

## Urban Women, Their Religion, and Response to Environmental Crisis: Empirical Evidence in Green School and Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha

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### Article History

Submitted:

2020-04-20

Reviewed:

2020-05-08

Approved:

2020-06-12

### Abstract

*This study argues against the thesis that environmental crisis occurring today is due to masculine men's domination over women in managing natural resource. Through an in-depth analysis on environmental conservation movement conducted by women in Pekalongan City, this study is projected to be antithesis on feminist's perspective on the response to environmental crisis issue. This research focuses on the environmental action in religion and gender's perspective in Green School and Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha communities. Methodologically, data of this case study research was obtained through observation, interview, and documentation. The result of research shows that the ideology of environmental conservation has diverse paradigms: developmentalistic, constructivistic, and emancipatory. In the context of movement issue and model, urban women's action in the research location also provided various topics: education, economics, and social movement, by involving school institution, majelis taklim, and non-government organization (NGO). Urban women in Pekalongan make religion and expedient technology the basis for resolving environment crisis by integrating masculinity into femininity harmoniously.*

**Keywords:** *Urban Women, expedient technology, Green School, Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha, gender*

### Abstrak

*Kajian ini membantah tesis bahwa krisis lingkungan yang terjadi saat ini disebabkan dominasi lelaki yang maskulin terhadap perempuan dalam mengelola sumber daya alam. Melalui analisis secara mendalam terhadap gerakan konservasi lingkungan yang dilakukan kaum perempuan di Kota Pekalongan, kajian ini diproyeksikan sebagai antitesis terhadap pandangan kaum feminis dalam merespons isu krisis lingkungan. Fokus riset ini mengkaji tindakan lingkungan dalam perspektif agama dan gender pada komunitas Green School dan Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha. Secara metodologis, data riset studi kasus ini diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Hasil riset menunjukkan bahwa ideologi gerakan konservasi lingkungan memiliki keragaman paradigma, yaitu developmentalistik, konstruktivisme dan emansipatoris; Dalam konteks isu dan model gerakan, tindakan perempuan perkotaan di lokasi riset juga menyuguhkan varian topik; pendidikan, ekonomi, gerakan sosial, dengan melibatkan institusi sekolah, majelis taklim, dan lembaga swadaya masyarakat. Perempuan perkotaan di Pekalongan menjadikan agama dan teknologi tepat guna menjadi basis dalam penyelesaian krisis lingkungan, dengan memadukan sisi maskulinitas dan feminitas secara harmonis.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Perempuan Perkotaan, teknologi tepat guna, Green School, Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuba, gender*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dealing with environmental crisis and disaster, feminists such as Nawal H. Ammar (2004: 256-268), Linda Vance (1993a: 118-145; 1993b: 1585-1593; 1997: 60-76); Vance, L., & Stories, B. J. S. (1995: 163), Agarwal Bina (1992: 119-158; 2000: 283-310; 2003: 184-224); Carolyn Merchant (2013; 2010; 2005; 1981: 356-357) and Francoise de'Eaubonne (1994: 174-197) argue that there is an important relationship between domination over women and domination over nature (Gamble 2004: 285). Vandana Shiva's study confirms that men's domination becomes a factor causing environmental damage significantly (Shiva 1986: 255-275; Mies & Shiva 1993: 70-90). There is a correlation between environmental damage with men's domination over women. Earth is identical with women. Both of them have following shared characteristics: submissive, passive, and emphatic. The two also equally shelter, protect, warm, shade, and embrace. On the other hand, both earth and women are equally in sorrow due to men's exploitative-dominative masculinity.

Feminists' perspective above is irrelevant to the crisis occurring in Pekalongan. Actually the going-global environmental crisis is not only due to masculine men's dominant behavior and exploitation, but also related to science and religion epistemology affecting an individual's life. Forest damage (deforestation) reaches 3.4 million hectares-wide area annually (Walhi, 2004-2009: 5). Illegal logging case penetrates into 70 millions m<sup>3</sup>-wide area, with the loss of 40-65 trillions. Not less than 60 times flood and landslide occurring annually is a very complicated phenomenon. Natural disaster, air pollution, water crisis, erosion rate, and sinking small areas and island are due to many factors. However, there are some other variables affecting: political policy, science development, religion perspective, economic dimension, and men-women relation in managing environment.

