



## Indonesian Women's Movements: Making Democracy Gender Responsive





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Women Research Institute  
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## **Indonesian Women's Movements: Making Democracy Gender Responsive**

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## Preface

This book is based on Women Research Institute's study on "Feminist Leadership in the Post Authoritarian Regime in Indonesia: Its Impact on Social Movements and Women's Welfare" (2012). The goal of the research was to capture the landscape of women's leadership in Indonesia after the downfall of Soeharto in 1998. There were not many studies and analysis on the condition of Indonesian women in the post 1998 period. Studies on the role of feminist leadership in making democracy gender responsive during post 1998 social transformation period were practically non-existent.

Since a good number of WRI's women's organization respondents in this research were established during the Soeharto's era, the account of Indonesian women's efforts to make democracy gender responsive in the post 1998 period occasionally roved back into the authoritarian period of the New Order. Glimpses into the hardships in the darker past always give us extra optimism to overcome seemingly insurmountable hurdles, such as patriarchy and male dominated interpretation of religious texts, which stubbornly stand on the way of the realization of gender responsive democracy in Indonesia.



WRI would like to say thank you to Dr. Rocky Gerung who was a discussant during the launching of the research findings that was held in May 2013 in Jakarta. He made a pungent point criticizing the theme of the launching, which read “Women’s Movements are Part of Democracy Movements in Indonesia.” Apparently for him women’s movements should not just be a part of democracy movements. Women’s movements should be the judge whether what we have in the post 1998 Indonesia is a democracy or something else that we should feel embarrassed. Hence, this book takes the stand that women’s movements in Indonesia are not just part of democracy movements in Indonesia. The achievements of women’s movements in Indonesia to make the post 1998 social transformation gender responsiveness determine the democratic character of the current political system.

Our sincere thanks also go to women activist respondents, whose name we cannot mention one by one, who had jumped eagerly to join WRI’s invitation to reflect on their politically and socially enlivening journey in promoting women’s rights in Indonesia in the past decade or two. Thank you to HIVOS, which had provided the financial support to make this research possible. Actually we would like to thank HIVOS primarily because of its commitment to support women’s movements in Indonesia, not just through empowerment and advocacy programs but also through research-based reflection. Tunggul Pawestri and Theresia Sri Endras Iswarini from HIVOS spent numerous hours of their precious time to challenge our findings and analysis and provide invaluable inputs into the tedious research report writing processes. Indeed, priceless time put to worthy cause.

Jakarta, September 2013  
Women Research Institute

## Glossary

APWLD	: Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
ASPABAE	: Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
ASPPUK	: Asosiasi Pendamping Perempuan Usaha Kecil (Association of Women Small Enterprises)
BLT	: Bantuan Langsung Tunai (Direct Cash Transfer)
BNPB	: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (National Agency for Disaster Mitigation )
BPD	: Badan Perwakilan Desa (Village Representative Agency)
BTI	: Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Farmers Troops)
caleg	: Calon Legislatif (legislative candidates)
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CREA	: Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action
CU	: Credit Union
CUCO	: Credit Union Coordinator Organization
CWGI	: CEDAW Working Group Indonesia
DAWN	: DisAbled Women in Action

DPRD	: Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (Regional People's Representative Council)
Elsapa	: Lembaga Studi Advokasi Perempuan dan Anak (Women and Children Advocacy Studies)
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
Formak	: Forum Masyarakat Kramat (Kramat Community Forum)
Gerwani	: Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women Movement)
Gerwis	: Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar (Indonesian Aware Women's Movement)
GPL	: Gerakan Perempuan Lampung (Lampung Women Movement)
GWS	: Gerakan Wanita Sosialis (Socialist Women Movement)
HDI	: Human Development Index
HIV	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPI	: Human Poverty Index
IDR	: Indonesian Rupiah
IOM	: International Organization on Migrant Workers
ISJ	: Institut Sosial Jakarta (Jakarta Social Institute)
IWRAW	: International Women Rights Action Watch
JarPUK	: Jaringan Perempuan Usaha Kecil (Women's Small Enterprises Network)
JASS	: Just Associate
JKB	: Jaringan Kerja Budaya (Cultural Work Network)
JKP3	: Jaringan Kerja Perempuan Pro Prolegnas (Women's Network for Pro-Women Legislation)
JPrP	: Jaringan Perempuan Pesisir (Network of Women in the Coastal Areas)
KBH	: Kantor Bantuan Hukum (Legal Aid Office)
KoAK	: Komite Anti Korupsi (Anti Corruption Committee)
Komnas Perempuan	: Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women)
Kowani	: Kongres Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women Congress)

KPI	: Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Demokrasi dan Keadilan (Indonesian Women's Coalition for Democracy and Justice)
KPS	: Kesatuan Perempuan Sukaraja (Unity of Sukaraja Women)
LBH	: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Legal Aid Institute)
LBH APIK	: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (The Indonesian Women Association for Justice-Legal Aid Institute)
LBT	: Lesbians, Bisexuals and Trans-gender
LGBT	: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTIQ	: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
LKM	: Lembaga Keuangan Mikro (Micro Finance Institute)
LP2M	: Lembaga Pengkajian dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (Center for the Studies and Empowerment for the People)
MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
MMR	: Maternal Mortality Rate
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
Musrembang	: Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan (Multi Stakeholder Consultation Forum for Development Planning)
NGO	: Non Government Organisation
NTB	: Nusa Tenggara Barat (West Nusa Tenggara)
NU	: Nahdlatul Ulama (Traditional Muslim organisation)
NUM	: Nahdhlatul Ulama Muslimat
OWA	: Organisasi Wanita dan Anak (Union of Women and Children Organizations)
PCI	: Project Center International
Pekka	: Perempuan Kepala Keluarga (Women Head of the Family)
Perwari	: Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia (The Women Association of the Republic of Indonesia)
Pesada	: Perkumpulan Sada Ahmo (Sada Ahmo Association)
PIR	: Perkebunan Inti Rakyat (People's Nucleus Estate)

PKBI	: Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia (Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association)
PKI	: Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKK	: Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Welfare Education)
PKT RSCM	: Pusat Krisis Terpadu untuk Perempuan dan Anak RSCM (Integrated Crisis Centre for Women and Children at the RSCM)
PNI	: Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party)
PNPM	: Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (National Program for Community Empowerment)
PPK	: Perkumpulan Panca Karsa (Panca Karsa Association)
PPSW	: Pusat Pemberdayaan Sumber Daya Wanita (Center for Women's Resources Development)
PSW	: Pusat Studi Wanita (Women Research Centre)
PUK	: Perempuan Usaha Kecil (Women Small Enterprises)
Puteri NUM	: Puteri Nahdlatul Ulama Muslimat
Raperda	: Rancangan Peraturan Daerah (Regional Regulation Draft)
raskin	: beras miskin (rice for the poor )
Rp	: Indonesian rupiah
RPK	: Ruang Pelayanan Khusus (Special Treatment Room)
Sepalas	: Serikat Perempuan Lampung Selatan (South Lampung Women Union)
Pesada	: Perkumpulan Sada Ahmo (Sada Ahmo Association)
Sergai	: Serdang Bedagai
SIP	: Suara Ibu Peduli (Voices of Concerned Mothers)
SKPD	: Satuan Kerja Perangkat Daerah (Regional Working Unit)
SOP	: Standard Operating Procedure
SP	: Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity)
SPBL	: Serikat Perempuan Bandar Lampung (Bandar Lampung Women Union)
SPI	: Serikat Perempuan Independen (Independent Women Union)

