelation—clearly positioning it as a corrective measure to a systemic injustice, not a codification of male privilege.⁵¹

Furthermore, the assertion that this verse upholds male superiority is refuted by its *balāghī* design: the repetition of the word *naṣīb* (share) and its association with both *al-rijāl* and *al-nisā'* establishes ontological parity. The semantic field of *naṣīb* in Qur'anic usage denotes legal entitlement, not favor or charity.

⁴⁹ Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan*.

⁵⁰ Ibn Kathīr. (2000). *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 2. Riyadh: Dār Tayyibah, pp. 230–231

⁵¹ Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr. (2000). *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'an*, vol. 8. Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, pp. 48–49

In Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), *ḵabar* that contains decisive wording (*ṣiḡhat jaḡm*) and is not contradicted elsewhere functions as a source of *ḥukm sharʿī*. The phrase *naṣībān maḡrūdān* fulfills this, thereby establishing an unambiguous legal mandate. From the perspective of *fiqh*, this is categorized under *ḥaqq māli* (property right), which cannot be annulled without due process (*qadāʿ*).⁵²

Moreover, according to *qāʿidah fiqhīyyah* “al-ḥaqq lā yuṭālu bi-l-jahl” (rights cannot be nullified due to ignorance) women's inheritance rights are permanent and protected, regardless of social perception. The verse becomes a legal shield, rhetorically reinforced through its structure. Contemporary case studies reinforce this Qurʾanic legal philosophy. Hidayati et al. (2022) documented Muslim women at UIN Salatiga who received and independently managed inheritance. One woman, for example, used her inheritance to build a boarding house for passive income, investing in her children's education. Another inherited gold and capitalized it into an e-commerce business, retaining full legal and financial control, while her husband remained responsible for family expenses.⁵³

These examples prove two points: (1) Islamic law recognizes and protects female economic agency; and (2) the Qurʾanic verse is practically implemented as a means of *tamkīn al-marʿah* (female empowerment) without disrupting gender harmony in domestic roles. Hence, Surah An-Nisāʾ [4]:7 does not merely declare women's rights symbolically. Through *uṣlūb ḵabar ibtidāʿī*, emphasis via repetition, and semantic parallelism, the verse challenges androcentric exegesis and provides a balaghah-based foundation for gender-equitable Islamic jurisprudence. The Qurʾanic rhetorical strategy is not just informative but transformative replacing cultural bias with divine equity, rooted in *ʿadl* (justice), *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of wealth), and *karāmah* (dignity).

3. The Role of Women in the Family

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ
فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْعُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

⁵² Al-Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn. (1994). *Al-Burhan fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, vol. 2. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, p. 311; Al-Ghazālī. (1993). *Al-Mustaṣṣā min ʿIlm al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1. Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, p. 89.

⁵³ Hidayati, R., Sulistyaningsih, D., & Syamsuri, A. (2022). *Women's Inheritance Rights and Financial Empowerment: A Case Study at UIN Salatiga*. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Economics Research*, 5(2), 121–138.

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women by what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance – advise them; then if they persist, forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. (An-Nisā' [4]:34)⁵⁴

The verse of QS An-Nisā' [4]:34 begins with: “Al-rijālu qawwāmūna ‘ala al-nisā’...” (الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ), which literally translates to: “Men are qawwām over women.”⁵⁵ This expression employs the rhetorical figure of *kināyah*, particularly *kināyah ‘an al-shakhs al-mas’ūl* (a figurative allusion to a person who bears responsibility), referring to the man’s functional role as caretaker, not his ontological superiority. The word *qawwāmūn* is derived from the root *qāma–yaqūmu*, which means to stand or uphold something. In *balāghah*, this use of *kināyah* serves to beautify meaning (*tahsīn al-ma‘nā*) and avoid explicit assertions of hierarchical authority.⁵⁶

The function of this verse is declarative (*ḵabar ibtidā’i*), yet it serves a legal and ethical instruction (*ḵabar yurādu bihi al-insā’*) under *‘ilm al-Ma‘ānī*, emphasizing *qiwāmah* as accountability and care, not domination. In classical tafsīr, al-Ṭabarī narrates the *asbāb al-nuzūl* of this verse involving a woman from the Anṣār who was physically harmed by her husband. The Prophet ﷺ initially ordered *qiṣāṣ* (retribution), but the revelation of this verse altered the decision, shifting the framework from retaliation to structured responsibility.

