

# **Millennial Generation's Understanding of the Meaning of *Kafa'ah*: An Analysis in the City of Banda Aceh**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Islam shows great concern for the welfare of the family. In forming a family, prior to marriage, the prospective husband and wife should know each other's partners. Harmony and balance between partners is needed in navigating the household ark. This can be done from the apprenticeship stage, which is when a person determines who is worthy of being his life companion. Harmony and balance in Islam is known as kufu' or kafa'ah. In this modern era, it is not uncommon for us to find domestic problems that are caused by a striking difference between the two various things, both in terms of religion, race, social status, and so on. The criteria for kufu' in Islam basically only include the factors of wealth, heredity, beauty and religion. However, over time, this concept has developed into several factors such as age, occupation, education, and even religious organizations. Unbalanced couples often lead to disputes between the two. Meanwhile, a balanced couples will greatly assist the socialization process towards family happiness, namely the *sakinah*, *mawaddah* and *rahmah* families.

**Keywords:** Millennial, Generation, Kafa'ah, Law, Family

## **Introduction**

Humans are biological creatures who have the desire and interest to pass on their descendants as the next generation who will continue their lineage.<sup>1</sup> In essence, human beings were created by Allah SWT. to live in pairs of male and female sexes who are bound in one relationship, namely marriage.<sup>2</sup> Humans should live in pairs, adult humans and anyone who meets the conditions to get married certainly has the instinct to build a household with their partner.

Living in pairs is the instinct of every creature, and is a sign of His greatness, as Allah SWT said in Q.S Az-Zariyat verse 49 which reads "Everything We created in pairs so that you may remember (the greatness of Allah)." and Q.S. Ar-Rum verse 21: which reads "And among the signs of His power is that He created your wives out of your own kind, so that you may be inclined and feel peace with him, and He made among you love and affection. Actually, in such a thing there are really signs for those who think."

The meaning of the verse above is that Allah always creates his creatures to live in pairs according to their type, heaven and earth, east and west, male and female, all living and created to have their own partners. In Islam, marriage is one of the ways to honor the ummah so marriage is highly recommended for those who have the ability and readiness to live it. However, in determining a partner, caution is needed, and one of the calculations in choosing a partner is *sekufu* or *kafa'ah*.<sup>3</sup>

*Sekufu* or *kafa'ah* (equality), according to the language means equal, balanced or harmonious, suitable, similar equal or comparable (Great Dictionary of Indonesian, Balai Pustaka, 1976) The meaning of *kafa'ah* in marriage is that the spouse must be *sekufu*, meaning that the spouse has the same position and is commensurate in terms of social, moral and economic levels.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Al-Fatih Suryadilaga, *Membina Keluarga Mawaddah Warahmah Dalam Bingkai Sunnah Nabi* (Yogyakarta: PSW IAIN, 2003), 4

<sup>2</sup> Rahmat Hakim, *Hukum Pernikahan Islam: Untuk IAIN, STAIN, PTAIS*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2000)

<sup>3</sup> (Iffatin Nur, "pembaharuan konsep kedepadanan kualita (*kafa'ah*) dalam al-quran dan hadis", *Kalam*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2012

<sup>4</sup> Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, Jild 2, (Al-Qahirah: Maktabah Daar al-Turats. T. th), 126.

Furthermore, the author uses the word *sekufu* to indicate the meaning of *kafa'ah*. The meaning of *sekufu* (equality) for those who consider it a condition in marriage, is that a man (future husband) should be equal in rank with the woman who will be his wife in some way.<sup>5</sup> Or a man is comparable to his future wife, equal in position, comparable in social level and equal in morals and wealth. *Sekufu* in marriage is a factor that can encourage the creation of marital happiness, and better ensure women's safety from domestic failure or turmoil.<sup>6</sup>

*Sekufu* aims to make marriage possible and last forever so that each can understand and understand the personality of the prospective partner who is of course different. If couples cannot find balance and commonality with each other, then long-lasting togetherness will experience obstacles such as easy quarrels and difficulty living a married life. Therefore, before the contract, the two prospective spouses should believe in the similarities they have in several ways for the sake of a peaceful household.