SPN	: Serikat Perempuan Nelayan (The Fisherwomen Union)
SPPN	: Serikat Perempuan Petani dan Nelayan (Peasant and Fisherwomen Union)
STT	: Sekolah Tinggi Teologia (Theology Institute)
TGPF	: Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta (Joint Fact-Finding Team)
Tuan Guru	: Mister (Master Teacher)
TRUK	: Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan (Volunteer Team for Humanity)
UN	: United Nations
UPC	: Urban Poor Consortium
UU PKDRT	: Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence)
VAW	: Violence Against Women
WCC	: Women Crisis Center
WD	: Wanita Demokrat (Democratic Women)
WRI	: Women Research Institute
YKSSI	: Yayasan Keluarga Sehat Sejahtera Indonesia (Indonesia's Foundation for Healthy and Welfare Families)
YLKI	: Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (Indonesian Consumer Foundation)
YPK	: Yayasan Panca Karsa (The Panca Karsa Foundation)



## Introduction

# Indonesian Women's Movements: Making Democracy Gender Responsive

There are not that many books on Indonesian women's movements that are based on research. There are even less books on Indonesian women's movements that are written by Indonesian authors. *Potret Pergerakan Wanita di Indonesia* (Portrait of Women's Movements in Indonesia), published in 1984, is especially valuable because it provides historical narratives on Indonesian women's organizations and movements from the "Pioneering Period" of 1880-1910 to the post-independence period of 1945-1965 from the perspective of an Indonesian women activist and academician author, Sukanti Soerjocondro. The book has become a classic reference on women's movements in Indonesia. It highlights the fact that, for example, marital issues especially polygamy and divorce, education, and women and children trafficking, which women's organizations are struggling with currently, were important issues in the 1920s.


There are more research-based books on women's organizations and movements in Indonesia written by foreign academicians. The published books of Cora Vreede-de Stuers,<sup>1</sup> Susan Blackburn<sup>2</sup> and Saskia Wieringa<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stuers, Cora Vreede-de, *Sejarah Perempuan Indonesia. Gerakan dan Pencapaian*, a translated edition, Komunitas Bambu, April 2008, Jakarta.

<sup>2</sup> Blackburn, Susan, *Perempuan dan Negara Dalam Era Indonesia Modern*, a translated edition, Yayasan Kalyanamitra, Maret 2009, Jakarta.

<sup>3</sup> Wieringa, Saskia, *Penghancuran Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia*, a translated edition, Yayasan Kalyanamitra, Agustus 1999, Jakarta.



were among the most influential works on women's movements in Indonesia. De Stuers focuses on women's organizations in Indonesia in the 1920s when the country was still colonized by the Dutch. The 1920s marked an important political development in Indonesia, which Soerjocondro called the period of the "Emergence of National Consciousness" among Indonesian women. In line with the spirit of the Youth Congress that was held on 28 October 1928 in Jakarta, the first Women Congress was convened on 22 December 1928 in Yogyakarta. Meanwhile, Susan Blackburn and Saskia Wieringa's works examined women's organizations and movements in Indonesia from the 1920s to 1965, which marked the beginning of Soeharto's New Order.

In the New Order era, President Soeharto exercised a tight political control over civil society organizations, including women's organizations. Women's movements were repressed systematically by stigmatizing progressive women's organizations such as Gerakan Wanita Indonesia/Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement) (Wieringa, 1999). Soeharto's regime constructed a discourse to depoliticize women and view them as submissive and obedient social actors. During the first decade and a half of Soeharto's rule, the only women organizations that were able to operate were those that were sponsored by the government such as Dharma Wanita, Dharma Pertiwi and PKK (Family Welfare Education).

The declaration of 1976-1985 by the United Nations as the UN Decade for Women marked the growing awareness of women's rights and gender injustice in Indonesia and it gave room to the emergence of women's NGOs in Indonesia such as Kalyanamitra, which focused on developing a centre of information and communication for women; Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity), which worked to empower and organize women migrant workers; and a number of other women NGOs that worked on reproductive health issues in Jakarta and outside of Jakarta such as Rifka Annisa in Yogyakarta. During the same period of time, university intellectuals started to develop Pusat Studi Wanita (PSW or Women Research Centre) to conduct studies on women issues. The first PSW was initiated by a number of lecturers at the Faculty of Social and Political

Sciences of the University of Indonesia and established in 1979.

Mass violence and looting and burning activities that erupted in big cities in Indonesia in May 1998 signalled the end of Soeharto's New Order regime. The chaotic period painted a black history of Indonesian women. Among the casualties of the mass violence were dozens of (ethnic Chinese) women who became victims of rapes and other forms of sexual assaults. The sexual violence acts incited many Indonesian women to get organized and demanded government's accountability, which led to the establishment of the National Commission of Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan). Violence against women became one of the most important works of Indonesian women's organizations in the post 1998 period.

After Soeharto stepped down from power, Indonesia started to go through a series of democratization processes. The introduction of decentralization policies later on opened up the opportunity for women to participate in public decision making processes to make planning and budgeting gender responsive. The introduction of direct election provided women with the opportunity to demand for more women representation in the parliament both at the national and local level. Indonesian women organizations developed strategies to effectively provide economic and political empowerment to promote women's leadership and enable them to make use of the opportunities to participate in public decision making processes to improve their social, political and economic positions. Women's organizations were struggling to transform their organizational forms, improve leadership quality and develop networking at the international, national and local level to improve the effectiveness of their programs in making laws and regulations and budget allocations gender responsive. To put it in different words, for them the governance system is not a democracy if it is not gender responsive.

There have been no books that are based on research that look at women's organizations and movements in Indonesia in the post 1998 period as part of the wider social transformation process. The scope of Soerjocondro and Wieringa's works only went as far as 1965. Published

books on Indonesian women's movements under the New Order were characterized by partial analysis and were not based on methodologically sound researches. WRI designed and conducted this research with the goal to fill the gap. WRI looked at Indonesian women's movements within the context of political democratization that took place after 1998. Inevitably the accounts also went back to the New Order era because many of WRI's respondents were women's NGOs that were established and carried out their activities during the New Order period.

WRI conducted the research not just to look at the character and activities of women's organizations but also to capture the concept of women's leadership that is considered suitable for the women's organizations during the post 1998 social transformation period. Following the advice of Srilata (2010), WRI looked at gender-based power relations in the post 1998 social transformation within the context of local empowerment and global influences. One of the global influences was transmitted into the country through the concept of good governance that was promoted by the World Bank (Ungpakorn, 2003; World Bank, 2000) and UNDP in the early 2000s. A number of women's organizations, including WRI's respondent Pekka, were involved in the PNPM national poverty reduction program that was formerly piloted by the World Bank before it was replicated nationwide. One goal of PNPM was to improve the governance of poverty reduction programs by providing the funds directly to communities, hence by passing the corrupt officials at the local level. Another transmission of global influence came from the relationship of WRI's respondents such as Hapsari, ASPPUK, Kapal Perempuan, Pekka, LBH APIK, LP2M, Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (KPI), Kalyanamitra, Migrant Care, Ardhanary Institute, Solidaritas Perempuan and the National Commission of Violence Against Women with foreign donor agencies such as Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation, Tifa Foundation, Hivos, Partnership for Good Governance Reform, Oxfam, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, and others.