What occurs in Pekalongan shows that environmental crisis is related to such aspects as economics, political, cultural, religion, and so forth. The expansive tidal flood in north coast, clean water crisis and farmland conversion into settlement, and high batik waste product reaching thousands meter cubic per day. Not less than 1,797,01 m<sup>3</sup>-waste is produced daily (NU's survey, 2018). The low environmental quality in Pekalongan City is a real representation of environmental damage in Central Java. Considering living

environment quality index in 2010, Central Java occupies the lowest rank for environment condition. Central Java is on 25<sup>th</sup> rank (score of 50.48) out of 29 provinces studied (Dajadilaga et al., 2011: 11). Therefore, in solving critical problem, multidisciplinary science and approach are required.

Considering the environmental crisis occurring in Pekalongan aforementioned, Green House Community (*Komunitas Rumah Hijau*, thereafter called KRH) cares about and makes environmental conservation movement. This community consists of *Cabe Rawet*, *Green School*, *Kuncup Mekar*, *Bank Sampah 'Basakinah'*, *Komunitas Biji*, *Pesona Swadaya Hijau*, *Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuba*, *Majlis Dzikir Kraton* and *NU Peduli Lingkungan* communities. This environmental conservation movement is largely activated by women. This group uses various issues, models, and approaches. They utilize science advance, expedient technology, local potency and wisdom, social and religious values, and local political support. The basic problems are what are ideology, model, and issue of this community environment movement”, Why they use science and religion approaches all at once, and how is it relevant to gender perspective. This study argues against ecofeministic theory and offers another perspective all at once.

Studies have been conducted widely on environmental crisis. These studies can be categorized into three basic predispositions: *firstly*, research on environmental issue with religious discipline approach such as *tafsir* (interpretative study) or environmental verses in Qur'an; *sharia's* perspective or *fiqh*; theological, tasawuf, and sufism perspectives (Ahmad, 2020: 359-396). Secondly, there is a research on environment with philosophical, ethical, and cultural approaches. Thirdly, the last type is research on educational issues and environmental social-political-movement. Only few results of research have studied environmental movement, one of which is Shiva, Aditjondro and Faishol's.

Unfortunately, the research is inadequate to be analysis instrument in seeing the women's environmental movement case in Pekalongan. The research is also conducted separately. Each of disciplines and approaches stand alone, rather than solidifies and approaches each other to disentangle the environmental issue.

Qualitative research with this natural social setting (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011: 17) used interdisciplinary approach. This research was conducted in relation to urban women's belief, ideology, perception, and environmental conserving behavior. This study is related to religion proponents' attitude and behavior (Mudzhar, 2000: 30-31; Mudzhar,

2002: 13-14). Referring to Weber's thesis, religion creates community's behavior (Weber 2006: 3-14); therefore, citizens' environmental behavior is affected by authoritative sources such as religion, social values and ideology they believe in. The primary data used in this research consists of idea, thought, perspective (Lofland & Lofland, 1984: 70), and environmental conserving behavior of urban women. This study focused on women affiliated with Green School and Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha in Pekalongan City. Data was obtained through interview, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using interactive model (Miles and Huberman, 2004).

Considering the arguments above, this study attempted to explore and to analyze in-depth the environmental crisis and movement conducted by urban women in Pekalongan in responding to the crisis.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Women, Religion, and Environmental Crisis**

Environmental crisis is related to conservation action. Gifford Pinchot defines conservation as the use of natural resource optimally, for goodness and long term interest. Conservation also means the development and protection of natural resource (Howe, 1979: 53). Another opinion says that conservation is an action to prevent the exploitation of natural resource by means of taking it fairly and not excessively, so that the natural resource will remain to be available in long term (Suparmoko 2012: 20). Conservation can also be defined as conserving the nature for the sake of human sustainability.

What Campbell conceptualizes is interesting (1972). In his opinion, one of conservation definitions is to use natural resource reasonably or with intellect utilization. In addition, conservation also means wise use. In this context, he introduces ethical consideration in utilizing natural resource, thereby can save the next generation and can avoid excessive environmental crisis (Campbell 1972: 314). Here, Campbell emphasizes on reasoning, intellectuality and ethical aspect all at once in utilizing human resources. Therefore, natural balance will be created.

