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PASAR SITI KHADIJAH AND WOMEN IN KELANTAN

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Pasar Siti Khadijah is a famous and bustling market located in Kota Bharu, the capital city of Kelantan, a state in northeastern Malaysia. The market is named after Siti Khadijah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad, who was known for her entrepreneurial spirit and her success as a trader. Pasar Siti Khadijah is a prominent center of trade and commerce in Kelantan, and it plays an important role in the social, cultural, and economic life of the state.

Kelantanese women have a deep connection to Pasar Siti Khadijah, as the market is not only a place for buying and selling goods, but also a hub for socializing, networking, and sharing knowledge and expertise. In this essay, we will explore the relationship between Pasar Siti Khadijah and Kelantanese women, and examine how the market has shaped the lives, identities, and aspirations of women in Kelantan.

Pasar Siti Khadijah has a long and rich history, dating back to the early days of Kelantanese society. The market has evolved over time, reflecting the changing needs and preferences of the people who live in and around Kota Bharu. Today, Pasar Siti Khadijah is a diverse and dynamic marketplace, where vendors from all over Kelantan come to sell their wares. The market is particularly renowned for its fresh produce, including fruits, vegetables, spices, and herbs, as well as its selection of traditional crafts and textiles, such as batik, songket, and tudung.

Kelantanese women are deeply involved in the market, both as vendors and as customers. Many women run small businesses at Pasar Siti Khadijah, selling everything from homemade snacks to handmade crafts. These women are known for their entrepreneurial spirit, their creativity, and their dedication to their craft. They are often the sole breadwinners for their families, and they work tirelessly to support themselves and their loved ones.



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At the same time, Pasar Siti Khadijah is also a place for Kelantanese women to socialize, network, and share knowledge and expertise. Women from all walks of life come to the market to catch up with friends, make new acquaintances, and exchange tips and advice on everything from cooking to parenting. The market is a hub of information and education, where women can learn about new products, techniques, and trends in the world of business and commerce.

The importance of Pasar Siti Khadijah to Kelantanese women can be seen in the many cultural practices and traditions that are associated with the market. For example, the market is known for its unique food culture, which includes a wide variety of traditional dishes and snacks that are sold by women vendors. These dishes reflect the diverse cultural influences that have shaped Kelantanese cuisine over the centuries, including Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Thai.

In addition, the market is also a center of religious and spiritual life for Kelantanese women, who are predominantly Muslim. Many women come to the market to purchase religious items such as prayer mats, Qurans, and hijabs. The market is also a place for women to engage in spiritual practices such as zikir (chanting of the name of Allah), which is often led by female religious teachers.

The relationship between Pasar Siti Khadijah and Kelantanese women is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, the market provides a vital source of income and livelihood for many women in the state, enabling them to support themselves and their families. On the other hand, the market also serves as a site of socialization, cultural exchange, and spiritual growth for women, fostering a sense of community and shared identity among Kelantanese women.

At the same time, Pasar Siti Khadijah is not without its challenges and limitations for Kelantanese women. One of the biggest challenges is the gender divide that still exists in many aspects of the market. While women make up a significant proportion of vendors at the market, they are often concentrated in certain areas, such as the food section, and are underrepresented in other areas, such as electronics or clothing. This gender divide is partly due to cultural and social norms that continue to restrict women's participation in certain fields of business and commerce.

Another challenge facing women vendors at Pasar Siti Khadijah is the competition from larger supermarkets and malls in the city. While the market remains a vibrant and bustling hub of activity, it is facing increasing competition from modern retail outlets, which offer a wider range of products and services, as well as more comfortable and convenient shopping experiences. For many women vendors at the market, this competition has made it increasingly difficult to compete and survive in an increasingly competitive market.

Despite these challenges, Pasar Siti Khadijah remains a vital and dynamic center of commerce and culture in Kelantan, and an important site of empowerment and community-building for women in the state. The market provides women with a platform to showcase their skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship, and to connect with other women from different backgrounds and walks of life. It also serves as a source of inspiration and motivation for younger generations of women, who are looking to

follow in the footsteps of their mothers and grandmothers and carve out their own path in the world of business and commerce.

In conclusion, the relationship between Pasar Siti Khadijah and Kelantanese women is a deeply rooted and complex one, reflecting the rich cultural and social heritage of the state. The market provides women with a vital source of income, as well as a platform for socializing, networking, and sharing knowledge and expertise. While the market faces numerous challenges and limitations, it remains a vital and dynamic center of commerce and culture, and an important site of empowerment and community-building for women in Kelantan. As Kelantanese society continues to evolve and transform, Pasar Siti Khadijah will undoubtedly continue to play a central role in the lives and identities of women in the state, shaping their aspirations, values, and sense of belonging. It is a symbol of the resilience and strength of the women of Kelantan, who have long played a crucial role in the region's economy and culture.

References

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