

# The Rise of Modern Thought in Indonesia: Raden Adjeng Kartini's Radical Thoughts about the Idealism of Inclusive Education and Gender

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## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the concept of women's awareness education in Indonesia through the perspective of Raden Adjeng Kartini. This is intended to explore the other side of Raden Adjeng Kartini's inclusive thinking about education in Indonesia, which is fighting for the existence of women and realizing modern education. Therefore, Kartini's inclusive value is measured by gender issues and more than that, namely expanding the scope of inclusivism, which is the criteria for modern education. This paper used the historical method with heuristic, critique, Interpretation, and historiography approaches. The output of this research is the idealism of inclusive education for women from the perspective of Raden Adjeng Kartini, and an inclusive education curriculum that is aware of women for universities.

**Keywords:** *Women's Awareness Education, Raden Adjeng Kartini, Inclusive Education, Kartini's School..*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The patriarchal stereotype of Javanese culture makes women placed in more minor strategic positions. The role of women is minimal and is just known as *konco wingking* who takes care of domestic matters [1]. Only women with *priyayi* status or *garwa padmi*, namely noble wives [2], have access to a better life than other women, especially access to education. However, the figure of Raden Adjeng Kartini with his revolutionary mind comes with a new direction.

Before Kartini's letters containing her criticisms and her demands about women's life were published with the title "Habis Gelap, Terbitlah Terang", social treatment of Javanese women was identical to how to treat people with disabilities. The context of women's disability does not come from physical disability, but in the function of women who are only seen as reproductive and economic tools for men. Women don't need to be educated. Women only need to be good at making up, good at serving their husbands, good at cooking and serving food, and merely to know how to build a good family. At 15, this woman is secluded at sufficient age while waiting for the man to come to ask for her hand. Even a man's origins don't really matter. Is he married or still single.

Kartini was very instrumental in removing the stigma against Javanese women by introducing inclusive

education. There are two ways for Kartini to introduce inclusive education; first, that education is the right of all nations regardless of gender. Second, the educational curriculum accommodates the existence of women. The presence of women in the implementation of education at the Kartini School contains the values of humanity by providing opportunities and the share of women in reconstructing the culture and social society that is too male-dominated. Then also convince the public about the dignity of women through awareness to understand the ideal age of marriage for women, awareness about household provisions (parenting education), and other technical matters related to women. At this point, the concept of inclusive education that was aware of women, the fruit of Kartini's thought, began to find its form.

Apart from the controversy over Kartini being branded as an icon of modern Javanese women as a result of Dutch education [3], this paper seeks to construct Kartini's inclusive thinking as a starting point for the birth of modern education in Indonesia which is rarely heard. This does not aim to delegitimize the role of Taman Siswa, which since its establishment in 1922 is more often regarded as the first indigenous school [4]. The figure of Kartini is intended to be reviewed through thoughts and works, not as a symbol of the annual *kebaya* commemoration. Therefore, this paper's main focus is to discuss the idealism of inclusive education in Kartini's

thinking? And, how was the curriculum model applied at the Kartini School at that time?

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a critical historical approach and a case study. This method clearly explains that qualitative research is used to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and people individually or in groups [5]. Thus, this research is based on empirical data through a social case study answered by the informants to be narrated into social facts. Therefore, interviewing informants is the right way. The interviews were conducted to obtain data about Kartini's inclusiveness ideas and also what educational curriculum has been implemented at Kartini School. Although the data obtained do not fully capture the gender-specific aspects of Kartini's thoughts, at least most of Kartini's ideas can be described as a discourse of social criticism of the education curriculum in Indonesia.

After knowing these characteristics, the researcher then conducted a literature study related to the theme of inclusive education, gender studies, the history of Raden Adjeng Kartini, and the history of the establishment of the Van Deventer Foundation either manually by buying reference books, visiting university libraries, regional libraries, and surveying school locations. Kartini and the van Derventer Foundation. After all the materials have been collected, the next step is to collect and tabulate the literature data to be processed into different research instrument materials.