Thus, environmental conservation means utilizing natural resource with ethical, harmonious, and proportional principles to prevent environmental crisis from occurring in the attempt of natural resource sustainability and human future.

Associating women with environmental conservation issue is really interesting. Environmental issue is so far always associated with men's work in a big coach of natural resource management. Natural resource management is a public domain related to many people's life interest. It involves political, budgeting policies, and environmental conservation program implementation. Involving women in decision making in doing environmental conservation work means giving the women the access to participation in public policy making. As such, women are no longer an object, but they can take a strategic part, being the policymaker.

Women being policymaker in natural resource management seem to be important amid environmental damage current due to science development, industrialization, and religion interpretation reasoning. Nevertheless, another assumption says that it is the women who are factually considered as the largest contributor of environmental damage. The women's consumptive behavior is considered as the reason. This aspect is, of course, still debatable further.

In cultural reality, it is well established that women are inseparable from rubbish problem daily. Women are considered as the largest rubbish producer (Iriyanti, 2008: 1). It includes domestic and personal rubbish and the one produced in workplace (industry or institution).

Consumerism lifestyle in fact affects significantly the environmental damage. Therefore, the consumers shopping smartly become collective need. The women's homework is to consume and to shop as necessary, rather than because of their want, desire, or passion. It can be achieved when community (people) can ward off capitalist's invasion in affecting an individual's lifestyle. Women play vital role to safeguard and to conserve environment.

Along with the development of science and technology activated by rationalism and existentialism, the nature no longer becomes living organism. To modernist, nature is a natural resource that can be exploited to get abundant benefit. In such situation, the nature is not treated respectfully, just like a mother as a woman.

Even, although women are now the majority population on the earth, they are often ignored in the term of natural resource management. Moreover, in the presence of patriarchic culture domination, the hegemonic masculine perspective in managing the nature has marginalized the role of women in managing natural resource, impacting on the

natural damage. In masculine world, human being sees another human being, nature, and so forth as competing egos. In such situation, fragmentation, isolation, and separation occur between human being and nature. Both of them become subject and object. Natural mastery and exploitation occurs and are conducted by human beings.

Environmental damage is presupposed to be the effect of gender-biased natural management; therefore an alternative idea is required, justice and women's equality in managing natural resource. In addition, environmental crisis is also related to value and belief system as the basis of ecological behavior. The belief here is not in the context of and does not stop in the order of relation between servants and their God, but functions to be an ideology. Ideology, as an argument, arises from world view and social paradigm used by a group of individuals to justify their action (Kinloch 1981: 78). On the one hand, the ideology is formulated and obeyed to achieve the objective, and on the other hand it also breaks, encourages, and reinforces their movement, privilege and action (Tompson 2003: 127-128).

In relation to the movement to cope with environmental crisis, there are at least five patterns. *Firstly, eco-facism* is the pattern developed by activists fighting for the environmental issue for the sake of environment itself. *Secondly, eco-developmentalism*, is an activist group fighting for the environmental conservation for the sake of economic growth and capital cultivation, such as capitalism (Dietz 2005: x-xiv). *Thirdly, eco-populism* is the environmental movement activist very partial to the people's interest and wellbeing. In their struggle, the pattern developed by activist group is concerned with political and economical issues, in addition to the environmental issue. Their movement pattern often takes political movement as well. Advocacy as an attempt of changing the policy seizing the people's right to natural resource also becomes the target of environmental movement (Ahmad 2006).

*Fourthly, eco-feminism* is the environmental conservation movement attempting to criticize men's domination over environmental management (Shiva 1986). Ecological damage, according to this group, is due more to women's subordination, while men are the dominant one mastering the nature (Ali 2012: 15). *Fifthly, eco-sufism* is an environmental conservation movement conducted by Sufi, integrating cosmic life (Suwito NS 2011).

Those environmental movements, of course, have their own ideological foundation, orientation, and work agenda. On the other hand, in ethical theory perspective,

environmental behavior can be seen from two interests: teleological and deteleological. Teleological theory states that the value of an action is highly related to objective and benefit. The higher the benefit, the more valued and ethical is the individual (egocentric) or group (utilitarianism) of an action. Meanwhile, deteleological theory states that there is no relationship between good or bad deed and its outcome, benefit, and consequence. An action's consequence cannot be the standard of good or bad deed. Moral obligation is done not to attain peace or happiness but merely for the sake of obligation itself.