Therefore, WRI decided to conduct field research in five areas in Indonesia. Three of them were located outside of Java and WRI made

use of the research to look at the local dynamics of women's movements. Jakarta was selected as the fourth research location because the Jakarta-based women's organizations dealt with women's issues at the national level and they were directly in touch with global influences.

The result of WRI's research in the four areas showed the strengthening of women's roles in the society, even though they had not succeeded in achieving gender equality, which was considered as a long term impact. Women's organizations in the four areas had been able to facilitate women, to some degrees, to push for gender responsive policies and budget allocations and increase political representation both at the local and national level. However, Goetz's (2009) warning should not go unheeded. According to him, gender sensitive governance cannot be achieved through women's representation alone since implementation of gender sensitive policies requires the transformation and improvement of public sector's capacity. The studies in the four areas showed that women's organizations played only limited role in promoting public sector's accountability. Their involvement was focused more on facilitating grassroots women to participate in the bottom up Development Planning Assembly at the village and district level.

Goetz's arguments confirmed the result of a study conducted by Rodan, Hewison and Robison (2006) that showed the difficulties of turning around local governments to become democratic, let alone gender responsive, because economic, social and political powers within the local government reacted to maintain the status quo that benefitted them. Facing such challenges, Indonesian women's NGO conducted long term education strategy to mainstream gender into policies and budget allocations.

Goetz's (2009) argues that global influences in general and good governance agenda in particular should expand cultural and political alternatives for women, allowing them to push for more room for participation in public decision making institutions. Good governance agenda, implemented through decentralization, is expected to promote better understanding of public officials regarding the needs of local women and

the provision of good quality services at the grassroots level. However, social transformation in Indonesia did not go in a linear way. Research result from Padang and Lombok showed that local institutions were not always receptive to global influences. Local responses to external influences could become counter-productive to the efforts to open up more space for women. The emergence and strengthening of religious organizations and local *sharia* regulations in the two cities presented a setback for women's movements.

WRI's research in the five areas looked at women's organizations and movements within the context of social transformation that swept Indonesia after 1998. It was an attempt to capture the leadership, organizational and empowerment strategies of Indonesian women's movements to make democracy in Indonesia gender responsive. Progresses and setback were examined by looking at the dynamics involving local, national and global influences.

This research is limited to women's organizations involved in promoting gender equality in three local areas in Indonesia, and in one area representing the national level. Those four research areas are:

*Jakarta* - this city is chosen on the basis of proximity with global political and economic resources that can be accessed by women's social movements. Moreover, this city is also home to sectarian local groups that are opposed to the efforts of women's social movements to promote fair and equal gender relations. It is also important to see how women activists at the national level attempted to develop a women's movements coalition model, which was the first after the 1928 Women's Congress.

*North Sumatera* - it is chosen for the efforts done by Perkumpulan Hapsari (Hapsari Association) in setting up Serikat Perempuan Sumatera Utara (North Sumatera Women's Union), a model for grassroots women's movement organized for gender fairness and equality.

*Padang* - this city is chosen on the basis of local responses to global influences in the form of local Islamic *sharia* regulations. Women's organizations should develop appropriate leadership strategies to deal with the local responses. Padang is also chosen to see how matriarchal values

work for and against the efforts of women's movements to promote gender fairness and equality.

*Lampung* - it is chosen based on the existence of a number of women's organizations operating the area culturally male-dominated. Lampung women's organizations exist for quite sometimes to develop partnership with government institutions and civil society organizations to fight for gender fairness and equality.

*Lombok* - is chosen because there are specific problems related to reproductive rights and health in the area. Moreover, this city is a pocket of women migrant workers. This city is also the base of a number of civil society organizations working for promote public welfare, including the welfare of women. Its location in the eastern part of Indonesia makes it interesting, especially to see how traditional Sasak culture and Islamic values interact with the promotion of gender equality.



CHAPTER I

Women's Movements in Indonesia:  
from Class Struggle to Participation and  
Representation



Sita Aripurnami

*"Ancient traditions, not easily dismantled, imprison us with resolute hands. Truly, one day those hands will have to release us from its grips but that day, still far away, is yet to come! That the day will come, this I have no doubt, but it will happen only after three or four generations beyond my lifetime"*

That was part of Kartini's letter to Stella Zeehandelaar written on 25 May 1899.<sup>1</sup> Kartini shared her concerns about the shackles that confined women who lived around her. She spoke about traditions, social habits, and existing laws that had constrained her and many of her peers from escaping their predicaments. The problems persisted and later became the reasons for the establishment of various women's groups and organisations in many parts of Indonesia, which led them to hold the first Women Congress in Indonesia on 22 December 1928. The issues that women were facing at that time revolved around marriage and family life, in particular relating to the practice of polygamy and the lack of education opportunities for women. After nearly three decades, the problems

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 2, "Aku Mau...Feminisme dan Nasionalisme. Surat-surat Kartini kepada Stella Zeehandelaar 1899-1903", Vissia Ita Yulianto, Penerbit Buku Kompas, April 2004.



that were discussed in the 1928 congress remained very much alike to the ones that Kartini identified in her letters. It is therefore of interest to examine the perspectives and analysis of the historical accounts of women's movements in Indonesia, such as the ones written by international academics such as Cora Vreede-de Stuers (1960),<sup>2</sup> Saskia Eleonora Wieringa (1994),<sup>3</sup> Susan Blackburn (2004)<sup>4</sup> as well as Wardah Hafidz and Tati Krisnawaty (1990).<sup>5</sup>

These women academics and activists unfolded historical facts about the struggles and brilliant ideas of Indonesia's pioneers in women movements that had hitherto been unknown. Cora attempted to illustrate the various problems that women organisers tried to overcome during the period of Dutch colonialism. Saskia, despite her focus on the activities of the Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women Movement, Gerwani), addressed the dynamics of women's movements in Indonesia from the colonial times to 1965, the year the Gerwani was crushed and banned. Susan's work covered a later period, which was the time during the New Order regime. Wardah dan Tati also construed the activities of women's organisations during the same period but took a slightly different approach to Susan by focusing on the relations between women's organisations and the New Order's various development programs.

Those published works mostly looked at women's movements in Indonesia through the framework of historical periodization and stages of development in women's movements. Those approaches might not be the best angle to illustrate the movements since they suffered from the

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<sup>2</sup> See "Sejarah Perempuan Indonesia. Gerakan dan Pencapaian", Cora Vreede-de Stuers, translated into bahasa Indonesia published by Komunitas Bambu, Jakarta, April 2008.

<sup>3</sup> See "Penghancuran Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia", Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, translated into bahasa Indonesia published by Garba Budaya and Yayasan Kalyanamitra, August 1999.

