

Women's Political Participation

By: Yulia Evina Bhara

A BRIEF STORY ABOUT INDONESIAN'S WOMEN

Indonesia is an archipelago country with 220 million people in 33 provinces. They are 252 ethnic groups who speak in 365 local languages. The country has gone through extreme political transformations and several regime changes since declaring its independence in 1945. The longest was the new order government of Suharto who ruled for 32 years.

Prior to New Order, women played active role in social and political organizations and occupied important positions in the government and other decision making bodies. The New Order regime that lasted for 32 years was built upon the annihilation of people's movement potential. Women's movement did not escape the destruction by this regime. During the New Order women were denied of their role in politics and returned to domestic sphere. Simultaneously, the regime carried out impoverishing economic programs that are still being implemented up to this day.

The reformation (*reformasi*) movement in 1998 succeeded in forcing Suharto to step down and opened up a democratic space, but it has failed in bringing any meaningful changes in political and economic policies that affect the people, including women. Twelve million people are still unemployed while more than 40 million people live with an income of less than a dollar a day.

Women as the majority of the population, constituting 120 million or 52 percent of the total Indonesian population, are the most affected by these policies. Indonesia's maternal mortality ratio is the highest in Asia with 470 deaths per 100.000 births and 9.3 million women illiterates.

Women have been gone through the discrimination, most women received 2/3 wages than men. Government have been imposing moral standard to women and society by enacted Syariah legislation in 37 districts and attempt to pass anti-pornography bill.

The reformation has facilitated the setting up of women's NGOs and mass organizations in localities however most of them are not involved in the political struggle. Their activities to influence the state's policy making process are still limited to lobbies towards policy makers, and have not been specifically directed towards pushing women to be more actively involved in the political struggle in order to win policies that promote people's welfare and women's equity. Most of them chose to be non partisan because, according to them, their independency would be put at risk when joining a political party at least this is what happens in 2004 elections.

However, there is shifting of awareness for necessity of participating in political party or being candidate for the election. This is not unreasonable phenomenon since it is realized that extra-parliamentary political strategy was not sufficient for giving some advantages to women's movement. There are many policies that have been raised gave consequences for limitation of women's space, moreover women could be judged doing criminalization in wearing clothes or going out late.

ROAD TO INVOLVE IN POLITICAL STRUGGLE

1. Women in Parliament

In 2004, women only participated 11, 45% of parliament (62 of 550 representatives). In 2009 it was increased to be 18 % (99 representatives). However, those increasing are related to "political dynasty". Those who are relatives of some politicians and governmental officers or some celebrities that just utilize their opportunity to be involved with politics. In the other side, women's activists that took apart on last election mostly grounded.

There was a bit brightness that gave fresh air for women's movement about the increasing of quota 30% women in candidacy. That was based on pressure given by the women's movement so the election bill state that candidacy require 30% women quota. Moreover, some parties such as PDI Perjuangan, Partai Amanat Nasional, Partai Bintang Reformasi had been made internal policy to implement the requirement for 30% quota for electing board members in their organization's structure

In fact, 30% quota realized as a small achievement for women's representation in parliament. Practically, the women's movement has difficulties to come into the parliament because of:

Firstly, loose in internal party. Women activists that join into some political parties has difficulties to win their program and position since they were not succeeded to appointed themselves in strategic position in board members. It made them couldn't be the decision maker.

Secondly, awareness of people seems to be very pragmatic. Money's supremacy could defeat all of women activist's capabilities. Based on my experience: Every day I made advocacy and gave an accompany activities for people to get free healthcare by giving support for the poor who had been ill with optimizing Jamkesmas (free healthcare service facility for the poor in Indonesia). Hundreds of

people had been taken care. I also gave advocacy for condemnation and live in their bases, but then I was shocked me a lot since Instead of electing me, they prefer to elect someone else who had given them Rp. 50.000 (4 Euros) from the political party who is empowering the country even though they knew the candidate still being under-investigation for the corruption case.

This fact not only happened to me, but also all of my activists friends. Poverty and political pragmatism made people couldn't think about their long future life. They had chosen only for the current necessity.

Thirdly, political tools and propaganda. There is an expression during the campaign period: If you could shown up in TV 10 times in a day, you shouldn't go out to do the socialization of your vision, mission, and your program. Just stay at home, buy the advertisement. Whoever had been seen by people a lot would be elected. So, It was very normal from 99 women in parliament only 1 activist could joined with. The remaining is celebrities, politician's daughters that empower the country currently, or rich entrepreneurs that could pay lots of advertisements.

Fourthly, Alliance wasn't become bigger. It happened for years. Women's movement could only meet to respond tactical matter. There wasn't strategic agenda to win the movement's activists that took a part in the election. Support that had been given just part of formalities and only based on necessity of funding since most the NGO formed by certain funding

2. Women in Executive

It is not so much differ with women condition in parliament, quantitatively women in executive fewer than legislative. In Indonesia Bersatu cabinet there are 4 women ministers. It is even worse since there are two ministers (Sri Mulyani : Economics Minister and Marie Elka Pangestu : Trading Minister)which are not in line with the pro-women policies. Those two ministers even in the frontline to follow the neoliberal strategy and almost never touched the women issues, just like the same with Megawati when she was Indonesian's president.