Theoretically, there are three environmental ethical theory models, known as *shallow environmental ethics*, *intermediate environmental ethics*, and *deep environmental ethics*. These three theories are also known as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism (Taylor 1986; Keraf 2002). This ecocentrism can be, among others, environmental ethic called *Deep Ecology* by Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher.

Considering the relationship between science and religion in environmental conservation, it is better for scientists to refer to the result of religion leaders and scientists' meeting in *Join Appeal by Religion and Science for the Environment* on May 1992 in Washington, D. C. declaring:

“We believe that science and religion can cooperate to mitigate the significant effect and to make resolution on the environmental crisis occurring on the earth. However, we believe that this critical dimension has not actually been taken into heart by our leaders leading important institutions and industrial leaders. Nevertheless, we accept our obligation to help give knowledge and understanding to millions people we cater on and teach concerning the consequence of environmental crisis and what we should do to cope with this” (Witt 2002).

Religion leaders and scientists sit down together and build commitment to grow the important consciousness of environmental issue. They explore and formulate spiritual value and teleological foundation about the creation, management, control of nature, and cope with the natural damage. Overall, women should be forced to be the subject to cope with environmental crisis and to utilize scientific and technological advance and environment-friendly religion.

## **Urban Women in Environmental Movement: Religion and Gender**

### ***Green School: Creating a Caring about Environment-Generation***

Women affiliated with “Green School” Education House as the part of Green House Community conduct environmental conservation movement through education channel and issue. ‘Alternative’ education, according to them, plays a strategic part in constructing better and just (fair) social order. Borrowing Sonny Keraf’s language, global environmental crisis and disaster are occurring today. In such situation, to solve with the more complex environmental problem, strategic and sustainable measures are required. One of them is through environment-oriented education process. Practitioners say that education is like two sides of coin. One the one hand, it results in transformation, but on the other hand it “often” becomes the instrument of status quo, to maintain “social injustice” values (Topatimasang, 1998).

In the context of environmental conservation, education creates believe, value and understanding on the urgency of utilizing, safeguarding, and conserving environment. At the same time, belief, value, and understanding above are implemented in a more real struggle (Ahmad, 2010: 59), including both study and movement, and other pro-environment program. In more real border, environmental education should be supported with environmental leadership, to encourage capacity, attitude, and practical experience to realize environment sustainability and justice through interdisciplinary approach in managing living environment (Witoelar , 2005: v). It is through this perspective that Green School, an educational institution, is dedicated. Through local natural potency and resource, and supported with expedient technology, ‘used’ products can be learning media and source. Through utilizing used product, Green School has implemented *reduce, reuse, and recycle* principles as promoted by environmental activists.

The vision of Green School is “*To be superior education centre that can bear smart, creative, and environment-oriented generation.*” Through this vision, learning process is conducted to prepare the students for developing their intellectual potency optimally and caring about environmental issue. This vision as if wants to criticize that the environmental damage is so far caused by those considered as having “smart” brain. Those often conducting exploitation are the smart ones, but ‘blind ecologically’. Green School is oriented to creating smart, creative, and environment-care children.



Green school is the pioneer school in Pekalongan, the *infaq* or tuition of which is paid using rubbish. It is conducted recalling that the large number of population is correlated with the high rubbish production. Human activity and need fulfillment contribute to rubbish emergence. Rubbish, according to practitioners, is unexpected residual material after the end of a process. Rubbish can also be defined as something unused, unworn, or disposed, coming from human activities (Brata and Nelistya, 2009: 5-6).

People need to be educated in order to have good understanding on environmental issue. Through an environment-oriented education, citizens are expected to be smart partners to control the state duty in fulfilling the basic needs to healthy, clean, and high-quality environment.

Another spirit contributing to the birth of Green School is, among others, to make the people (community), particularly young generations, have high environment-care. Education is the most effective instrument in the process of inculcating ecological values to the community. To Green School, educating the citizens in order to be environment-care is conducted in some ways, one of which is through paying tuition (SPP) using inorganic rubbish.