<sup>4</sup> See "Perempuan dan Negara dalam Era Indonesia Modern", Susan Blackburn, translated into bahasa Indonesia published by Yayasan Kalyanamitra, March 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See "Perempuan dan Pembangunan. Studi Kebijakan tentang Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Proses Pembangunan di Indonesia", Wardah Hafidz and Tati Krisnawaty, this writing is presented and disseminated in Hivos Partners Meeting in April 1990 in East Lombok, NTB.

pitfalls of generalization. In reality, progress was slow and various initiatives crossed many historical timelines. This paper uses similar periodization to facilitate discussion. The separation and differentiation between timelines are simply used to provide an approximate portrayal of the social, economic, and political conditions at the different time periods.

This paper provides a general overview and reflection on the core activities and movements of women's organisations in Indonesia from the colonial time to the period following the fall of Soeharto's regime. The aim is to supplement previous researches on the dynamics of women movements in Indonesia.

### **The Dutch Colonial Period: The Rise of Women's Movements in Indonesia**

The onset of women's movements in Indonesia can be traced back to the end of the 19th Century or circa 1890s. During this period, women's movements began to adopt the forms of modern organisation<sup>6</sup> and produced documents that later on allowed us to develop a chronicle of their actions.

The documents started with the writings of Kartini (1879-1904), who lived in Jepara and then moved to Rembang, Central Java. In her writings she questioned many traditional beliefs on women during that period. Dewi Sartika (1884-1947) in West Java, Maria Walanda Maramis (1827-1924) in North Sulawesi, Rahmah el Yunusiah (1901-1969) and Rasuna Said (1910-1965) in West Sumatera soon followed suit.<sup>7</sup> In the

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<sup>6</sup> Modern organization is interpreted in the context of groups with written regulations such as articles of association on division of tasks amongst members, rights and obligations and so on.

<sup>7</sup> Interesting data shows that in 1910, the number of female students in Java was 280 people, on the other hand, from outside Java including Madura it reached up to 12,276 people. Out of this number, 6,056 female students were in Manado, (p. 49, "Perempuan dan Pembangunan. Studi Kebijakan tentang Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Proses Pembangunan di Indonesia", Wardah Hafidz and Tati Krisnawaty, 1990).

feudal society of the period, during which time women were kept indoors and taught and expected to perform the three household duties of cooking, mothering, and housecleaning, few had access to education and knowledge. Women's biggest obstacle was the discrimination related to her rights for education. Access to schooling was virtually closed once they reached womanhood and was practically non-existent to those outside the aristocracy.

It was for this reason that women's movements in that period focused their core activities on providing education for young girls and women. Very few young girls had access to knowledge and the outside world. They were allowed to leave the confines of their home only when they helped their parents doing household chores or had been married-off as soon as they came of age. Consequently, most young girls were not only illiterate but also had no access to knowledge. For women, learning would have provided greater awareness of their surrounding and condition.

Another factor that spurred women movements during this period was the economic and political crisis that was brought upon by colonialism, which heavily exploited both natural and human resources. At that time, women were overly exploited by the colonial capitalists as plantation workers and even *comfort women*. The daily economic-political difficulties faced women instigated the birth of women's movements.

It was clear that by the time of the National Movement, women were facing two predicaments. First, feudalism made women to become second class citizens that were subordinated to men. Women's organizations responded to the challenge of feudalism by promoting education for women. They also engaged in political actions to demand equal rights for women in marriage by amending colonial regulations. Around 1913, women's organisations were petitioning for the rights of women to file a divorce and for the abolition of forced and arranged marriages, particularly for under-age girls.

Second, women activists came to the realization that the economic and political difficulties brought upon by the excesses of colonialism could

not be solved by the implementation of the Ethical Policy<sup>8</sup> of the Dutch colonial power. The policy that necessitated the colonial power to provide education for native children did not eradicate colonialism. Women's movements realized that colonialism could only be removed through revolutionary process. Subsequently, women organisations became part of national political organizations. For example they formed Puteri Mardika (1912) as part of the Budi Utomo, the first native political society formed by Indonesian nationalists in 1908. They also formed Aisyah (1917) as part of the Muhammadiyah social organization. The women activists believed that women would be liberated once the nation became independent.

One decade later, on 22 December 1928 women's organizations organized the first Women Congress only two months after the youth and student organizations held the Second Youth Congress on 28 October 1928, which declared the nationalistic Youth Pledge that called for the youths from all over the archipelago to unite. The Women Congress was actually a political declaration of women's organizations to end the Dutch colonialism. While they adhered to different ideologies, they were brought together by a single determination to be free from the Dutch colonialism.

Women's movements at this period were very much influenced by the rise of nationalist sentiments among the educated. This was reflected in the topics discussed during the first Women Congress, which was attended by 30 women's organisations. The Congress identified three main challenges face by women at that time, namely women's rights in marriage, polygamy, and access to education. The Congress issued three de-

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<sup>8</sup> Ethical Politics is a policy implemented by Dutch colonial in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to expand the education opportunity for native women. Behind this ethical politics, colonial government used this for decentralization policies and market expansion. Low and medium level education were required to produce labors to fill in Dutch colonial low level bureaucracy. Improvement of education led to the increasing needs and consumption of the public. Western education improvement on the other hand leads to the strengthening of status quo and the support of colonial interest. (pp. 49-50, *Perempuan dan Pembangunan. Studi Kebijakan tentang kedudukan Perempuan dalam Proses Pembangunan di Indonesia*, Wardah Hafidz and Tati Krisnawaty, 1990).

mands to the colonial governments, namely to build more schools for young girls; to make the bridegroom say *talik*, which was a promise to treat his bride well and his willingness to be sued for divorce if he acted against the promise; and introduce a new regulation to provide financial support for widows and orphans of deceased civil servants of the colonial government.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Struggle of Women's Movements From Independence to the New Order Era**

Indonesia declared its independence and proclaimed itself to be a republic on 17 August 1945. Did the freedom from colonialism free women from discriminations that they had been experiencing?

Women's organisations and groups had different opinions regarding the gains achieved by women from the independence of Indonesia. Some women's groups were pleased that the government recognised women's equal status as stated in the Constitution of 1945. They felt that after the independence of Indonesia, it would be enough to put women's equal status in various laws and policies. The Women Association of the Republic of Indonesia (Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia or Perwari) and their supporters was a proponent of this opinion. When women's organizations held the Indonesian Women Congress (Kongres Wanita Indonesia or Kowani) in 1946, various women's groups and organisations that were against colonialism attended the meeting, but more Congress participants actually came from Perwari factions who felt that policies guaranteeing equality for all citizens, men and women, would resolve all problems faced by women. The principal aim uniting those various women organisations was their desire to end feudalism in general and the widely practiced polygamy in particular.

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<sup>9</sup> Potret Gerakan Wanita di Indonesia, Sukanti Suryochondro, Rajawali, Jakarta 1984.

Meanwhile, other organisations like Istri Sedar<sup>10</sup> (established in 1930) considered that while Indonesia had declared independence, it was not truly liberated. They continued their harsh criticisms towards the efforts of the Dutch government to re-colonize Indonesia. Various negotiations and agreements between the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch government such as the Round Table, Linggar Jati, and Renville put Indonesia in disadvantageous position. The Round Table Conference, for example, placed the burden of war losses on Indonesia's shoulders by converting them into debts. The Netherlands colonised the country and yet Indonesia was forced to assume the costs. Lands that had been confiscated from local farmers for the use of colonial plantations during the *cultuur-stelsel* or forced cultivation system had not been returned to their original owners. Colonial businesses and state consortiums, particularly in the oil and gas industry, continued to remain in the country. This situation provided the proof for the progressive movements of that period, including Istri Sedar, that Indonesia was yet an independent nation.