Feminist exegete Amina Wadud argues that the *fadl* (preference) mentioned in the verse is not ontological but functional, based on historical access to financial and public roles. She interprets *qiwāmah* as a contextual construct shaped by societal needs rather than divine essentialism. The verse further states: “bi-mā faḍḍalallāhu ba‘dahum ‘alā ba‘ḍ wa bi-mā anfaqū...” This clause explains *qiwāmah* as contingent on two factors: (1) contextual differentiation (*tafḍīl*), and (2) economic responsibility (*naḥaqah*). This conditional authority undermines arguments for absolute patriarchy and aligns with maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah goals of justice (*‘adl*) and preservation of family (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*).

From a *balāghī* standpoint, this verse is structured to restrain abusive interpretations. The progression of instructions (*fa’iẓuhunna, wahjuruhunna, waḍribuhunna*) follows a rhetorical strategy of gradual correction (*tadarruj*), not license for violence. Al-Zamakhsharī, in *al-Kashshaf*, explains that each step is a conditional

⁵⁴ Kemenag, *Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahan*.

⁵⁵ Hamka.

⁵⁶ Nurmala, Sumbulah, and Nurbayan, “Ideal-Normative and Socio-Historical Approaches to Gender Equality Verses: A Study of Riffat Hassan’s Thought.”

escalation only when moral appeal fails, and even *ḍarb* is interpreted metaphorically or restricted by the Prophet's practice of never striking women.⁵⁷

This Qur'anic rhetoric is corroborated by contemporary field studies. Hidayati et al. studied fifteen female civil servants at UIN Salatiga who balanced their roles as professionals, mothers, and wives. Their domestic arrangements reflected *qiwamah* as mutual responsibility:⁵⁸

1. Financial Planning: Couples jointly planned household expenditures, prioritizing family needs.
2. Domestic Reciprocity: Husbands and wives shared chores depending on work schedules.
3. Economic Agency: Wives administered income from family assets or businesses independently.
4. Spiritual Partnership: Both spouses supported each other's piety through shared prayer and learning.
5. Digital Safeguarding: They cooperated in monitoring children's media exposure.

These practices affirm that *qiwamah* in practice is neither rigid nor authoritarian, but ethically charged and dialogical. Rather than reinforcing gender asymmetry, the verse offers a framework for ethical guardianship rooted in balance, not dominance.

4. Women have Protection from Injustice

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا ۖ وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ ۚ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا ۖ وَيجعل الله فيه خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good. (An-Nisā' [4]:19).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Tri Wahyu Hidayati, Ulfah Susilawati, and Endang Sriani, "Dynamics of Family Fiqh: The Multiple Roles of Women in Realizing Family Resilience,"

⁵⁸ Hidayati, R., Wahid, A., & Nurhayati, I. (2022). "Peran Ganda Perempuan Muslim Profesional dalam Perspektif Islam." *Jurnal Gender dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 18(1), 117–135.

⁵⁹ Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan*.

Surah An-Nisa verse 19 contains *kalam insya*, which gives important instructions regarding how to get along with women in marriage. This verse commands, "*dan bergaullah dengan mereka secara patut*." Some scholars interpret it as an obligation to do good to wives, both those they love and those they don't.⁶⁰ Which emphasizes the importance of sound and fair treatment of wives. Because during the Jahiliyah period, women were treated like merchandise to be bought and sold in marriage and had no rights. So, Surah an-Nisa verse 19 urges believers to leave this culture because it is full of injustice. One of the practices is treating women as inheritance and degrading them.⁶¹ This commandment underlines that the relationship between husband and wife must be based on kindness, respect and empathy. In this way, Islam elevates women's position in marriage, ensuring they are treated with dignity and compassion. Therefore, surah an-Nisa verse 19 emphasizes two main things: first, the prohibition on committing detrimental actions to women, and second, the command to marry and behave well, especially towards wives. This verse shows that the Quran provides a solution for married life by fulfilling the meaning of *ma'ruf*, namely goodness according to applicable sharia standards, including providing support and love to the wife.

