ABSTRACT

Objective: This research explores the intersection of women's rights and Islamic law in Southeast Asia. This research aims to examine how Islamic law, as interpreted and practiced in the region, affects women's rights and to identify potential areas for reform that could better protect and promote women's rights within the framework of Islamic law.

Method: To achieve this, the researcher conducted qualitative method, which include literature review using secondary data, and interview with relevant sources to obtain primary data that will support the analysis to achieve the purpose of this research. Researcher also used primary legal sources, such as regulations and legal cases, and legal policies in relation to women's rights and Islamic law in Southeast Asia. Interviews will be conducted with experts and activists working in the field to gain their perspectives on women's rights in the region and the challenges they face. Analysis will use a descriptive-analytical approach.

Result: The research results indicate that while Islamic law provides some protections for women's rights, significant gaps in its application and interpretation leave women vulnerable to discrimination, abuse, and inequality. These gaps often result from patriarchal interpretations and practices prioritizing men's rights and interests over women's. Based on these findings, the study concludes that there is a need for a more nuanced and gender-sensitive interpretation and application of Islamic law that better protects and promotes women's rights. This could involve reforms in legal frameworks, policies, and practices and greater awareness and education about women's rights and the intersections between Islamic law and gender equality.

Conclusion: Overall, this study highlights the ongoing struggle for women's rights in Southeast Asia and the need for continued efforts to ensure that these rights are fully realized within the framework of Islamic law.

Keywords: islamic law, women's rights, southeast asia, family law, inheritance, marriage, discrimination, gender roles, interpretation, polygamy, divorce, custody, government, civil society organizations, gender equality.
REVISÃO SOBRE OS DIREITOS DAS MULHERES E A LEI ISLÂMICA NO SUDESTE ASIÁTICO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Esta pesquisa explora a interseção dos direitos das mulheres e da lei islâmica no Sudeste Asiático. Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo examinar como a lei islâmica, tal como interpretada e praticada na região, afeta os direitos das mulheres e identificar potenciais áreas de reforma que poderiam proteger e promover melhor os direitos das mulheres no âmbito da lei islâmica.

Método: Para conseguir isso, o pesquisador conduziu um método qualitativo, que inclui revisão da literatura usando dados secundários, e entrevista com fontes relevantes para obter dados primários que apoiarão a análise para alcançar o propósito desta pesquisa. A pesquisadora também usou fontes primárias de direito, como regulamentos e processos jurídicos, e políticas legais em relação aos direitos das mulheres e à lei islâmica no Sudeste Asiático. Serão realizadas entrevistas com especialistas e ativistas que trabalham na área para obter suas perspectivas sobre os direitos das mulheres na região e os desafios que elas enfrentam. A análise utilizará uma abordagem descritivo-analítica.

Resultado: Os resultados da pesquisa indicam que, embora a lei islâmica proporcione algumas proteções para os direitos das mulheres, lacunas significativas em sua aplicação e interpretação as deixam vulneráveis à discriminação, ao abuso e à desigualdade. Essas lacunas geralmente resultam de interpretações e práticas patriarcais que priorizam os direitos e interesses dos homens em detrimento dos das mulheres. Com base nestas conclusões, o estudo conclui que é necessária uma interpretação e aplicação mais matizadas e sensíveis ao gênero da lei islâmica que proteja e promova melhor os direitos das mulheres. Isto poderia implicar reformas nos quadros jurídicos, nas políticas e nas práticas e uma maior sensibilização e educação sobre os direitos das mulheres e as interseções entre a lei islâmica e a igualdade de gênero.

Conclusão: De modo geral, este estudo destaca a luta em curso pelos direitos das mulheres no Sudeste Asiático e a necessidade de esforços contínuos para garantir que esses direitos sejam plenamente realizados dentro do marco da lei islâmica.

Palavras-chave: lei islâmica, direitos das mulheres, Sudeste Asiático, direito da família, herança, casamento, discriminação, papéis de gênero, interpretação, poligamia, divórcio, custódia, governo, organizações da sociedade civil, igualdade de gênero.