Istri Sedar did not only fight against colonialism. With other women's organizations, Istri Sedar was actively involved in political actions such as providing political awareness trainings for women. They took a critical stance towards old-fashioned norms, traditions, as well as religious precepts that discriminated women, which did not go away with the declaration of the independence but continued to operate afterwards.

Besides Istri Sedar, the period also saw the birth of Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar (Gerwis)<sup>11</sup> whose members were women who had fought against both the Japanese and the Dutch colonizers. Similar to Istri Sedar, Gerwis thought that the independence had failed to free women from the shackles of feudalism. On the contrary, feudalism operated with a renewed vigour. Gerwis pointed out the fact that a large number of socially

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Gerwis was established in July 1950, as part of Indonesian Communist Party. It changes its name into Gerwani, (see pp. 63-64, "Perempuan dan Pembangunan. Studi Kebijakan tentang Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Proses Pembangunan di Indonesia", Wardah Hafidz and Tati Krisnawaty, 1990).

and economically elite members of the society practiced polygamy and provided more education opportunities for boys.

In 1954, Gerwis held a congress and changed the name of the organization to Gerwani. Besides Gerwani, the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia or PNI) also had a women organisation under its wings called Wanita Marhaen, which later became Wanita Demokrat.<sup>12</sup> Wanita Marhaen got split into two groups, one supported by the party elites who maintained feudalism and the other one by a faction who were pro-commoners.

Gerwani and Wanita Marhaen which came into being in the 1950s and 1960s were mass organisations that had strong and large women mass base. Organisations such as Fatayat and Aisiyah were also women's organisations that had extensive women mass base. Fatayat<sup>13</sup> was a women's organisation affiliated to the largest Muslim mass organisation Nahdatul Ulama (NU). NU was a traditional Muslim organisation and since its inception its members had been men. Nonetheless, the NU leadership responded to women issues in a progressive manner. For example, KH. Wahid Hasyim, son of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, once allowed a woman to become a judge. Women issues received further attention when Kiai Dahlan proposed the establishment of an NU women's organisation during the XIII NU Congress at Menes, Banten, on 11-16 June 1938. This was an important gathering as it discussed the necessity to provide women with equal opportunity to attend NU's religious schools. At the time the congress decided to admit women as NU members and they were allowed to listen and become followers but were not allowed to have a structural position in the organization.

Another significant development occurred at the XV NU Congress in Surabaya on 5-9 December 1940. A heated debate took place about a proposal to allow NU's women members to establish their own organiza-

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<sup>12</sup> Wanita Demokrat Indonesia was established in January 1951 as affiliation of Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI). In 1964, this organization changed into Gerakan Wanita Marhaenis.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from "Sejarah Kelahiran Fatayat NU", <http://fatayat-nu.blogspot.com/2011/05/sejarah-kelahiran-fatayat-nu.html>, 28 May 2011.

tion within NU. Kiai Dahlan was among those who were passionately in favour of the suggestion. On the last day of the congress the members failed to reach an agreement and, hence, a concensus was made to let the Board of the Syuriah NU settle the matter. Kiai Dahlan took this opportunity to attain a written agreement from KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and KH. Wahab Hasbullah to support the proposition. Members of the congress then agreed to let women NU members to have their own organization. At the XVI NU Congress in Purwokerto on 29 March 1946, the NU women organisation, the Nahdhlatul Ulama Muslimat (NUM), was declared and launched as part of NU. Its first chair was none other than Chadidjah Dahlan of Pasuruan, the wife of Kiai Dahlan.

The formation of the NUM inspired the rise of younger generation of NU women that were represented by three aspiring women leaders, namely Murthasiah (Surabaya), Khuzaimah Mansur (Gresik), and Aminah (Sidoarjo). The XV Congress of 1940 in Surabaya was attended by daughters of NU members from various branches in the country who initiated the establishment of Puteri Nahdlatul Ulama Muslimat (Puteri NUM). These younger generation of NU women asked the congress to acknowledge Puteri NUM as an independent organisation within NU. However, the congress would only recognize Puteri NUM as part of the NUM. After two years, Puteri NUM requested to have its own leadership that was independent from the NUM since the organization experienced a rapid expansion at the branch level.

The NU Leadership Board subsequently agreed to make Puteri NUM an independent entity with separate leadership known as the Dewan Pimpinan Fatayat NU on the Arabic calendar date of Rabiul Akhir 1339 or 14 February 1950. At the XVIII NU Congress that was held from 20 April-3 May 1950 in Jakarta, the NU officialy launched Fatayat NU (FNU) as an autonomous body within NU. The formal launch was done after FNU declared the founding of the organization in Surabaya on 24 April 1950, exactly on the Arabic calendar date of 7 Rajab 1317. Nihayah Bakri was FNU's first chair and Aminah Mansur (Sidoarjo) was her Deputy. At that time the organisation only had two divisions: information and education.

Another Muslim mass organisation, Muhammadiyah, also had its women's organization called Aisyiah.<sup>14</sup> Aisyiah started as groups of girls who studied the Koran. K.H.A. Dahlan and Nyai Ahmad Dahlan, leaders of Muhammadiyah, provided them with religious supervision. They also provided education and guidance to women since the teaching of Islam prohibited Muslims to neglect women. Realising the importance of women and their place in society, the husband-and-wife team established a women's prayers group whose members consisted of girls and women. The group became known as Sapa Tresna. K.H. Mokhtar conducted a series of meetings with K.H.A. Dahlan to discuss about forming an official organisation for women. The meetings were held at Nyai Ahmad Dahlan's residence and also attended by H. Fakhruddin, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo and other Muhammadiyah leadership. At first they wanted to name the women organization Fatimah, but this suggestion was later rejected by the meeting. Haji Fakhruddin then proposed to name the organization Aisyiyah, and it was approved by the meeting. Aisyiah was considered a better name because the women's organization was expected to emulate the endeavours of Aisyiyah, the wife of the prophet Muhammad, who assisted her husband to disseminate Islam. Aisyiyah was launched in conjunction with the Isra' Mi'raj day, which celebrated the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven, on the Arabic calendar date of 27 Rajab 1335 H or 19 May 1917. K.H. Mukhtar provided administrative and organisational support while K.H.A. Dahlan was responsible to provide religious guidance to the newly formed women organization.

As combating backwardness became one of their principle objectives, in 1923 Aisyiyah organised a literacy program in both Arabic and Latin letters. Participants in this event were young girls and housewives who studied together to improve their knowledge and involvements in the public domain. In 1926, Aisyiyah published the organisation's magazine called Suara Aisyiyah, which in the beginning was written in Javanese

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted from "Aisyiyah", <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/content-199-det-aisyiyah.html>, 6 February 2013.

language. Through this monthly magazine *Aisiyah* disseminated their programs and activities, including its internal organisational consolidation.

*Aisiyah* were among the organisations that proposed and helped establish the formation of a federation of women's organisation in 1928. Together with other women's organisations, *Aisiyah* fought to free Indonesia from colonial shackles and backwardness. The newly formed federation was called Kongres Perempuan Indonesia (Indonesian Women Congress), now known as Kowani. The federation helped unified various efforts to struggle for national independence.