Green School also organizes parenting activity or education for parents routinely. It is intended to equip parents or students' guardian to educate and to take care of children. Green School holds "Parenting on Environment Conservation" systematically. *Parenting* is usually filled in with such events as educating child, solving child caretaking problem, reproductive health, and so on. However, Green School focuses on different activity agenda. Parenting event is filled in with organic rubbish management. Parenting on environment conservation is held through collaboration with Pekalongan City's Living Environment Office.

Three experts and practitioners of environment conservation attended the event; they were Muhson, Heri and Wijayanto. The event has been regularly held concomitantly with the distribution of "students' learning result report since October 2018 until today. In this occasion, education or socialization about the importance of environment conservation and the technique of managing organic rubbish is given. In training and education session, the resources convey the importance of rubbish management from our own home. Mushon said:

“Rubbish management ideally starts from household. If domestic rubbish can be managed and used up at house level, that is better. So, the most important point to rubbish management is to start it from family to process it at home. Mothers (women) play very important role. Organic rubbish can be made compost. Inorganic rubbish such as paper and iron can be made handicraft or sold. The point is that it is done by the members of individual families (Muhson, 2019).

Rubbish issue, according to Mushon, is often neglected. Rubbish is considered as a trivial matter. Therefore, community often does not care about it. Not only community pays inadequate attention to it but also officials and society leaders consider rubbish as non-strategic issue.

To Muhson, disposing rubbish to landfill is not an appropriate solution. Mushon said:

“Avoid disposing rubbish as much as we can. How can we? The principle is to prevent, to reduce, to reuse, and so forth. And the last is to dispose rubbish. Prevent the activity potentially producing rubbish. Reduce whatever we need. Reuse the stuffs we have and so forth. Then, finally we can dispose rubbish” (Muhson. October 18, 2012).

In addition to growing consciousness, parenting activity is also filled in with compost producing practice. Composting is a way of utilizing organic rubbish. That is to process organic rubbish to be decomposed into compost. Compost can be used to be planting media and fertilizer.

In consciousness growing session, technique of preparing compost is also taught. Muhson stated that the method of preparing compost can be conducted in many ways. One of them commonly used is to use Aerobic composter and Biopore hole. Composting is important to reduce rubbish volume because organic rubbish produced by household is 75% of total rubbish volume, on average.

In the same occasion, facilitator also practices compost preparation using aerobic composter, a tool made of plastic bag containing aerating (PVC) pipes/ventilation holes, designed in such a way that can process organic rubbish. Compost can improve soil fertility, improve physical condition of soil, improve soil organism activity, and increase organic material in the soil (Brata and Nelistya, 2009: 71). Compost is useful to be organic fertilizer for a variety of plants.

As an environment-oriented school, Green School regularly conducted a campaign for rubbish management. Green school introduces inverted pyramid of school management. The top part is the broadest and widest one and then narrower and narrower to the bottom. The pyramid contains preventing, limiting, reusing, recycling used product, and disposing rubbish.

In addition, campaign for rubbish processing is also conducted, including “Three Er”, *reduce, reuse and recycle*. There is a jargon, ‘*think global, act local*.’ The jargon above means we should think greatly to cope with global environment crisis and disaster, by conducting small and simple activities, start with the self and family. It can start with ‘small deed’ such as managing rubbish that will have big impact; that is the meaning of *small action-big impact* promoted by Green School women.

Green School also promotes Biopore holes. Biopore is a way of minimizing the flood is to penetrate rainwater into its place. The way can be conducted by making holes inside soil functioning to accelerate rain water penetration.

In addition, Green School inculcates the importance of nutrition intake to children’s health early. Nutritious food is highly desirable to growth period. An individual’s body and life quality is determined, among others, by healthy lifestyle, in addition to regular physical exercise, and self management of various life problems. The need for high-quality food becomes inevitable amid the prevalence of ‘junk food’ produces by multinational companies massively. The food intended is instantaneous food, in various types, brands, and shapes.

It is in this context that Green School institutionally has ‘vegetable’ laboratory, the target of which is to build vegetable self-sufficiency in family scale, in addition to be learning, research and activity media for children (Report, 2012).