Then the critical-historical approach that is used relies on four things, namely [6];

1. Heuristics is the first stage of research, namely finding and collecting the necessary sources in historical writing. Sources of data needed in this paper were obtained through various ways. The primary sources used consisted of the leading books used as references, namely *Habis Gelap, Terbitlah Terang* from Raden Adjeng Kartini, and *Kartini The Complete Writings 1898-1904* edited and translated by Joost Cote. While on secondary sources, this research refers to several journals discussing Kartini's thoughts regarding education and historical stigma related to her problems. In addition, the results of the Focus Group Discussion with Didi Kwartanada, a historian, who discussed Kartini's inclusivist thoughts were also one of the secondary data used.
2. Criticism, as a form of verification of the source or data used as a reference to ensure its authenticity, credibility, and authenticity. So that the results obtained are at least close to the actual reality.
3. Interpretation is an effort to chronologically compose existing sources to be assembled as a unified whole.
4. Historiography is the final stage in compiling the whole process of heuristics, criticism, and

interpretation into a storyline that gives value and meaning.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. *Inclusive Education and Gender*

The word inclusive is taken from the English language, namely "to include" or "inclusion" or "inclusive" which means to invite in or include. In the sense of "inclusive" that is embraced or included are every individual with a different background, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, language, culture, characteristics, status, way/pattern of life, physical condition, ability, and other different conditions [7]. Then the question is, since when was inclusive education implemented and became popular?

The history of inclusive education began with 3 European countries, namely Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in the early 20th century. Meanwhile, in 1991, the UK started to publish the idea of inclusive education, which was marked by a change in the education model from a segregative education model to an integrative education model followed by the Bangkok Declaration in 1994 Salamanca [8]. In Indonesia, the paradigm of inclusive education began in 1901, which was organized by the Community Social Institution (NGO). Inclusive education is still defined as education that handles the nation's children who have physical and mental disorders or disabilities. In the 1980s, the Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Depdikbud) established an Extraordinary Elementary School to provide joint primary education in one place between children with special needs and "normal" children in general. However, in the process, education for children with special needs remains separated from other normal children [9].

Then in early 2015, the notion of inclusive education underwent an expansion of meaning. Inclusive education is starting to be translated into education that touches all aspects of life and all circles, including women's (gender) conscious education. The Ministry of Education and Culture in the Module *Improving the Competence of Principals in Managing Curriculum Implementation* in 2015 defines inclusive education as open and friendly to learners by promoting respect and embracing differences. The expansion of this understanding gives another meaning that the inclusive education system is an education that provides learning opportunities for the entire community without making distinctions based on gender, religion, race, geography, culture, community groups with HIV/AIDS, and with special needs. Gender is one of the urgencies for perfecting the goal of creating an inclusive society, namely a society that respects differences in gender, age, disability, ethnic groups, and linguistics. The aim is to create a space for active participation for all elements of society and not to allow discriminatory behavior to occur.

The change in the definition of inclusive education indirectly opens up new spaces to be filled with new and appropriate narratives, orientations, models and implementations of inclusive education. Therefore, women's awareness (gender) education is an important topic to be constructed as one of the new directions of education. No exception, the interpretation of Kartini's figure which is only often used as an annual display and ceremonial object becomes essential and needs to be discussed. Exploring ideas about education from Kartini's perspective is interesting to review. The aim is none other than to color the perspective on the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia.

### **3.2. Raden Adjeng Kartini's Inclusive Ideas**

Kartini was born on April 21, 1879, in Mayong, a small town in the residency area of Jepara [10]. Kartini grew up in the midst of a Javanese noble family. So he got the title R.A., which means Raden Ajeng, but his title changed to Raden Ayu after marriage. Despite having a pavilion to teach, Kartini was never known as one of the pioneers of education. Kartini is better known as a fighter for women's emancipation in Indonesia. Her name is getting bigger because her birthday is set as a particular day, Kartini's day. The day where almost every school or government agency parades kebaya clothes. In fact, the ideas, ideas, ideals and counter-narratives on gender and education conveyed by Kartini in her letters are far greater than just clothes. Idealism and educational curriculum at Kartini's schools are also rarely discussed.

One proof that Kartini did not just talk about women's domestic problems but also about educational inclusiveness can be found in her letter to Mrs. M. C. E. Ovink-Soer in 1900. In that letter, Kartini tried to remove the taboo with the argument that men would never be humiliated if women received the same level of education as him. In addition, the position of education for women is not something that is forced, but a choice. That is, women have control to choose the extent of education they want to take. Although education is an option, it does not mean that education for women is abolished. Kartini clearly stated that "I will teach my children, both boys and girls, to see them as equal beings. I will provide the same education for them according to their respective talents. To make a girl a new girl, for example, I don't force her to study, if she doesn't like it or is not talented. But to diminish his right to put his older brother first, no way!" [11].