What set the Gerwani and Wanita Marhaen apart from Fatayat and *Aisiyah* was that the later did not develop a stance against colonialism and the idea of a colonial state. Nonetheless, Perwari, *Aisiyah*, Muslimat, Gerwani as well as Wanita Marhaen were able to combine their collective powers to fight against feudalism and overcome backwardness for the same quest of achieving equality for women. After the declaration of independence in 1945, Perwari, Fatayat and *Aisiyah* took the position that colonialism had been eradicated. Meanwhile, Wanita Marhaen, Gerakan Wanita Sosialis (GWS) insisted that colonialism was alive and well in Indonesia. Gerwani even described colonialism as a latent problem.

To fight against the revival of colonialism, Gerwani joined forces with farmer and worker's organisations to take over colonial plantations, a movement known as the *nationalisation of plantations*,<sup>15</sup> and handed them

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<sup>15</sup> To guarantee benefits for the people of Indonesia, nationalization or handover of ownership from big plantations from foreign countries to the government of Indonesia was done many times. First, it was a consequence of Indonesia's victory in the Round Table Conference in 1949. Second, it was done as a follow up and consequence of the economic declaration of independence on 10 December 1957. Third, it was done in 1964 during the confrontation against Malaysia. Big plantations owned by the Dutch were nationalized by the government of Indonesia. The nationalization of the plantations showed a strong sense of patriotism and nationalism and that Indonesians wanted to have economic sovereignty in their hands. This represented historical milestones which showed that the new nation had the capacity to manage plantations without relying on the expertise of the Dutch. See "Perkebunan Dalam Lintas Zaman", <http://ditjenbun.deptan.go.id/index.php/inventaris-berita/87-lintas-zaman-perkebunan.html>, 6 February 2013.

over to the Indonesian government. Unfortunately, the movement did not take another step to complete the taking over of other economic resources such as oil and gas industries.

“I had the opportunity to speak to one of the women who worked in a Dutch spinning mill in Garut, West Java. This particular woman said that she had been assisted by Gerwani when she took part in the strike to demand better wages and facilities. Gerwani helped make demands on behalf of the labourers. This woman also said that the labourers understood labour relations as a result of the training provided by Gerwani”.<sup>16</sup>

The taking over of plantations and other similar activities reflected Gerwani's political opposition against colonialism. That was what differentiated this women's organisation from the rest.

In the 1950s, there were two women's organisations – Gerwani<sup>17</sup> that supported the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI) and the nationalist Wanita Marhaen, which occupied prominent positions in the society of that time. Gerwani, previously called Gerwis, was established in the 1950s with initial membership of 500 women. The members were generally well-educated and politically-conscious women. Ideologically, Gerwis was a continuation of Istri Sedar. The women of Gerwis came from the younger generation but had links to those who had earlier joined Istri Sedar.

Following the political strategy of PKI, in 1954 Gerwis and its 80,000 members decided to recruit women members from the general public. To symbolize the decision, they changed the organisation's name into Gerwani. Over the course of the period, Gerwani members took an active role in

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<sup>16</sup> See interview with Ruth Indiyah Rahayu, “Organisasi Perempuan Harus Mengubah Strategi Gerakan”, <http://www.komnasperempuan.or.id/2010/05/ruth-indiyah-rahayu-organisasi-perempuan-harus-mengubah-strategi-gerakan>.

<sup>17</sup> See “Sejarah Gerwani”, <http://indication-dawam.blogspot.com/2012/04/sejarah-gerwani.html>, 11 April 2012.

campaigning to become parliament members. Four of its members were appointed to office in the 1955 general election.

In 1956, Gerwani's members had reached more than half a million women. Regardless of its rapid increase of its members (in 1960 it was said that the members had reached 700,000), their number of women cadres were relatively small and were not enough to lead their 183 branches. During this period, Gerwani sent its cadres from Java to outside of Java to establish and lead the organisational branches.

Gerwani's core campaign was focused on several rape cases in West Java and Bali. The organisations also provided support to women village heads. Several women had been elected to become village heads but were unable to perform their function since the existing colonial laws forbade women to lead such offices.

By 1961, the number of Gerwani's members had increased to one million. Branches were set up across the country. Women were attracted to join the organisation because it focused on their daily needs. Cooperative shops and small saving and loan groups sprung up in many places. As a women's organizations, ideologically Gerwani underwent a significant shift in early 1960s, as observed by Wieringa.<sup>18</sup>

“...Gerwani shifted to a standpoint that considered class-differences, and not gender-differences, of the utmost importance; and that women should focus on class-struggle rather than patriarchy.”

Therefore, Gerwani supported women farmers and workers in their conflicts with landlords and factory owners. Gerwani was active in raising the awareness of women farmers, in cooperation with women from Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Farmers Troops, BTI). In 1961, they organised a special seminar to address their problems. Later on, Gerwani took part in the occupation of lands led by the BTI and demanded land rights be given to women. However, the organization also maintained

<sup>18</sup> P. 461, “Penghancuran Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia”, Saskia Eleonora Wieringa, Garba Budaya dan Kalyanamitra, Agustus 1999, Jakarta.

their women empowerment works. Gerwani's programs became a mix of class struggle and women empowerment activities. Gerwani helped to set up kindergartens in the markets, plantations, and villages. Women were trained to become teachers at these schools. Marriage counseling centres were set up to assist women with marital problems. Cadre training centres were established at various organisational levels. The training centers provided various technical courses including accountancy and management. Equally important were courses on the history of women's movements in Indonesia.

Other than working together with women farmers on land rights, Gerwani also took part in other activities such as campaigning against illiteracy, demanding for a more democratic marriage law, petitioning for harsher punishment against rapists and human traffickers, and organizing various social-economic activities for women farmers and workers. Gerwani activists organised massive campaigns to eradicate illiteracy among women while at the same time providing information to women about political issues in general and issues faced by women in particular. In collaboration with women from other organisations they organised various activities at the village, city or even provincial levels relating to problems around family welfare, health, sanitation, as well as prostitution, under-age marriage, and trafficking. They provided legal counseling and aids for victims of floods and other natural disasters.

Actually Gerwani had not formally discussed about problems relating to the traditional division of labour among men and women.<sup>19</sup> A number of its cadres, however, had challenged the existing inequalities at the personal level. Several cadres testified about their effort in educating their husbands and sons to do household chores that were viewed as the exclusive realm of women.

Following the events of October 1965 there were massive demonstrations demanded the disbandment of all organizations that were considered as leftist. They launched successful campaigns against Gerwani,

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<sup>19</sup> *Loc.cit*

removing its legacy from the official history of women's movements in Indonesia. Those who survived would face problems politically if they ever dared to admit their affiliation to Gerwani. The demise of Indonesia's largest women's organisation came suddenly, swiftly, and unexpectedly.

At the end of October 1965 Gerwani was expelled from Kowani and in 1966 they were officially banned. Under the New Order regime, Kowani and other women's organisations had to adjust to the politics of the new regime. Bit by bit nearly all social and economic programs intended for poor women and women from villages were eliminated.