As a learning media, in this school the children are taught to plant and to love plants. Children are involved in planting and maintaining plants. In this way, the process of accustoming children with environment care occurs. In other words, it builds children’s participation early in taking care of, managing, and utilizing the land to plant organic vegetable in order to inculcate environment-care behavior into them.

Children should be closed to the profile of Muhammad as a prophet as the environment-care pioneer (Jusoff and Samah 2011: 46-53), through either storytelling or

direct practice, e.g. planting. Such care can be conducted by involving children in planting plants and vegetables.

To Green School, maintaining and caring about environment are not merely “extracurricular” activity but an integral part of curriculum taught to children. Environmental perspective is an important means of achieving the target of the birth of high-quality environment. Therefore, Green School can utilize the potency of surrounding environment, in addition to learning media. In this context, learning media Green School utilizes such used products as mineral water bottle and glass, coral, stone, and leaf existing around the school.

Inorganic rubbish is utilized to be polybag, on which organic vegetable is planted then. Children are involved in planting, and maintaining it, so that the vegetables resulting from the ‘laboratory’ can be utilized to increase students’ nutrition intake.

It has been known publicly that physical, psychological, and spiritual qualities of children are affected by the quality of nutrition intake. This laboratory is important, in addition to serving as learning media for children to improve their understanding on nature, plant, and etc, and organic vegetable products will impact on their physical and psychological strengths. For that reason, Green School takes preventive measure against the prevalence of vegetables circulating in the market resulting from mass production, with chemical fertilizer and pesticide.

Green School realizes that the circulation of ‘chemical’ vegetables is difficult to ward off by the community. Therefore, a precise ‘knowledge’ is required to buy and to consume vegetables. To avoid the danger of chemical vegetables, in addition to inviting the community to “boycott” the production of multinational company, a systematic strategy is also needed to ensure the resilience of food material, particularly vegetable. For that reason, vegetable self-sufficiency program is important to conduct to resist the circulation of chemical vegetables threatening the people’s health. Such activity can start with the bottom level, i.e. family. Thus, through organic vegetable self-sufficiency, it means an attempt has been taken to protect the children from the dangerous effect of chemicals on health.

#### ***‘Bank Basa Sakinah’: Majlis Taklim model of Rubbish Management***

*Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuba* was established on February 27, 2002 or Muharram 3, 1423 H. This establishment of Majlis taklim is inseparable from the mission to create a society

order more compatible to *tauhid* (Profile of *Majlis taklim Ulin Nuba*, 2010). However, in its development, this *Majlis Taklim* not only holds *pengajian* (Quran study) and spiritual building activities only, but also conducts environment conservation movement.

The shift and expansion of *majlis taklim*'s 'work area' is not without reason. Many arguments can explain why living environment issues becomes important to be the agenda of *Majlis Taklim*'s struggle. The most substantial one is because the utilization and maintenance of environment is the basic theme of Islam tenet (Mesra 2010: 200). Quran's verses and hadith discuss the earth creation aspect as living environment, purpose of imaging, how to manage and to maintain, and etc. The command to improve or the prohibition from damaging environment is a doctrine the Muslimin should implement (ZPS, 2012).

Factually, according to the result of problem analysis, one of social problems encountered by *majlis taklim Ulin Nuba* community is environmental problem caused by people's behavior of disposing inorganic rubbish haphazardly. Therefore, according to the institution established ten years ago, the indicator of successful religion education through '*majlis taklim*' forum is not measured with not only the quantity of community members attending, but also with the behavior of community members. It is not only ritualistic worship but also social one in relation to environment. "Worshiping diligently but making the environment dirty is in vain". It is the rhetoric often conveyed by the head of *Majlis Taklim*.

Considering this and the importance of creating the high-quality environment, ZPS reveals the process of early establishment of Bank Basa Sakinah. He said that the members of *majlis taklim* consisting of about 30 persons established Bank Basa Sakinah operating in collecting and managing rubbish, and marketing rubbish-based handicraft resulting from the people's creativity (October 6, 2019).

In the context of ecological behavior, *majlis taklim* empowerment team considers the importance of constructing collective understanding on plastic waste or rubbish. The result of analysis on community members shows that many people still have behavior of disposing rubbish haphazardly. This behavior impacts on environmental damage, viewed from both its esthetic and quality aspects.