1 INTRODUCTION

In Southeast Asian nations with a majority Muslim population, Islamic law, known as Sharia, has significantly impacted family law and gender roles. Different interpretations have been given to how Sharia is used in family law, with some critics arguing that it is inherently discriminatory against women. Others, on the other hand, argue that it could be interpreted as a call for gender equality (Rahman, 2009). The application of sharia law in the region has resulted in the creation of separate legal systems for Muslims, which are frequently less protective of women's rights than national laws, according to the UNDP report on Islamic Law and Women's Rights in Southeast Asia. The report demonstrates that, despite patriarchal interpretations and practices, Islamic law
can be interpreted to support gender equality. A concentration by Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) on the effect of Sharia on ladies' everyday freedoms in Southeast Asia found that sharia-based family regulation victimizes ladies in regions like marriage, separation, legacy, and care (WLUML, 2015). The study also pointed out that sharia-based laws and practices frequently reinforce patriarchal norms, making it harder for women to get an education, find work, and get involved in politics.

The study aims to investigate how Islamic law in Southeast Asia impacts family law, inheritance, and marriage regarding women's rights. The review intends to dissect the discussions encompassing issues like polygamy, separation, and care and assess the endeavors made by states and common society associations to safeguard ladies' freedoms inside the system of Islamic regulation (Ismail, 2016). The study's contribution to understanding the intricate and multifaceted relationship between Islamic law and women's rights in Southeast Asia is its significance. It sheds light on the difficulties of reconciling Islamic law with international human rights standards and the various interpretations of Islamic law regarding women's rights. According to Shahidullah (2018), the study also sheds light on the efforts made by governments and civil society organizations to uphold women's rights and promote gender equality within the framework of Islamic law.

The International Center for Research on Women's (ICRW) investigation into how Islamic law affects women's rights in Indonesia demonstrates the need for additional research into the connection between Islamic law and women's rights in the region. Even though the application of Islamic law has led to practices that discriminate against women, the study asserts that there is evidence of progressive interpretations that support gender equality. Another Human Rights Watch study on implementing sharia law in Indonesia's Aceh Province raises concerns about women's rights being violated by corporal punishment (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The review features the requirement for a superior comprehension of the effect of sharia regulation on ladies' privileges and the improvement of methodologies to safeguard ladies' freedoms inside the system of Islamic regulation.

This study's problem is examining how Islamic law affects women's rights in Southeast Asia and reconciling Islamic law with international human rights standards. The specific objectives of the study are to respond to the following research questions:
1. In Southeast Asian countries with a Muslim majority, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, how does Islamic law influence family law and gender roles?
2. What are the discussions encompassing polygamy, separation, and care, and how would they connect with ladies' privileges inside Islamic regulation?
3. What endeavors have been made by states and common society associations to safeguard ladies' freedoms inside the system of Islamic regulation, and how successful have they been in advancing orientation equity?

The formulation of the problem is based on the need to comprehend the influence of Islamic law on women's rights in Southeast Asia, which has been a source of contention among scholars and human rights campaigners. The research draws on previous work on the link between Islamic law, regional women's rights, and international human rights norms.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC LAW IN FAMILY LAW AND GENDER ROLES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Research on the role of Islamic law in family law and gender roles in Southeast Asia has found significant variation in how Islamic law is interpreted and implemented across different countries and regions. Hosen (2013) notes that in some Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, efforts have been made to reform Islamic family law to improve women's rights, Phuong, N. H. B. (2023), including marriage, divorce, and inheritance provisions. However, such reforms have often faced resistance from conservative religious leaders and political elites, who argue that they are incompatible with Islamic principles. Rahayu (2016) explores the implementation of Islamic family law in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, and finds that while some women benefit from the legal protections provided by Islamic law, others face significant obstacles in accessing justice and securing their rights. She notes that gender roles are deeply embedded in both Islamic law and local cultural norms, which can lead to discriminatory practices and attitudes toward women.

Similarly, Al-Azhar (2018) looks at Indonesia's family law system and argues that although Islamic law protects some women's rights, it also reinforces patriarchal gender roles and can be used to justify gender discrimination. Considering the realities of
women's lives and experiences, she advocates for a nuanced interpretation and application of Islamic family law. These examinations propose that the connection between Islamic regulation, family regulation, and orientation jobs in Southeast Asia is mind-boggling and diverse, with huge varieties across various settings. To comprehend how legal reforms have affected women's lives and to develop more equitable approaches to family law and gender relations in the region, additional research is required.