The habits that occur in assessing whether or not *sekufu* is in the practice of people in Indonesia are very relative, because the basis and guidelines of the review used are not based on Islamic law, but rather on the consideration of customary law and the habits of the local community. Millennials in the city of Banda Aceh also agree with the notion that marriage must be with someone who is known, loved and *sekufu*. From the results of the author's interviews with 74 young people who are students at several campuses in Banda Aceh, they said that *sekufu* is important for the permanence of the household, but *sekufu* is not only about religion, even though religion is the main factor in choosing a prospective life partner, because the matter of religion is certain and should be married to someone of the same religion. However, there are several criteria that millennials have related to the concept of *sekufu*. The criteria they conveyed were equality in education, employment, lifestyle and religious organization. However, parents also do not all agree with them, parents understand the meaning of *sekufu* in addition to having to marry people of the same religion, they must also have fellow people who have noble titles such as *Cut* with *Sayed* and

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah, *Fiqih Lima Mazhab* (edisi lengkap), cet.2 (Jakarta: Lentera, 1996), 349.

<sup>6</sup> Tihami dan Sohari Sahrani, *Fikih Munakahat Kajian Fikih Nikah Lengkap*, 57.

others because in Aceh there are still many people with noble blood with the genealogy of the sultanate or the *habaib*. From that lineage, parents often find a life partner for their child with the descendants of the sultan or *habaib* as well. It is not something wrong if parents hope that their lineage is not lost by looking for a son-in-law who has the same flow, in Islam this is known as maintaining and maintaining the *Bani* or group or lineage. Islam also encourages its adherents in terms of finding a life partner to look at four things, namely wealth, appearance, religion and fate, but for millennials in Banda Aceh, including those with the title of *Cut* or *Sayed*, parents' thoughts about *sekufu* in terms of offspring are no longer a benchmark in choosing a prospective life partner.

Based on this, the researcher is interested in the phenomenon of *sekufu* understood by millennials in the city of Banda Aceh. For this reason, this article wants to answer how the concept of *kafa'ah* in Islam and how the Banda Aceh millennials understand the meaning of *sekufu*.

This research uses an empirical method, which is a research method that tries to see a phenomenon or case that occurs in the field that can be witnessed and analyzed using several tools including interviews and observations or documentation analysis to uncover the root of the existing problem.

Furthermore, empirical studies are carried out by examining existing empirical data, such as the results of field research, surveys, or observations, which provide direct insight into the understanding of the meaning of *sekufu* for Banda Aceh millennials. This analysis aims to identify patterns, barriers, and potential solutions that can be adopted from a practical perspective. By combining findings from literature reviews and empirical studies, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the millennial generation's understanding of the meaning of *sekufu* in the city of Banda Aceh.

## Result and Discussion

### Definition Of *Kafa'ah*

*kafa'ah* means equal, commensurate or comparable.<sup>7</sup> Dalam kamus bahasa Arab *kafa`ah* berasal dari kata *كفاء* (*kafa'a*) which means

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<sup>7</sup> Sayyid Sabiq, *Fikih Sunnah*, Jilid 7, (Bandung: PT. Al-Ma'arif, 1997) 36.

similarity, worth and matchmaking.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, in the complete Indonesian dictionary, kafa'ah means balanced.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the Islamic Encyclopedia and Fiqh Dictionary define kafa'ah, namely comparable, equal, balanced, harmony or conformity.<sup>10</sup>

The meaning of kafa'ah in marriage is that the husband must be sekufu for his wife, meaning that he has the same status and is commensurate with his wife in terms of social, moral, and economic levels. And there is no doubt that the more balanced the position of men and women, the more guaranteed and more preserved the success of the couple's life is from failure.<sup>11</sup>

Kafa'ah according to Madzhab Shafi'i is an important thing that must be considered before marriage. The existence of kafa'ah is believed to be a factor that can eliminate and avoid the appearance of disgrace in the family. Kafa'ah is an effort to find equality between husband and wife both in perfection and circumstances other than being free from defects.<sup>12</sup> The similarity in question is the condition of the husband who is equal to his wife in social, religious, moral (akhlak) and economic positions. Thus, some people believe that equality between husband and wife is one of the factors of harmony in the household. Muhammad Abu Zahrah defined kafa'ah as a balance between a prospective husband and a future wife with certain circumstances, with which both will be able to avoid difficulties in living a married life.<sup>13</sup>

In Islam, marriage is not to get peace of mind for a moment, but for eternity. Therefore, a person must choose his life partner carefully and look at it from various perspectives.<sup>14</sup> Regarding sekufu in marriage, at

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<sup>8</sup> Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab Indonesia* (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1990) 378

<sup>9</sup> Tri Rama K, *Kamus Lengkap Bahasa Indonesia* (Surabaya: Karya Agung, t.th), hlm. 218

<sup>10</sup> Dewan Redaksi *Ensiklopedi Islam*, *Ensiklopedi Islam*, (Jakarta: PT. Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 1994), 845.