The empowerment team of *majlis taklim* says that the basic problem is that people have not understood yet the hazard of organic and inorganic rubbishes, particularly plastic,

on natural balance, particularly soil. In addition, people have not been equipped with “skill” through training on waste management, the training that can change ‘rubbish’ into usable products or the one with economic values.

*Majlis taklim* faces some constraints in implementing the rubbish-care movement. They include an assumption that it is uncommon for a *majlis taklim*, in this case *majlis taklim ulin nuha*, Tirto, Pekalongan City, to deal with environment issue. So far, *majlis taklim* usually wrestles with spiritual and mental building and worship issues related directly to religion issue. The *majlis taklim* getting out of its habitat will be viewed as strange. The habitat of *majlis taklim* includes *pengajian*, religion counseling, improving worship practicing capacity, and so forth. In this aspect, *majlis taklim* often gets critical questions either internally or externally.

Perhaps the following illustration can explain the reason of why *Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuha* got challenges, when they planned rubbish management program originally. The Head of *Majlis Taklim* explained:

“Yesterday, someone teased us with allusion, “how come *majlis taklim* deals with rubbish? I replied religion always teaches about how to take care of environment. Many verses of Quran tells about universe, environment, and etc. It indicates that rubbish issue we are managing now actually is a part of religion tenet as well. The problem is that only few Muslims have understood this issue well. It is as if beyond Islam tenet” (ZPS, October 2019).

To Zahry, taking care of environment is a part of religion tenet. Therefore, according to Zahry, it does not matter that *majlis taklim* cares about environment. “Accusation” filed by members of *majlis* is not wrong. Moreover, closely observed, environmental issue is not included into the mission to be implemented by *majlis taklim*. There is neither textual nor verbatim script stating that the mission of institution is, among others, ‘environment-care’ (Profile of *Majelis Taklim Ulin Nuha*, 2010). Furthermore, dealing with this challenge, Zahry explains the importance of ecological issue to Islam religion. The explanation is as follows:

“There is a very famous verse of Quran related to environment damage. Quran says that environmental crisis and disaster occurs due to human’s behavior. Even there is a story telling about ‘oil waste’ in Middle East Sea impacting on environmental damage” (ZPS 2019, October 6, 2019).

Additionally, to Zahry, “environmental crisis is due to human behavior”. Recalling the environmental issue is related to other issues, according to Zahry, the effect of

environmental crisis also disturbs other sectors. As a system, environment consists of components working regularly as a unity. Environment consists of biotic substance (human being, animal, and plant) and abiotic (air, water, soil, climate, etc) (Zubair 2010: 67-76). People's treatment against environment will affect other social problems. So does the citizens' treatment against rubbish. Rubbish disposed haphazardly can result in damaged esthetic and flood, and exacerbate environmental crisis and disaster. Flood not only threatens an individual's health but also affects economic, social, political, and other aspects. So, there is a systemic effect of living environment management.

Zahry thinks that if 'rubbish' is utilized, it will have economic impact. She attributes rubbish issue with system context, in which the elements within it are closely interrelated. Through systemic perspective, the damaged natural resource or environment can affect its function as consumption function and an individual's service or need fulfillment will be disrupted (Soemarwoto 1997: 59). Therefore, women affiliated with *Majlis Taklim* processes rubbish into compost and handicraft with high-economic value.

Having been sorted, generally rubbish can be divided into two categories: organic and inorganic. Organic rubbish can be processed into compost, through compostering process.

To improve the organic rubbish managing capacity, *majlis taklim* conducts a collective compostering learning program. *Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuba* holds training activity concerning compostering. To solve problem rubbish issue, 3R principles can be used: *reduce, reuse, and recycle*. *Majelis taklim's* report on "rubbish management" activity mentions that the best solution to dealing with rubbish is to start with the self and closest environment, family.

Occupation rate affects rubbish production and volume. Rubbish can derive from industries, offices, hospitals, and families. Rubbish can be both organic and inorganic. In domestic case, organic rubbish can reach 75% of total domestic rubbish. *Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuba* processes it into compost. Composter learning is facilitated by Hermawan, the officer of Labor Office, with the specialty of compost preparation.