Jasser Auda's thoughts have had a real impact on the practice of family law in Indonesia, for instance through the recognition of *cerai gugat* (woman-initiated divorce). Before legal reforms, only husbands had the formal right to pronounce *ṭalāq*; now, Law No. 7/1989 and the Compilation of Islamic Law grant wives the equal opportunity to file for divorce in religious courts. This reflects the principle of *wa 'āshirūhunna bil-ma'rūf* (live with them in kindness) as stated in Surah An-Nisā' [4]:19 not only by prohibiting harmful treatment but also by allowing women legal space to act when a marriage becomes unjust. Thus, the reform of Islamic family law not only abolishes the patriarchal treatment of women found in pre-Islamic practices but also strengthens women's rights to seek justice emotionally, financially, and morally within the family in accordance with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* that promote gender equality in a holistic manner.⁶²

Surah An-Nisā' [4]:19 contains *uslūb kalām inshā' ṭalabī* through the expression "*wa 'āshirūhunna bil-ma'rūf*" (وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ), a command form (*fi'l amr*) derived from the trilateral root '-sh-r (عاشر - يعاشر - معاشرَة), meaning to associate or live together intimately. According to scholars of *ʿIlm al-Ma'ānī*, this is not a neutral command, but a *ṭalab ilzāmī* a binding moral obligation, reinforced rhetorically by the imperative structure that functions to emphasize ethical

⁶⁰ Samsudin, Lilik Andaryuni, and Muhammad Idris, "Reinterpretasi Makna Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan: (Studi Kajian Tematik Tentang Terminologi Kekerasan Dalam Al-Qur'an)," *MAQASID* 13, no. 1 (2024): 72–85.

⁶¹ Abdullah Qomaruddin, "Tafsir Ayat Ahkam QS Annisa Ayat 19-20," n.d.

⁶² Royan Utsany and Afrizal TW, "Women's Rights and Gender Equality: An Analysis of Jasser Auda's Thoughts and His Contribution to Renewal of Islamic Family Law in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Law* 3 (2022): 54.

behavior in marital life, beyond the mere legal minimum.⁶³ The imperative verb *'ashirū* serves a transformative rhetorical purpose. It acts as a discursive correction of the pre-Islamic custom that allowed men to inherit and mistreat women. This shift is strengthened by the inclusion of the term *bil-ma'rūf*, which, according to al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī, encompasses acts of kindness, justice, and proper behavior sanctioned by both reason and divine law.⁶⁴

Thus, the verse is not only legalistic but ethically instructive (*ta'dibī*), urging men to internalize compassion and justice within the marital relationship. Moreover, the use of *fi'l amr* in this verse is stylistically powerful, as noted by al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshaf*, where he explains that imperative forms often carry rhetorical force that surpasses legal prescription, embedding moral pedagogy into divine instruction.⁶⁵ The juxtaposition between the prohibition "*la yaḥillu lakum an tarithū al-nisā' karhan*" and the command to treat women *bil-ma'rūf* intensifies this rhetorical effect, transforming marriage from a transactional arrangement into a spiritually dignified bond.⁶⁶

In the contemporary context, this rhetorical directive has found tangible reflection in Islamic legal reforms. For example, Indonesia's recognition of *cerai gugat* (female-initiated divorce) through Law No. 7/1989 and the Compilation of Islamic Law represents the legislative actualization of *wa 'āshirūhunna bil-ma'rūf* providing women with a legitimate means to seek justice when marriage becomes harmful. Jasser Auda argues that such reforms embody the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (higher objectives of Islamic law), particularly the principle of *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (preservation of dignity), reinforcing that *ma'rūf* is not static but contextual and evolving. Hence, the verse merges rhetoric and law: the *balāghah* of the imperative is not merely decorative it becomes the vehicle through which the Qur'an restores women's dignity and agency within marriage. The syntactic force of *fi'l amr*, the semantic scope of *ma'rūf*, and the context of prohibition create a multilayered command that upholds justice, kindness, and protection from systemic gender injustice.

5. Women's Participation in Public Life

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

⁶³ Ibn 'Āshūr, Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir. *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*. Tunis: Dār Sahnūn, 1997, jil. 4, hlm. 244.

⁶⁴ Al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī. *Al-Mufradāt fi Gharīb al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 2006, hlm. 513

⁶⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī. *Al-Kashshaf 'an Ḥaqā'iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl*. Kairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1998, jil. 1, hlm. 525.

⁶⁶ Auda, Jasser. *Maqāṣid al-Sharīah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. London: IIIT, 2008, hlm. 123–125.