The idea of women being obliged to attend school, according to Kartini, does not aim to avoid their responsibilities in the domestic sphere [12], but to prepare themselves if the public needs women as social figures but their duties as quality family educators [13] are still carried out hand in hand. According to Kartini, "from the beginning, the progress of women has been the most important article in the effort to advance the nation. The intellectual intelligence of the natives will not advance rapidly if the woman is left behind in this

endeavor. The woman who brought civilization!... That woman became the pillar of civilization's teacher!... in terms of improving or deteriorating life, that she is the one who helps the most human morality" [14].

In addition to being concerned about the problem of women's education, Kartini is also open to socializing. She was especially impressed by the Chinese figure, Oei Tiong Ham, who according to Kartini was a modest modern figure because he consciously gave his daughters the freedom to study in Europe [15]. His letter dated January 3, 1902, to Mrs. Abendanon clearly explained that Kartini praised Oei Tiong Ham as a philanthropist who helped the poor a lot and "a father of very developed daughters. One of them must be extraordinarily clever and have plans to go to Europe to study to become a lawyer—great! It's a shame they don't have a brother, we will definitely take his heart"[16]. In addition, evidence that Kartini was also enlightened by this Chinese figure can also be seen in the Letter of June 17, 1902 to Mrs. de BooiJBoussevain, Kartini said "In the newspapers, I just read that some Chinese girls applied to be allowed to take the teacher exam. Horay! For progress! I'm really excited about it! The Chinese are very strict in maintaining customs: now we see that the toughest and longest customs can be broken too! I have passion and hope!" [17].

Then, Kartini also has tolerance for the values of other religious teachings. Kartini embraced Islam, but she was pretty close to the teachings of other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism [18]. Kartini admitted that there was a close and intimate relationship between herself and God. He described that closeness as his own family life, that is, as the relationship between father and son. Therefore when Mrs. van Kol introduced the phrase "God as Father", Kartini welcomed it with enthusiasm. The phrase is considered appropriate to describe his own inner experience. Thus, it can be understood that Kartini's letters expressing God as a loving Father can be easily found [19]. What needs to be underlined, Kartini only considers that Christian teachings have a pretty good concept in describing her spirituality even though Kartini still clings to her faith as a Muslim.

Kartini's tolerance attitude is intended always to maintain good relations between religious adherents. No exception how to spread the religion. When the zending carried out Christian propaganda in the midst of the Javanese who were poor, sick, and stupid because of colonialism, Kartini gave criticism and stated her attitude that such an act of spreading religion was wrong [20]. Kartini said that true belief only exists if it is chosen by people who are really conscious of choosing, and those who are adults. Therefore, the zending should prioritize the humanitarian mission by first educating, treating, and helping the Javanese from poverty. Instead of taking advantage of the situation and then forcing these poor people to convert.

At this point, it can be concluded that Kartini's idea of inclusivity does not merely support the existence of

women but is much more complex. Kartini is a modern woman with all new openness and rationality. See life more fully. Not only about women and men, but also rejecting oppressive practices, both in terms of education, gender, and religion.

### **3.3. Kartini School Education Curriculum**

Kartini School is a school that was nurtured by the ethical politics of the Netherlands. In addition, the establishment of the Kartini School was also caused by Kartini's letters which were published in the form of a book by Abedanon entitled *Door Duisternist Tot Licht* in 1911 which unexpectedly attracted the sympathy of Dutch readers and gave rise to the idea of creating a foundation for the education of indigenous women [21]. This idea was then followed up by establishing the Kartini Foundation (*Kartini Vereeniging*) on August 22, 1912 and inaugurated in The Hague by the Dutch Kingdom. Although there are many criticisms that accompany the establishment of the Kartini School, the indigenous people still welcome the presence of this school.

The first Kartini School was established in Semarang in 1913. Then gradually it was found in six other cities such as Madiun (1914), Batavia/Jakarta (1914), Butenzorg/Bogor (1914), Malang (1915), Cirebon (1916), and Pekalongan (1916) [22]. Apart from being a form of return from a Dutch friend of Kartini, Abendanon, the establishment of the Kartini School was also the realization of R.A. Kartini to have her own school with her idealism towards inclusive education, especially schools for women. The idealism of education in Kartini's point of view was stated in her letter to Miss Zehandelaar dated August 23, 1900, which said,

“The blessing will be even greater if the daughters are also given the opportunity to learn one of the skills that will enable them to take their own path in life. Of course, if after getting the lesson he immediately returned to his former world. A daughter whose mind has been enlightened and her outlook has been broadened will no longer be able to live in the world of her ancestors. He was put in a cage after he was taught to fly” [23].