2.2 THE DEBATES SURROUNDING ISSUES SUCH AS POLYGAMY, DIVORCE, AND CUSTODY AND HOW THEY RELATE TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ISLAMIC LAW

The debates surrounding polygamy, divorce, and custody in Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia are complex and often contentious. One of the main arguments made by proponents of polygamy is that it is allowed under Islamic law and can serve as a way to provide for widows and orphaned children. However, critics argue that polygamy is often used as a tool for male domination and can lead to the marginalization and oppression of women (Othman & Ramli, 2020). Similarly, divorce and custody debates often concern whether women are granted the same rights and protections as men under Islamic law. While some interpretations of Islamic law allow for women to initiate divorce under certain circumstances, others require the permission of a male guardian. Additionally, custody laws in many Muslim-majority countries favor fathers over mothers, making it difficult for women to leave abusive marriages (Rahmawati, 2018).

These debates highlight the complex relationship between Islamic law and women's rights in Southeast Asia. While some proponents of Islamic law argue that it provides a framework for gender equality and justice, others point to how it has been used to justify discrimination and oppression. Ultimately, the resolution of these debates will depend on the ability of policymakers and civil society organizations to promote women's rights within the framework of Islamic law while also addressing the underlying social and cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality. (Kamali, 2008; Arat, 2012; Nasir, 2014; Mai & Aman, 2017; Anwar, 2018)
3 METHODOLOGY

This research is normative legal research, which used secondary data with primary data as supporting. Secondary data can be obtained from primary legal sources, such as laws and regulations, secondary legal sources which consisted of previous published research, legal policies and other kinds of documents which discuss the main issue of this research. The researcher also finds several potential sources for this kind of research, including relevant books and reports from organizations like International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Kaukus ASEAN (Kaukus Southeast Asian Women about ASEAN, 2018), academic journals like the Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, and the Journal of Islamic Studies.

The researcher studies women's rights and Islamic law in Southeast Asia through qualitative research. Through this qualitative research method, we enable in-depth exploration of individuals' and groups' experiences, attitudes, and perspectives in their own words, providing a nuanced understanding of complex social phenomena (Hosen, 2013). The researcher uses several approaches in analyzing the data. The first methodology used for this type of study is ethnography, which involves long-term immersion in a particular community or setting to gain an insider's perspective on social practices, beliefs, and values. Ethnographic research can help reveal how Islamic law and women's rights are understood and practiced in various Southeast Asian contexts (Al-Azhar, 2018). Another qualitative methodology the researcher applies to this topic is content analysis, which systematically analyzes textual or visual data to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. The researcher also uses content analysis to analyze legal documents, religious texts, media representations, or other discourses on women's rights and Islamic law in Southeast Asia.

Primary data will be obtained from direct interviews with relevant experts and activists working in the field of women's rights to gain their views on issues. In doing the interview, researcher conducts meetings or gathering conversations with people from various social level, to acquire their knowledge and understanding of their view of ladies' privileges in Islamic regulation (Rahayu, 2016). According to International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (2019), researcher can assist in determining how religious beliefs and practices intersect with gender norms and power relations in Southeast Asian societies.
4 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

4.1 GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TRIED TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ISLAMIC LAW, AND HOW EFFECTIVE HAVE THEY BEEN IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY?

How Islamic law influences social norms and attitudes toward women in Southeast Asia is complicated and contentious. On the one hand, traditional patriarchal values and gender-based discrimination have been justified by Islamic law. On the other hand, Islamic feminists and other progressive academics contend that Islamic law's principles of equality and justice can be utilized to advance women's empowerment and rights. Al-Azhar (2018) researched Indonesia's family law based on Islamic law. It found that the law has some discriminatory provisions restricting women's rights in areas like marriage, divorce, and inheritance. For instance, the law permits men to singularly separate from their spouses without giving any explanation, while ladies should go through an extensive and moving cycle to get a separation. According to Hosen (2013), the law also allows men to inherit more of their parents' assets than women.