Composting is a strategic measure to solve organic rubbish problem. Through a relatively low-cost technology, rubbish can be processed into organic fertilizer with promising commercial value. To *Majlis Taklim*, this compostering is an opportunity; moreover those dealing with household are women.

Learning from *Pesantren Nurul Iman Parung, Bogor*, the economic value of recycling attempt cannot be underestimated. *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) community has developed and proved that rubbish recycle to promise fairly good economic benefit for many purposes. They can get profit of more than 140 millions annually from this ‘rubbish’ business (Mesra 2010: 224).

In addition to organic rubbish, inorganic one can also be recycled to produce many handicrafts. *Majlis taklim Ulin Nuba Tirto* has used such rubbish for producing handicrafts like movable food cover, relaxation pillow, blind, house-shaped moneybox, bag, wallet, apron, sandal, (Islam) prayer rug, etc (Susminingsih, 2010).

Inorganic rubbish should be cleaned from dirt first. So, before producing handicraft, the rubbish should be washed, sunbathed and aired to avoid some diseases. Then, it can be processed into handicraft.

In relation to rubbish utilization, viewed from economic aspect, the head of *Majlis taklim* said:

“We have not gotten money yet, as we still save it. In the end of year or on Lebaran, we will calculate it. The result of sale can be used at least for RT (neighborhood association) activities or other activity purposes. However, there is a family collecting rubbish once and getting IDR 250 thousands” (ZPS, October 6, 2019).

Nevertheless, this *majlis taklim* diligently attends expose or exhibition for product, handicraft, and souvenir made of rubbish. The production conducted by *majlis taklim* is indeed still limited in volume. Many factors affect it: resource, time, and basic material.

“Although members of community have established rubbish bank, but this bank still serves merely as collector that stores the rubbish and then sells it to the scavenger. Indeed, we process some of them into “handicraft” (ZPS, October 6, 2019).

When asked how many women are involved directly in producing handicraft, Zahry said:

“Not too many, just me. There are a few sewing machines that can be utilized by women here. Sewing rubbish for handicraft requires certain skill. The women here have not had it yet. Some other constraints are also encountered, e.g. other activities of community members. Nearly all members of community are career woman. Women here consist of teachers or even headmaster, leaders in



governmental office, or section head in each of their offices. It is the problem” (ZPS, October 6, 2019).

Finally, rubbish management is only one of various programs that can be developed by women. Giving the women an opportunity equal to the men of course provides an opportunity of developing environment maintenance activity and improving family’s economic standard all at once (Mesra 2010: 224).

In internal evaluation and reflection conducted by the members of *majlis taklim*, women empowerment through environment conservation has provided some outcomes: *firstly*, some people begin to care about rubbish sorting from household level; *secondly*, the change of rubbish sorting behavior affects the cleanliness condition of some alleys, in which there is no longer rubbish overflowing because the rubbish barrel cannot accommodate it; *thirdly*, housewives begin to pay attention to sewing hobby to produce bag and other handicraft, with the sewing machines provided by empowerment team.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Considering the result of data analysis on urban women’s thinking and action in the research location, the study can give the following tentative notes. *Firstly*, the ideology of environment conservation movement conducted by women affiliated with Green School institution and Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuha is more developmentalistic in nature, despite some of them constructivism and emancipatory. This conclusion is drawn based on the result of analysis on environmental crisis occurrence. Urban women view that the environmental crisis occurs due to low education and wellbeing, traditional values and limited skill of community. Meanwhile, the issues developed are education, ecological value internalization, expedient technology utilization, and *pengajian* (Quran Study) and direct practice related to religion, rubbish, and other environmental issues.

*Secondly*, science and technology, in those with dominative and exploitative behavior, can cause environmental damage. Otherwise, to those with the perspective on the balance between nature, human being, and other material, technology can be the energy of natural resource sustainability. Harmonious relation between elements is the key to taking care of and conserving the nature. To women affiliated with Green School and Majlis Taklim Ulin Nuha, expedient technology is important and the key instrument to rubbish problem and to the conservation movement process conducted by urban women. They use

expedient technology advance and religion approach to support the environment-care work program. Through the feministic women's touch, they campaign for environment-friendly education, industrialization, and religion rationality, rather than dominate and negate each other.

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