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكُنَّا عَرْشَ عَظِيمٍ

Indeed, I found [there] a woman ruling them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne. (An-Naml [27]:23).⁶⁷

This verse contains *uslūb kalām khabar ṭalabī*, a declarative structure introduced by the emphatic particle *inna* (إِنِّي), which in *balāghah* serves to assert the truth of a statement and invoke listener attention (*faidah al-khabar*). Here, the hoopoe (*hud-hud*) informs Solomon of an unusual discovery: a woman, Queen Balqis, ruling over a nation. The rhetorical strategy is significant: it highlights the legitimacy and exceptional status of female leadership, particularly in a patriarchal context where such roles were unexpected.

The phrase *tamlikuhum* (تَمْلِكُهُمْ), indicating rulership, is presented without condemnation, sarcasm, or disapproval. As al-Rāghib al-Aṣṣfahānī points out, the positive lexical framing used to describe Balqis being granted all resources and possessing a grand throne implies affirmation, not critique. This indicates that her political authority is acknowledged, even admired, within the Qur'anic narrative.⁶⁸ From an Islamic legal perspective, this verse provides a normative framework indicating that women can hold positions of public leadership, provided they meet the standards of justice (*‘adālah*), competence (*kifāyah*), and public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*). As Jasser Auda asserts, Islamic law should be interpreted holistically through a *maqāṣid*-oriented and system-based lens, emphasizing justice and the empowerment of marginalized voices. Classical commentators like al-Qurṭubī and al-Zamakhsharī do not dispute Balqis' authority; instead, they analyze her governance in relation to Solomon's prophetic mission. Notably, al-Zamakhsharī observes that the verse's structure carries no rebuke, and the depiction of her throne and comprehensive control is linguistically celebratory rather than critical.

This Qur'anic image is echoed in modern empirical contexts. A study by Rambe, Dompok, and Salsabila (2023) reported a 37% nomination rate of female candidates in Indonesia's 2024 parliamentary elections (DPR RI), though only 21.9% secured seats.⁶⁹ These figures highlight both women's increasing ambition in public leadership and the persistent structural barriers to full representation. Nonetheless, this mirrors the message of Queen Balqis: leadership is not gender-exclusive but capacity-dependent.

⁶⁷ Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan*.

⁶⁸ Abdurrohman Al Asy'ari and Robingun Suyud El Syam, "Kepemimpinan Wanita Menurut Al-Qur'an (Kajian Komparasi Tafsir As-Sya'rawi Dan Shafwatut At-Tafasir Surat An-Naml Ayat 29-33)," *Jurnal Pendidikan, Sains Sosial, Dan Agama* 8, no. 1 (2022): 241–52.

⁶⁹ Dompok Rambe dan Humaira Salsabila, *Keterwakilan Perempuan dalam Politik (Studi Kasus: Caleg Perempuan DPR RI Tahun 2024–2029)*, *Jurnal Pemerintahan dan Politik* 10, no. 1 (Februari 2025): 22, <https://ejournal.uigm.ac.id/index.php/PDP/article/view/5192>.

Thus, the verse serves as both a rhetorical and legislative declaration. It challenges androcentric assumptions by employing affirmative declarative structures (khabar ṭalabī), ta'kid, and semantic dignity. It lays the foundation for gender-equitable participation in governance as a manifestation of Islamic values, rooted in 'adl (justice), shūrā (consultation), and maṣlaḥah (public interest).

6. Wedding

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَتَيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ ۖ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَانكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَآتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَحْدَانٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ حَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۝

And whoever among you cannot [find] the means to marry free, believing women, then [he may marry] from those whom your right hands possess of believing slave girls. And Allah is most knowing about your faith. You [believers] are of one another. So marry them with the permission of their people and give them their due compensation according to what is acceptable. [They should be] chaste, neither [of] those who commit unlawful intercourse randomly nor those who take them as mistresses. But once they are sheltered in marriage, if they should commit adultery, then for them is half the punishment of free [unmarried] women. This [allowance] is for him among you who fears sin, but to be patient is better for you. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (An-Nisā' [4]:25)⁷⁰