### Women's Movements in the New Order Era

The banning of mass organizations and people movements, including Gerwani, in October 1965 marked the beginning of the New Order regime. Its leadership successfully used Gerwani as a political propaganda against women's movements.<sup>20</sup> They disseminated disinformation that portrayed women who dared to fight as bad and even evil. Their aim was to domesticate women's movements. Kowani became the only women's organization in the country; labour, farmer and fishermen unions were stripped off their political agenda and transformed into associations. Those organizations were all created by the New Order government to serve their political interests. As conveyed by I Gusti Agung Ayu Ratih<sup>21</sup> in her 2008 Cultural Speech:

“In Indonesia's history the process of destroying women by using a model that was used in the middle ages occurred in the same instance when Suharto established his dictatorship. Cleverly (and horrifyingly) the military regime used images of wild sexuality and the ferocity of

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> See “Kita, Sejarah dan Kebhinekaan: Merumuskan Kembali Keindonesiaan”, delivered by Anak Agung Ayu Ratih in a Cultural Speech on 10 November 2008, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta.

'communists' women who danced naked at Lubang Buaya to instill hatred towards women who took part in politics. This propaganda immediately provoked physical attacks against women who were considered as Gerwani members as well as members of PKI and other organisations of the same persuasion. The message was clear: 'communists' women, political women, endangered the survival and integrity of the nation. Consequently, it will be legitimate to root out and annihilate anyone who are considered 'communist'.'<sup>22</sup>

Kowani accepted women's organisations from the pre-1965 era such as Gerakan Wanita Sosialis (Socialist Women Movement, GWS) and Wanita Marhaen (Marhaen Women) to become members only after they had shed their political character and transformed themselves to become Gerakan Wanita Sejahtera (Prosperous Women Movement) and Wanita Demokrat (Democratic Women). Members of Gerwani were arrested and imprisoned without due legal processes.<sup>23</sup> The values of women as *konco wingking* who worked in the kitchen and accompany men in the bedroom were reinstated in the public mind. The campaign was done through women magazines and gave rise to a new conception of women's "double role". Women were allowed to work but must never abandon their responsibilities to their families as mothers and wives.

In the 1980s, economic development became increasingly unequal and resulted in economic and political crisis, which gave rise to protest movements led by non-governmental organisations and students. The 1980s also witnessed a world economic crisis. The developed countries reorganised the world economy through yet another intervention to make developing countries deregulate their economy in order to promote free trade and free movement of capital.

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<sup>22</sup> For further information on sexual images in anti communist propaganda and the politics of sexuality of the New Order in general, see Saskia E. Wieringa, *Penghancuran Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia*.

<sup>23</sup> See "Gerwani. Kisah Tapol Wanita di Kamp Plantungan," Amurwani Dwi Lestariningsih, PT Kompas Media Nusantara, September 2011, Jakarta.

At that time, women's organisations started to pay attention to the effects of the drive to attract foreign capital and increase exports to achieve high economic growth. The orientation to achieve high economic growth had marginalized the agriculture sector that was considered as unable to generate rapid growth. Women's organizations started to increase their activities to reduce poverty in the villages through micro-credit schemes.

While a number of women's NGOs considered providing assistance to impoverished women as the solution, some other argued that poor women did not only face poverty but also problems related to their sexuality, and this view led them to conduct campaigns against rape, abuses and other forms of violence against women. It started in 1983 with the establishment of Yasanti in Yogyakarta that worked to strengthen the rights of women workers and women who worked in the batik industry as shopkeepers. Yasanti was followed by other women's organisations in other cities such as Kalyanamitra in Jakarta (1984). Detailed and in-depth explanation about these organisations' endeavors during the New Order era can be found in another article in this book.

Women's organizations had to face the ideology of "women's double function" that was not only promoted by the government but also institutionalized politically. As part of the construction of the double role of women, the government created various women's organizations that consisted of the wives of public officials and the military and they played the role of supporting the duties of their husbands.

"The New Order government did not only destroy Gerwani, but it also took away the authority of other women's organisations to determine their own agenda. Ideas on the emancipation of women, which started to be discussed in the second decade of the 20th century, were coopted and transformed into a conservative idea of "women's double role". The government then established various organisations of civil servants wives and structured them in accordance to the hierarchy in the bureaucracy and military. The wife of the head of the bureaucracy became the chief of the women's organizations. Meanwhile, the military continued to conduct violence at a massive scale against women in Aceh, West Papua, and Timor Leste. It was during

this period that the patriarchal values from the feudal and colonial times found its affirmation in the militaristic ethos and principles, which demanded clear hierarchy, unbound loyalty, and proximity to violence.”<sup>24</sup>

In the meantime, students movements that had suffered from repressive policies of the New Order regime experienced a revival through the activities of study clubs. The students studied critical development theories such as feminism and marxism in order to understand and find solutions to the diverse social, economic, and political, and cultural problems. However, the students and NGO activists only studied feminism at the theoretical level and they had not translated it into social practices. They had yet to gain the ability to facilitate women to voice out their repressed voices to make people recognized women's rights in the society.

In 1997, the Indonesian economy experienced a deep economic crisis and the decreasing legitimacy of the government gave rise to a number of groups-students, professionals, academics, as well as women organisations – that were interested in looking for economic and political solutions. They were particularly concerned with the impact of the economic crisis on the general public, especially women. People's purchasing power tumbled as prices rose. As the welfare of the people experienced a sharp decline, so did their political trust to the government. Mahfirlana Mashadi said that

“when the price of milk increased by nearly 400 percent, impoverished families were clearly not able to purchase it. At that time, mothers in Indonesia started to feed sweetened tea to their babies and toddlers, even though they knew that tea did not have the nutrients found in milk.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See “Kita, Sejarah dan Kebhinekaan: Merumuskan Kembali Keindonesiaan”, delivered as a Cultural Speech by Anak Agung Ayu Ratih on November 10th 2008, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta.

<sup>25</sup> Mahfirlana Mashadi dalam artikel “When Mothers Speak, Milk Prices Come Down-And So Does a Government”, [www.mercycorps.org/countries/indonesia/10172](http://www.mercycorps.org/countries/indonesia/10172).

Several women's groups and organizations gained strength and prominence by riding on the issue of the erosion of women and children's welfare.

### **The 1998 Women's Movements**

A number of organisations, including women's groups, joined forces to provide basic food supplies for the people who were hard hit by rising food prices. Husbands lost their jobs, prices of daily needs doubled and tripled, and children were in danger of not able to continue with their schooling. Women were greatly affected by this economic crisis. One commodity that became unaffordable was instant milk. The Indonesian Rupiah got devalued from Rp. 4,850 to Rp. 17,000 to the dollar on 22 January 1998. As a result, all goods with imported components became too expensive to afford. Printed media and television reported on the rising prices of milk and medicines almost on a daily basis. The situation prompted women's groups and organizations to take actions. Students in their respective campuses across Indonesia also organized mass sit-ins and demonstrations calling for change.