Representation of women in districts or province is not sufficient enough either qualitatively or quantitatively for the policies that has been made.

Being asked about women representation in Indonesia, currently we just can answer that women minimally fill the significant political post for being decision maker that struggle for pro-people's policies. So that, it is important to keep moving for expanding women's political positioning.

EXPERIENCE OF PAPERNAS IN ORGANIZING WOMEN IN ORGANIZATION AND PARTY

There are some experiences that we think could be shared to strengthen women participation in parties and society from districts level to national level

Firstly, women has to be involved in Mass Organizing

This is first step of women to participate in politics. It is realized that in to fight for people we need a place to be gathered in. They have to stay in the organization as a place to stay for giving their aspiration. Labours are organized in FNPBI, the poor urban are organized in SRMK, the peasants are organized in STN. They have to be involved in all of the activities of organization, they are not only become “sweetener” in an organization. They have to fight and know what to fight for.

Secondly, Education, Mobilization, and Advocacy

In every part of the world the patriarch impacts seems to be made women being doubt in their capacity and ability. In doing so, to be ready to fight they must have capacity building process. Routine education that has been conducted in cooperation with VIF was: education to increase women capacity to participate in politics and to take the strategic position in organization, parties, and society.

Education given differs based on level. First step, it was directed to comprehend why they should take a role in politics and politics’ benefit. Culture also taught as considered has its important role.

For implementing the result of education they were involved in organizing activities, mobilization, actions and advocacies. In doing so, they were needed to be given such opportunities to give speech in front of mass and negotiate in governmental institution or some others institutions.

After first step has been passed, second education had been prepared them to dare for taking important role in their organization, party, or some local election for electing chief of some communities (RT, kepala desa) or even offer themselves in candidacy. They also asked to do some kind of training for trainer for someone else after following those educations.

Two months after the workshop had been conducted; national committee did monitoring to the participants that had been participated to the workshop. Some observation results were:

1. Several participants took important position in their organization. Some of them became region chairman of labour organization and they joined PPK and PSS to save the vote of candidates from deception
2. Even though the candidates of legislative failed to get chair in the 2009 election, they got high votes in their region (minimum the third place)
3. There was preparation for following the upcoming elections: from the election of smallest community of their region, regional election, until the preparation for the upcoming 2014

Thirdly, take over important positions in society

After following educations, got some organizing and advocating experience they suppose to be dare to take the important role in organization and could be involved in decision making. In doing so, they should be stimulated to take official position even from the smallest level.

For example:

1. Ibu Hasni Rahman, member of SRMI South Sulawesi who became local community's chairwomen (ketua RW) in Makassar.
2. Ratri Wahyu Mulyani, Papernas board member has been elected as ketua RW in Bekasi, West Java.

There are also some the movement's members took a part in candidacy and mobilization action that pioneered by PAPERNAS. Most of them are women from labour sector, the poor urban, and also the peasants.

Fourthly, Cooperation with the others

In every level of party, it is always be directed to alliance with the others community. It was for example conducted between PAPERNAS and NGOs in Central Java to support Dita Indah Sari who had been involved in legislative candidacy. This cooperation was very useful since we could be involved with all of their organizing bases.

The other cooperation such as advocacy for condemnation, land dispute, etc were also conducted to get more people to be involved in.

RESPONSE OF SOCIETY FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

When I came forward in the candidacy on last 2009 election and did some campaign works I met lots of people in my electoral district from the city centre till the small village. I found them could accept me very well. In fact they were not make men and women differentiation. Almost all of them treat me equally, only few numbers of them those thought women shouldn't participate in politics.

In some other places they even gave more respect since I'm very young woman, but dare to fight in the political arena. However, their acceptance was not followed by electing women activists since they were still in a very pragmatic situation and follows the money politics.

NATIONAL LEVEL

National level activities more emphasized in campaign program and cooperation commencement.

PAPERNAS involved in alliances that involved groups of women in advocacy of bill.

Some achievements that have been gained were:

1. Settlement of violence in domestic sphere in 2004. That bill is very important since it save various violences that might be suffered by women. Violence cases in domestic sphere were truly big threat for the women. In 2009 it was written 43.000 cases that handled by the police, but there so many cases that couldn't be handle since the victims don't have such a brave to report the case.
2. Settlement of 30 % quota for women. The electoral bill states some article that accommodates 30% women representativeness in establishment of political party and also in board member of organization structure for national, province, and county level. PAPERNAS that has been so much involved with this issue considered this winning as affirmative action. We fight for more than 30% should belong to women representatives. Anyhow, we could consider the 30% as very small winning that needed to be improved more in the future.

IN THE HARDEST TIME, WE HAVE TO HOLD ON

I would like to close my text with saying that it was not easy for me, but I need to hold on. I need to stand on! Last 2009 election was such a hard time that happened for the women's movement. It is not only for PAPERNAS, but also for all of women's movement in Indonesia. The total failure that needed to be faced have to make us keep holding on and standing on. We have to learn more and more to expand our method for organizing people. The experience of this struggle in fact is not only about the failure, but also give new understanding for us. We understood that till now, politics in front of my people's eyes is only about transaction. Here, I could say that I'm proud of my 37,000 votes that I got without giving any single penny from my pocket!

Thank you,

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Yulia Evina Bhara