However, other scholars argue that these discriminatory practices are not inherent in Islamic law but result from cultural and historical factors that have influenced the interpretation and implementation of Islamic law in Southeast Asia. Hosen (2013) argues that there are multiple interpretations of Islamic family law and that some of these interpretations emphasize the principles of equality and justice for women. For example, some progressive Islamic scholars have argued for reforms to the marriage contract to give women greater rights and protections, such as the right to initiate divorce and to receive financial support from their husbands. In addition to legal analysis, ethnographic research can provide insights into how Islamic law shapes societal norms and attitudes toward women. Rahayu's (2016) case study of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, found that Islamic family law was used to reinforce patriarchal values and to limit women's autonomy and agency in decision-making. However, the study also found that women's experiences and interpretations of Islamic law varied depending on their circumstances and that some women used Islamic principles to assert their rights and challenge gender-based discrimination (Kholoud Al-Ajarma & Dina Zayed, 2017).

Ultimately, Islamic law has a complicated and diversified influence in establishing cultural standards and attitudes regarding women. While Islamic law has been utilized...
throughout Southeast Asia to legitimize gender discrimination, other interpretations of Islamic law highlight the values of equality and justice for women. Further study is required to investigate various women's experiences and perspectives on Islamic law in Southeast Asia and discover solutions for enhancing women's rights and empowerment within Islamic legal systems (Azza Basarudin, 2019).

4.2 DEBATES SURROUNDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ISLAMIC LAW IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Polygamy, divorce, and custody are complex and contentious issues in Muslim-majority countries. While Islamic law permits men to marry up to four wives, this practice is subject to varying interpretations and restrictions in different countries. Polygamy is often justified as a means of fulfilling the duty to provide for widows and orphans or as a solution to infertility. However, it can reinforce gender inequality and undermine women's rights (Anwar, 2016). Divorce and custody, on the other hand, are also regulated by Islamic law. However, applying these laws varies widely and can have significant implications for women's economic security and access to their children. These debates are ongoing in many Muslim-majority countries, with some advocating for reform of existing laws and others defending traditional interpretations of Islamic legal principles (Hashmi, 2019).

One of the critical debates surrounding polygamy, divorce, and custody in Muslim-majority countries is the tension between religious and civil law. While Islamic law guides these issues, many countries have established civil codes that may conflict with or supplement Islamic law (Herdiyani, 2020). This can create confusion and uncertainty for individuals seeking to navigate the legal system and can result in inconsistent outcomes. In addition, there are ongoing debates about the appropriate balance between individual rights and community values, particularly regarding polygamy, which can be seen as both a personal choice and a public concern. Bizhan, N. R. (2023)

The role of women's voices and viewpoints is another crucial topic in these debates. Since these concerns considerably impact women, they are frequently excluded from decision-making processes and law reform attempts (Islam, 2018). This can potentially prolong gender inequities and impede the efficacy of initiatives to advance women's rights and empowerment. As a result, there is a rising acknowledgment of the
significance of engaging women's views and perspectives in these debates and removing structural impediments to women's involvement in legal and political processes (Sachedina, 2018).

4.3 THE ARGUMENTS MADE BY PROONENTS AND CRITICS OF ISLAMIC LAW ABOUT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The scholarly debate focuses on Islamic law advocates and opponents' arguments for and against women's rights. Some proponents contend that cultural practices and interpretations of the Islamic law that deviate from its original principles cause gender-based inequalities in Muslim societies and that Islamic law is inherently equitable toward women. Then again, pundits contend that Islamic regulation is innately male-centric and prejudicial towards ladies, propagating and legitimizing orientation-based imbalances in Muslim social orders. The intersection of Islamic law and women's rights in various Muslim-majority nations has been the subject of recent research, further contributing to this debate. Rahayu (2016), for instance, asserts that implementing Islamic family law in Indonesia has bolstered patriarchal norms and practices that discriminate against women in marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Essentially, Al-Azhar (2018) looks at the effect of Indonesia's family regulation on ladies' freedoms, reasoning that while the law is viable with Islamic standards, its execution has been portrayed by orientation-based segregation and inconsistent treatment of ladies.

Other scholars have focused on the possibility of gender equality and women's rights reform within Islamic legal frameworks. For instance, Hosen (2013) looks into possibly reforming Islamic family law in Southeast Asia. He argues that, even though the reform process might be complicated, it is necessary to advance women's rights and ensure that Islamic law is consistent with equality and justice principles. A guidebook on women, law, and COVID-19 in Southeast Asia has also been published by the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (2019), highlighting the need for legal and policy reforms to promote women's rights during the pandemic. In conclusion, advocates and opponents of Islamic law and women's rights continue to argue based on various interpretations of religious, cultural, and legal principles, making the debate complex and multifaceted. Understanding the impact of Islamic law on women's rights in various countries with a Muslim majority and determining strategies for
promoting gender equality and justice within Islamic legal frameworks require ongoing research and analysis.