<sup>11</sup> Sayyid Sabiq, *Figih Sunnah*, terj. Abu Syauqina dan Abu Aulia Rahma, *Figih Sunnah*, vol. 3, 397.

<sup>12</sup> 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jazairi, *Kitab al-Fiqh al-Mazahib al-Arba'ah*, Jilid IV, Cet. I (Beirut: Dar alKutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1990), 57

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Abu Zahrah, *Al-Ahwal Asy-Syakhsiyyah*, (Mesir: Dar al-Fikr wa al-Arabi, 1950), 156.

<sup>14</sup> Amir **Syarifuddin**, *Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2006), 48.

least it meets four criteria, namely the property, namely being together, then in terms of nasab or descendants, both family and social status in society, then the physical, which is beautiful with a handsome one and finally the religion and that is the main thing. If they have good or sufficient religious knowledge, they will later be kafa'ah in terms of religious approaches. If one is ignorant about religion while the other understands religion, then it is considered not kafa'ah in terms of religion or religious knowledge.

### **Kafa` ah Dalam Perspaktif Ulama**

The existence of kafa`ah is believed to be a factor that can eliminate and avoid the appearance of disgrace in the family. Kafa'ah is an effort to find equality between husband and wife both in perfection and circumstances other than being free from defects. The similarity in question is the condition of the husband who is equal to his wife in social, religious, moral (akhlaq) and economic positions.

According to madhhab Maliki, there are two characteristics of kafa'ah, namely religion and condition, meaning surviving disgrace. According to the Hanafi school there are 6, namely religion, Islam, independence, nasab, property and profession. while madhhab Shafi`i: religion, purity, independence, nasab, free from disgrace and profession. According to the Hambali madhhab, the nature of kafa'ah is religion, profession, nasab, property, and independence.<sup>15</sup> Based on the explanation above, the four schools agree on kafa'ah in religion. Schools other than Maliki agree on kafa'ah in independence, nasab and profession. The Maliki and Shafi'i schools agreed on the nature of being free from disgrace which can lead to the emergence of the right to vote. Therefore, from the explanation of the kafa`ah criteria above, it can be described as follows:

1. In terms of religion or piety. Religion/piety referred to here is truth and upright to religious laws, istiqomah and practicing what religion requires. All scholars recognize religion as one of the most essential elements of kafa'ah.

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<sup>15</sup> Wahbah Zuhaily, *al- Fiqh al- Islam wa- Adillatuhu*, Juz. VII Cet. III; (Beirut: Dar-al-Fikri 1409H/1989 M), 235-23

2. In terms of independence, that is, independence as a criterion for kafa'ah is that a male slave is not as kufu' as an independent woman. Likewise, a male slave is not as kufu' as a woman who is free from birth.
  1. Nasab Aspects. That is the relationship of a human being with his origins. Jumhur fuqaha (Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali and some of the Zaidiah Shia schools consider the existence of nasab in kafa'ah.<sup>16</sup> Hereditary factors are one of the factors that can affect a person's personality. Parental genetics are very dominant in shaping humans, not only their physical appearance but also their psychological characteristics.<sup>17</sup>
  2. In terms of wealth. That is, wealth is the measure of sekufu' in marriage is that the man who is going to get married should have a dowry and maintenance. For a person who is poor or poor and then does not have the property to pay dowry and alimony or one of them, then it is considered not sekufu'.<sup>18</sup> The Shafi'i school and the Maliki school are of the opinion that wealth/treasure is not included in the kafaah, because wealth is something that can be lost and does not become a pride for those who are zuhud. Even poverty for them is a glory in religion.<sup>19</sup>

## **Millennial Generation's Understanding of Kafa'ah**

The following are the results of interviews with 80 millennials in Banda Aceh consisting of 39 men and 41 women with an age range of 17 to 22 years.

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<sup>16</sup> Wahbah Zuhaily, *Al- Fiqh al- Islam wa- Adillatuhu*, Juz. VII (Cet. III; Beirut: Dar-al-Fikri 1409H/1989 M), 235-236.

<sup>17</sup> Mubarok, *Psikologi Keluarga*, (Malang: Madani, 2016), 102.