In general, the idea of Kartini's inclusive education can be summarized in several points. First, Kartini stated that the key to the nation's progress lies in education. An advanced nation is a nation that is intelligent, broad-

minded, and has knowledge and technology obtained through the educational process. And all that must start from the intelligence of women. Therefore, all children of the nation must be able to receive their first education through a composed mother. Second, education must be carried out in a non-discriminatory manner. Given to anyone without distinction of gender, religion, lineage, social position, and others. Education must reach all social backgrounds of society, therefore education must respect differences, and view all human beings as equals.

Third, in addition to providing knowledge and skills, it should prioritize the formation of children's character and personality. Character education is the main thing in the educational process. It is character and personality that determines the quality of a nation. Good character and personality education will be easier for a country to achieve progress and success. This is in accordance with Kartini's letter to Mrs. Ovink-Soer 1900. Kartini stated, "Who has done the most for the last, who has helped the most to increase the level of the human mind? Woman, mother. Because man first received education from a woman. It is from the hands of women that children begin to learn to feel, think, and speak. The first education is not without meaning for all livelihoods" [24]. And lastly, education needs to pay attention to the position of women in their day. Women must receive education as men get so that women can play a part in all aspects of life, be independent, broad-minded, and have skills comparable to men. Therefore, it is necessary to have the right curriculum in implementing education. In his letter to G.K. Anton dated October 4, 1902, Kartini stated,

“We sincerely request that the teaching and education of girls have endeavored here. Not because we want to turn girls into rivals for men, but because we believe in the great influence that women may have. We want to make women more capable of carrying out the great task that Mother Nature herself put into her hands to become mothers who educate their children” [25].

The thing that distinguishes Kartini School from other schools is the existence of feminine lessons such as cooking and sewing [26]. In addition, the style of dress worn by the students at the school followed the Javanese culture at that time, namely the kebaya and jarik cloth and the hair in a bun. The concept of the education curriculum at the first Kartini School can be explained through the Table 1.

**Table 1.** Kartini's Education Concept Matrix

No	Concerning	Kartini's Education Concept
1.	Ownership	Schools should be pursued to be privately owned so that they have own system of authority
2.	Aim	Making women as intelligent and virtuous women, who not only play a role in the family but also in society as carriers of civilization
3.	Educator	Educators are not only teachers but also educators who position themselves as mothers for their students
4.	Method	Readings, fairy tales, songs, games that can educate and allow non-physical punishments
5.	Material	The science of health and disease, art, cooking, sewing, reading and writing, crochet, and taking care of the household
6.	Language	Mastery of Dutch is taught in every learning activity, both reading and writing
7.	Environment	The most basic educational environment is the family, then the family environment forms the community environment so that civilization is created

Kartini's idea about women's education is a manifestation of her sensitivity to social problems that have become viral and lodged in the body of the Bumiputra community in the form of a feudal life system [27]. Kartini's struggle to raise women's education equal to that of men was compatible with religious goals, especially Islam, and at the same time the foundation of education for women. Through these seven things, Kartini School seeks to educate women and introduce the community that education is not just a matter for men and women, but more than that, namely for the future of civilization.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Kartini's education concept is in the form of practical and applicable educational ideas about women's education. In general, according to Kartini, education is for everyone, not even women or men. In that education, the value of inclusiveness must be prioritized, everyone is equal to each other. No group or class is superior to another, and no race is superior or superior. For Kartini, women must be excellent and educated, not only for making up, cooking, and taking care of babies, so that women can become men's fighting partners to build a better national civilization. Women have two roles, namely in families who do not forget their nature as wives and mothers, and in society as carriers of culture. Only educated women are able to carry out both roles well.

Education is an ideal system that enables a person to become better. The educational curriculum must realize these ideals. Kartini School has an independent curriculum orientation covering knowledge about health and disease, art, cooking, sewing, reading and writing, crochet, and taking care of the household. Women must also be close friends with their children in the future and also long-living partners with their husbands, so women must have broad horizons to be able to discuss with their families.

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