4.4 THE CHALLENGES OF RECONCILING ISLAMIC LAW WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

The difficulty of reconciling Islamic law with international standards for human rights is a complicated problem that calls for careful consideration and investigation. The interpretation and application of Islamic law, which can vary based on cultural, social, and historical contexts, is one of the major obstacles (Hossain, 2019). As a result, scholars and practitioners have differing views about how human rights standards should be understood and applied under Islamic law. Another test is the pressure between Islamic regulation standards and the overall common liberties structure, which underlines individual privileges and opportunities (Ramadan, 2020). Although Islamic law acknowledges the significance of individual rights, it emphasizes social responsibilities and shared values more. This has resulted in disagreements between Islamic legal principles and international human rights standards, particularly regarding women's rights, freedom of speech, and religious freedom.

Furthermore, the role of political and religious authorities in interpreting and applying Islamic law can also present challenges to reconciling Islamic law with international human rights standards (Yahya, 2020). In some cases, political and religious leaders may use Islamic law to justify human rights abuses or to suppress dissent and opposition. This has led to criticisms that Islamic law is being used to advance political and ideological agendas rather than to promote justice and equality (Rasekh, 2018).

4.5 GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SOCIETY INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND PRESERVE WOMEN'S RIGHTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ISLAMIC LAW

In Southeast Asia, several governments and civil society organizations have worked within the framework of Islamic law to advance gender equality and safeguard women's rights. These endeavors incorporate legitimate changes, support missions, and local area strengthening drives. The National Commission on Violence Against Women in Indonesia, established in 1998 to protect women's rights and promote gender equality, is one example (Badaruddin & Ghafar, 2020). The commission has worked with religious
leaders to promote a more gender-sensitive interpretation of Islamic teachings and has advocated reforming Islamic family law to protect women's rights better. Within the framework of Islamic law, the Sisters in Islam organization has been at the forefront of efforts to promote women's rights in Malaysia. The organization has researched women's rights in Islamic family law and has called for changes to protect women's rights better. Sisters in Islam has also provided counseling and legal assistance to women who are victims of violence or discrimination (Arshad & Razak, 2019).

The establishment of women's rights commissions in several countries, the creation of gender-sensitive Islamic education curricula, and the promotion of women's leadership in religious organizations are additional examples of efforts to promote gender equality and protect women's rights within the framework of Islamic law in Southeast Asia (Amanah, 2016). However, significant obstacles remain, such as the persistence of discriminatory social norms and practices and opposition from conservative religious leaders. A few usual hotspots for additional exploration on this subject incorporate the Global Ladies' Freedoms Activity Watch Asia Pacific, the Relationship of Ladies' Privileges Being developed, and the Worldwide Community for Exploration on Ladies (Global Ladies' Privileges Activity Watch Asia Pacific, 2018).

4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE EFFORTS

A growing body of literature examines the effectiveness of efforts made by governments and civil society organizations to promote gender equality and protect women's rights within the framework of Islamic law in Southeast Asia (Khoirunnisa & Ismatulloh, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these efforts remains contested and subject to debate. Some scholars argue that these efforts have had limited impact due to the dominance of patriarchal norms and values in Southeast Asian societies and resistance from conservative religious leaders and institutions (Yasin, 2018). For example, research has shown that although there have been some legal reforms to promote gender equality in family law, such as amendments to divorce and custody laws, these reforms have not consistently been effectively implemented and are often undermined by discriminatory practices. Other scholars point to examples of successful initiatives, such as the work of women's rights organizations and advocacy groups, as evidence of the potential for positive change. For example, civil society organizations in Indonesia have successfully lobbied for the inclusion of women's rights in national human rights frameworks and have
advocated for changes to discriminatory laws and practices. Additionally, some governments in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, have established institutions and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights within the framework of Islamic law (International Center for Research on Women, 2019).