<sup>18</sup> Dadang Jaya, *Bagaimana Relasi Suami-Istri Perkawinan Tidak Sekufu dalam Profesi: Dampak Terhadap Keharmonisan Keluarga*, (*Jurnal At-Tadbir: Media Hukum dan Pendidikan* Volume 31 Nomor 1 Tahun 2021

<sup>19</sup> Rusdaya Basri, *Fiqh Munakahat 4 Mazhab dan Kebijakan Pemerintah* (Sulawesi Selatan; kafa'ahLearning Center, 2019), 71

### Male

No	Age	Amount
1	18 years	1
2	19 years	25
3	20 years	12
4	22 years	1
		<b>Total amount : 39</b>

### Female

No	Age	Amount
1	17 Years	1
2	18 Years	3
3	19 Years	24
4	20 Years	10
5	21 Years	1
6	22 Years	1
7	23 Years	1
		<b>Total Amount: 41</b>

### Based on Kafa'ah Category

No	Kafa'ah	Amount
1	Religion	46
2	Education	31
3	Profession	19
4	Morals	11
5	Lineage	16
6	Economy/Social Status	8
7	Physical Beauty	12
8	Compatibility/Balance	12
9	Tribe	6
10	Property	6
11	Hobby	4
12	Honesty/Responsibility	3
		<b>Total Amount : 174</b>



Based on the data in the table above from 80 millennials in the city of Banda Aceh who were interviewed who were born between 2000-2005, where during that time in Aceh there was a devastating disaster, namely an earthquake accompanied by a tsunami that damaged the entire existing security system. The Mayaritoas of that generation understood that kafa'ah is equality, equality, and balance between a married couple in a marriage, both in terms of religion and education and profession. Religion and Education are the choices that are the highest of several criteria that they expect, this is understandable because the majority of Acehnese Muslims are thick with the nuances of Islamic law. However, not a few also answered that kafa'ah is equal in terms of physical, moral and moral, economic, ethnic, hobby and honesty and responsibility. This may be due to their concern about various events that have occurred recently such as domestic violence, infidelity, illegal polygamy and so on.

So far, what has been of concern to the millennial generation is sekufu in terms of profession and educational background, not only sekufu in terms of religion (obedience). On the other hand, professional and other accompanying factors because they can have an impact on the fulfillment of daily life needs, even SZ stated "Sekufu or equality in marriage is a concept that views the importance of equality or balance between couples in various aspects of life. This view is not only limited to similarities in social, economic, or educational status, but also involves other aspects such as values, life goals, and personality. In the context of marriage, equality means that both spouses have an equal opportunity to participate in the taking to the verdict and the division of responsibility. This includes the division of household duties, financial planning, and childcare. Equality also means that couples respect each other and appreciate each other's views and contributions, without feeling superior or inferior."

In addition, some stated that equality in terms of education can affect marriage by improving communication, facilitating joint decision-making, equalizing expectations and aspirations, and increasing mutual respect and understanding. However, educational equality is not the only determining factor for happiness in marriage. Then there are also those who consider the importance of this sekufu (kafa'ah) marriage, in important aspects such as religion, life values, or long-term goals can be a

valid reason to reconsider wedding plans. An imbalance in these matters can lead to significant conflict and tension in a long-term relationship. Therefore, considering *sekufu* is important to ensure harmony and compatibility in marriage. SZ also admitted that he ignored the criteria for *sekufu* (*kafa'ah*) in marriage, and felt that it was all up to the bride-to-be because the one who would navigate the marriage of the household, who endured the bitterness of life was the couple themselves, the important thing was that they both liked it and in order to avoid slander because they were often together (dating), it was better to get married immediately.

Based on the above explanation, it can be said that the millennial generation's views on *sekufu* marriage (*kafa'ah*) are varied, but the more dominant criterion for *sekufu* (*kafa'ah*) in marriage is religion which is the main followed by *sekufu* in terms of profession and educational background. In Islam, there are four criteria for prospective spouses which must be commensurate or equal in terms of their destiny, property, physicality, and religion (obedience), from these four, it is the aspect of religion or obedience that becomes the basis or benchmark for the creation of eternal household happiness in this world and the hereafter. In today's era, the choice of a partner on the basis of religion/faith is often ignored, for some generations of religion/faith is no longer an important barometer, a girl is desperate to commit suicide because her parents are forbidden to marry someone of a different religion (see Serambi Indonesia Opinion 11 September 2024). In fact, if religion and faith should be used as the most important guideline or foothold, it is certainly very much in line with the hadith of the Prophet (saw) "If a servant marries, then half of his religion is perfect, then fear Allah SWT for the other half" (HR. Al Baihaqi in *Shu'abul Iman*).<sup>20</sup>