This verse conveys a powerful command using *uslūb inshā' ṭalabī*, especially in the phrase “*wa atūhunna ujurahunna bi al-ma'rūf*” (and give them their dowry in a fair manner). From a *balāghah* standpoint, the use of the imperative verb (*fi'l amr*) here indicates not merely a social recommendation but a binding obligation. According to *Ilm al-Ma'ānī*, such verbal construction constitutes a *ṭalab ilzāmī* demand that carries legal and moral weight. This form of *khitāb* shows that *mahr* is a right that women are entitled to receive unconditionally, not as a favor or as a result of their social position. The expression *bi al-ma'rūf* further reinforces the requirement for fairness, appropriateness, and respect, aligning with the broader ethical principles of Islamic law. From a semantic perspective, the term *ujūr* (plural of *mahr*) functions as a *synecdoche* for women's broader marital rights, including autonomy, dignity, and respect.

⁷⁰ Kemenag, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan*.

Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 H) explain the verse as a corrective measure against the misuse of enslaved women during the pre-Islamic era. He cites traditions that this verse was revealed to elevate the marital rights of even those considered socially inferior, thus emphasizing Islam's commitment to equity and human dignity in marriage (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 8, p. 163). Furthermore, in uṣūl al-fiqh, the imperative form (*amr*) that comes without an accompanying condition (*qarīnah*) and is related to transactional relationships (*mu'āmalāt*) is interpreted as conveying obligation (*wujūb*). Thus, this verse lays a definitive legal foundation affirming women's financial rights in marriage and promoting justice and economic security from the outset of the marital contract.

This perspective is strongly reinforced by contemporary scholarship. For instance, Beddu, Mas'ari, and Yanti argue that mahr in Islamic law is not merely symbolic but serves as a juridical instrument for preserving women's rights and dignity.⁷¹ Their study confirms that mahr: 1) Establishes the woman's independent economic identity. 2) Acts as financial protection during and after marriage. 3) Symbolizes the husband's willingness to uphold her rights and honor. From the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, mahr aligns with: ḥifẓ al-'ird (protection of dignity), ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of wealth), and al-'adālah (justice), positioning women as rightful and dignified participants in the institution of marriage.

This Qur'anic verse, therefore, provides both a legal mandate and a rhetorical device to transform the institution of marriage from a power-based transaction to a partnership built on mutual respect and equitable rights. It serves as a theological and legal foundation for tamkīn al-mar'ah (women's empowerment) and confirms that in Islam, marriage is a covenant of honor—not a hierarchy of domination.

Conclusion

This study offers an original contribution to the discourse on gender justice in Islam by employing the science of Balāghah as a hermeneutical framework to analyze key Qur'anic verses related to women. Through systematic analysis of *ḵabar ibtidā'i*, *ḵabar yurādu bihi al-insbā'*, *uslub insbā' ṭalabī*, and *kināyah*, we find that the Qur'anic language consistently affirms the dignity, agency, and equality of women in legal, economic, social, and moral spheres. Rather than interpreting legal texts through a patriarchal lens, the Balāghah-based approach exposes how rhetorical precision serves to protect and empower women, as seen in verses on

⁷¹ Muhammad Juni Beddu, Ahmad Mas'ari, dan Novi Yanti, "Mahr sebagai Instrumen Perlindungan Hak-hak Perempuan dalam Pernikahan: Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Al-Mutharabah: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 21, no. 1 (2024): 474–485.

inheritance (Qur'an 4:7), marital ethics (Qur'an 4:19), economic agency (Qur'an 4:25), and political leadership (Qur'an 27:23). These findings challenge long-standing exegetical assumptions that have marginalized women's roles in Islamic jurisprudence.

The implications of this study are both theoretical and practical. At the theoretical level, it invites scholars to integrate rhetorical analysis into mainstream *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *tafsīr*. At the practical level, this method may serve as a normative foundation for gender-equitable legal reforms, particularly in contexts such as marriage contracts, guardianship, and judicial fatwas. Future research should explore the application of *Balāghah* in reinterpreting other contested areas of Islamic family law, such as *ṭalāq*, *wilāyah*, and *qiwāmah*.

Thus, the Qur'anic rhetoric, when properly understood, does not merely tolerate women's rights; it enshrines them. The use of *Balāghah* is not an academic ornament but a critical key to unlock Qur'anic intent in its most just and comprehensive form. A paradigm shift is therefore necessary one that grounds Islamic legal interpretation not in inherited norms, but in the eloquence, justice, and ethical universality of the divine Word itself.

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