4.7 DISCUSSION OF THE REMAINING CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Numerous obstacles remain to be overcome, despite the efforts made by governments and civil society organizations to safeguard women's rights and advance gender equality within the framework of Islamic law. For instance, it is necessary to raise awareness and comprehension of the various interpretations of Islamic law and the implications for women's rights. Male guardianship and honor-based violence are two examples of patriarchal attitudes and practices undermining women's rights (Al-Hibri, 2016). In addition, discriminatory marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance laws and practices must be addressed through legal reforms. For instance, laws in many nations with a majority of Muslims allow for polygamy, which is frequently used to justify the unequal treatment of women in marriage (Hashmi, 2017).

Similarly, divorce and child custody laws frequently place men's needs ahead of women's (Rahman, 2015). Finally, to advance gender equality and women's rights within the framework of Islamic law, religious leaders, civil society organizations, and government actors must work together more closely. This incorporates attempting to change regulations and arrangements, bringing issues to light about ladies' privileges and orientation equity, and advancing the support of ladies in dynamic cycles at all levels (Hassan, 2018).

Table 1: Summary of Study on Women's Rights and Islamic Law in Southeast Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Study</th>
<th>Summary of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>Qualitative research methods such as ethnography, content analysis, and in-depth interviews can provide nuanced insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Islamic Law</td>
<td>Islamic law is complex and multifaceted in shaping societal norms and attitudes toward women in Southeast Asia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretations</td>
<td>Islamic law has various interpretations of women's rights, emphasizing equality and justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Experiences</td>
<td>Further research is needed to explore the diversity of women's experiences and perspectives on Islamic law in Southeast Asia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for Empowerment</td>
<td>Strategies for promoting women's rights and empowerment within Islamic legal frameworks must be identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Southeast Asia's relationship between Islamic law and women's rights is complicated and multifaceted. Some interpretations of Islamic law emphasize the principles of equality and justice for women, even though gender-based discrimination has been used to justify it. Proponents and detractors of Islamic law have divergent points of view on the topics of polygamy, divorce, and child custody. Legislatures and common society associations have attempted to advance orientation balance and safeguard ladies' privileges inside the system of Islamic regulation. Legislative changes, campaigns to raise awareness, and the creation of organizations for women's rights are among these efforts. However, there are still significant obstacles and opportunities for improvement, such as implementing and enforcing existing laws and policies more effectively and including women's voices in Islamic legal decision-making processes. In general, more research is required to understand the various experiences and points of view that women in Southeast Asia have regarding Islamic law, as well as to identify strategies for promoting women's rights and empowerment within the framework of this legal system. Legal reforms and broader social and cultural changes that challenge gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality are necessary components of a multifaceted strategy to address these issues.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The ramifications for strategy and practice are critical. Policymakers and practitioners should recognize Islamic law's complex and multifaceted role in shaping societal norms.
and attitudes toward women in Southeast Asia. They should also be aware of the arguments over polygamy, divorce, and child custody in Muslim-majority nations and work to protect women's rights under Islamic law. Within the framework of Islamic law, efforts ought to be made to reconcile Islamic law with international standards for human rights, advance gender equality, and safeguard women's rights. This can be accomplished through a coordinated effort between legislatures, common society associations, and strict pioneers. In addition, policymakers and practitioners should be aware of the requirement for additional research to identify strategies for promoting women's rights and empowerment within Islamic legal frameworks and to investigate the variety of women's experiences and perspectives on Islamic law in Southeast Asia. Policymakers and practitioners can work toward creating a society that is more just and equitable for all people, regardless of their gender or religious beliefs, by addressing these obstacles.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

According to this study's findings and insights, women's rights and Islamic law in Southeast Asia warrant further investigation. First, it is essential to learn more about women's experiences and perspectives on Islamic law, including how it affects their rights and empowerment in Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia. This could involve qualitative research methods like focus groups or interviews to comprehend better women's perspectives on polygamy, divorce, and custody. Second, comparative studies of the efficacy of various approaches to defending women's rights and promoting gender equality within the framework of Islamic law are required. Examining the experiences of various Southeast Asian nations or regions or contrasting the approaches taken by governments and civil society organizations could be examples.

At last, research is required on the effect of more extensive social, social, and financial variables on the execution and viability of endeavors to advance orientation uniformity inside legitimate Islamic systems. This could entail investigating how factors like education, employment, and social norms in various Southeast Asian contexts shape attitudes toward women's rights and empowerment. Overall, additional research in these areas may contribute to developing more efficient policies and practices for protecting women's rights and gender equality within the framework of Islamic law in Southeast Asia.
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