In Indonesia itself, *sekufu* in religion is often associated with *sekufu* in religious organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Islamic Union and others, even though basically the three organizations in *Aqidah* belong to the *ahlu sunnah wa al-jama'ah* group. However, in the procedure of *ijtihad* to establish a law, the three have differences so

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<sup>20</sup> Abu Bakar Ahmad bin Husain bin Aliy Al-Baihaqi, *Syu'bul Iman* (Beirut: Daar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah), n.d.

that they look a little contrasting, especially in terms of worship practices and religious traditions.<sup>21</sup>

One of the reasons for holding the principle of sekufu in one religious organization or one group is because some people believe that by marrying someone who has the same background and the same understanding in fiqh, it will support harmony in the household.<sup>22</sup> But in reality, there are also many couples who are different religious organizations but still get along well and harmoniously. This shows that kafa'ah in the context of religious organizations is also relative.

## Analysis

Some people in terms of kafa'ah prioritize lineage for the reason that when marrying with a commensurate lineage, it will produce a clear and sequential nasab as is the custom of some tribes in Indonesia who make kafa'ah in the tribal aspect as one of the conditions for marriage, this is intended to maintain the line of descent. For example, in Acehese society there is a term for noble titles such as the descendants of Teuku must be juxtaposed with the descendants of Cut so that the lineage of this king is maintained. However, in the current era, this kind of thing is rarely found in the millennial generation because marriage is a matter of heart and harmony.

On the other hand, kafa'ah in the millennial context is work or livelihood. Work is related to all facilities and infrastructure that can be used as a source of livelihood both for the company and others.<sup>23</sup> If a woman comes from a circle that has a permanent and honorable job, then it is considered not as kufu as a person with a low income. Another opinion says that in the implementation of work, urf (customs) and traditions that apply in a place must be considered. Whether a work is considered honorable or not depends on the local customs or a certain

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<sup>21</sup> Rafida Ramelan, Sekufu dalam Konteks Hukum Keluarga Modern, Tahkim, Jurnal Peradaban dan Hukum Islam. Vol.4 No.1 (Maret, 2021)

<sup>22</sup> Azzahro khulaifa, m. mukhid mashuri, dkk. Urgensi Kesetaraan Pasangan Sekufu "Dalam Al- Qur'an (Tinjauan Tematik Konseptual Perspektif Tafsir Maqashidi), Triwikrama: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Sosial Volume 01, Number 01, 2023

<sup>23</sup> Al-Hakim, *Prioritas Kafa'ah.*, hlm. 46

era.<sup>24</sup> If work in one place is considered honorable but in another place is considered low, then the work can hinder the occurrence of kafa'ah.

Then the thing that becomes the focal point of sekufu is education. A person's level of education is also considered a criterion for kafa'ah, which only emerged in the millennial era which was not mentioned by salaf scholars. Nowadays, education is considered important because it not only gives birth to job skills but also changes in mentality, tastes, interests, goals, and ways of speaking.<sup>25</sup> Noryamin Aini's research shows that 9.7% of men marry a partner who is more educated than him (marry up). On the other hand, it is very rare for women to marry a less educated man (marry down).<sup>26</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Although in Islam that sekufu can be seen from the attributes of beauty, wealth, descent, religion. However, the millennial generation expands the criteria of kafa'ah which includes age, occupation, education, morals and morals, social and economic status and hobbies, but sekufu in religious matters is still dominant. However, they no longer focus on nasab such as nobility or blue blood having to marry blue blood but making equality in terms of education still the main choice after religion. This could be because reflecting on many cases, if education is low, religious understanding is lacking and not having a job is still vulnerable to quarrels that lead to divorce.

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<sup>24</sup> Peunoh Daly, *Hukum Perkawinan Islam: Suatu Perbandingan dalam Kalangan Ahlus Sunnah dan Negara - Negara Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1988), 175

<sup>25</sup> Rafida Ramelan, Sekufu dalam konteks hukum keluarga modern, Tahkim, *Jurnal Peradaban dan Hukum Islam*. Vol.4 No.1 (Maret, 2021)

<sup>26</sup> Noryamin Aini, *Tradisi Mahar di Ranah Lokalitas Umat Islam: Mahar dan Struktur Sosial di Masyarakat Muslim Indonesia*, *Jurnal Ahkam* Vol. XIV No. 1 Januari (2014), hlm. 2

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