#### *The Voices of Concerned Mothers, Suara Ibu Peduli*

The political situation heated up and the government tightened up security on 23 February 1998 as the People Representatives held its General Assembly to re-elect Soeharto as president. The Commander of the Armed Forces was instructed to ban demonstrations and disband any mass gatherings during and after the General Assembly. It was around this tense political situation that Suara Ibu Peduli (the Voices of Concerned Mothers, SIP) took a bold initiative to voice out women's concerns about the rising prices of basic food stuffs. Their demand was simple: the government must turn their attention to problems faced by mothers, which was the high price of milk and staple food. At that time, SIP was not an organi-

sation. It was just a name of a joint action.<sup>26</sup> The word mother was selected because it was considered as neutral and not affiliated to any political force. The strategy worked and many women contributed to support SIP's activities to provide affordable milk to impoverished mothers. Their activities were funded by donations collected from the general public as well from aid provided by women entrepreneurs and local businesses.

On 23 February 1998, the police, who earlier had only been observing the demonstrations organized by SIP at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout, made a move to arrest two of SIP's leaders, Karlina Supelli and Gadis Arivia, both were lecturers at the University of Indonesia, as well as Wilasih, a female entrepreneur. This quickly got the attention of the general public and became a pivotal moment in the history of women's responses to the social economic problems faced by the country. In the public eye, the arrest of the mothers was considered politically incorrect. As conveyed by Karlina, a doctor of astronomy and philosophy, she was simply a mother who was concerned with the well-being of the future generations. How would an Indonesian child develop a brilliant mind when milk prices were prohibitively expensive, said Karlina.

The arrest of the three SIP activists encouraged pro-democracy women activists to gather and demand the government to take serious measures to protect the well being of the people from the economic crisis. At the same time, students from various big cities in Indonesia also organized protests. SIP and their supporters raised donations to provide logistical support for the student movements. Since the colonial era, women's movements have simply been viewed as providing support to social movements. However, what SIP had done provided proof that logistics was not simply a matter of domestic activities. Logistics played an important role in any attempts to promote social change. Throughout 1998, there were other women's organisations and groups beside SIP, such

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<sup>26</sup> *Catatan Perjalanan Suara Ibu Peduli*, Nur Iman Subono (ed.), Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, 1999.

as Kalyanamitra and the Volunteer Team for Humanity (Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan or TRUK), who also provided logistical supports. Logistics was power. Those women's organizations were able to mobilize hundreds if not thousands of mothers to get involved in managing the logistics to support the fights against violence perpetrated by the government.

"SIP distributed food to people who were involved in the social movements. Some people said that distributing food was not political at all. Yet others argued that logistics provision is political indeed. The general public should learn that the seemingly domestic activities related to the provision of food was actually very political. We discussed this issue in various SIP's forums with women like Nursyahbani, Karlina, and others. But women's groups did not only provide food supplies. They also went down to the streets and took part in the reform movements to demand "justice for Soeharto and his cronies". It was the women's movements that came up with the anti-Soeharto and his cronies slogan. The women groups drafted it at the LBH Jakarta office and spoke it out for the first time in the Parliament. The works of SIP and women activists inspired for the people to support the reform movements.<sup>27</sup>

SIP deconstructed the double role of women that was promoted by the New Order regime, which meant that women are allowed to work in the public domain to support the career of their husband as long as they also carry out their domestic works at home and. Not only that SIP and other women's organizations conducted political activism in the public sphere to pursue their own political interests, but they also transformed logistics management that was associated to their domestic role to become a political tool in their struggle to promote reform. Domestic works became political.

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Yuniyanti Chuzaifah from the National Commission for Anti-Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan), "Gerakan Perempuan Perlu Meredefinisi Strategi, Membuat Pola Baru", <http://www.komnasperempuan.or.id/2010/05/yuniyanti-chuzaifah-gerakan-perempuan-perlu-meredefinisi-strategi-membuat-pola-baru>.

*The Volunteers Team for Humanity (TRUK)*

While women's groups and activists were actively involved in the reform movements, the public were shocked by the acts of violence and sexual violence against the ethnic Chinese minorities that occurred in May 1998, which later would be known as the May 1998 Tragedy. The May Tragedy was a black history for both the Indonesian government and the people. It was preceded by the shooting of four Trisakti University students who took part in the demonstrations on 12 May 1998 to demand the resignation of Soeharto. Students demonstrated and went on a long march to the Parliamentary building to convey their demands.

The acts of sexual violence took place at the same time with the burning and looting of business districts and office buildings. The pandemonium quickly spread across Jakarta, particularly in areas inhabited by the ethnic Chinese. In their report, the Volunteers Team for Humanity (TRUK),<sup>28</sup> which was led by Father Sandyawan, described that they were groups of people that provoked the violent acts. They appeared to be adult men but dressed in high school student uniform. During the looting and burning, there were no military nor police forces that carried out their job to provide protection to the citizens. The few who were present simply allowed the lawlessness to continue. But fully armed security personnel were in ready for full combat just a few days before to confront peaceful demonstrations.

The TRUK discovered that in the midst of this chaos, dozens of Chinese women were subjected to acts of sexual violence. A number of non-governmental organisations quietly provided supports to the victims. They realised that many of the victims had not received proper medical assistance and counselling treatments. There were no organised advocacy groups to help the women who suffered from sexual abuse and rape. Fi-

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<sup>28</sup> Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan (The Volunteers Team for Humanity) Early Documentation No. 3. The Rapes in the Series of Riots: The Climax of an Uncivilized Act of the Nation Life, 1998.

nally, a number of organisations and individuals from diverse backgrounds agreed to establish the Women Division of the TRUK.<sup>29</sup> The team was formed to provide medical treatment, companionship, shelter, psychological therapy, security, as well as legal counselling. Data compiled by the TRUK Women Division showed that in time of the chaos, the rights, dignity, and even life of the women did not receive any protection from the government at all. The TRUK Women Division used Kalya-namitra's office as a secretariat and a place where they accompanied the rape victims in Jakarta.

The violent rampages that took place on 13-14 May 1998 shocked the nation. On 15 July 1998, following Soeharto's resignation, 22 leading women visited the Presidential Palace demanding the government to take responsibility for the atrocity committed. President Habibie finally expressed his regret towards the violence and agreed to form a Joint Fact-Finding Team (Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta – TGPF) and then issued a presidential decree for the establishment of the National Commission for Women with the goal of ensuring women's rights and the eradication of all violence against women.

The TGPF formed by President Habibie investigated the rape and violence incidents committed during the 1998 May Tragedy and came to a conclusion that there were 52 women that were gang raped, 14 women were physically attacked and raped, 10 were abused sexually, and 9 were sexually harassed. The tragedy forced many Indonesian citizens of ethnic Chinese origins to relocate to other countries that would provide them with safety and security. TGPF underlined their finding that there were indications about the involvement of security personnels in the planning and execution of the violent rampages. The military and police were also held responsible for allowing the violent acts to happen. Today, the government is yet to act on the TGPF's recommendations.

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<sup>29</sup> "Mereka Telah Kehilangan Segalanya", interview with Ita Fatia Nadia, [www.oocities.org/capitolhill/4120/mi.html](http://www.oocities.org/capitolhill/4120/mi.html).

### Post-1998 Women Empowerment Initiatives

The various efforts conducted to remove Soeharto from power influenced the work of women's organisations and activists. The initiatives to provide help to victims of sexual violence of the 1998 May Riot encouraged many women activists, groups, and organisations to pay more attention to women that were victims of violence. In Jakarta, Mitra Perempuan, Serikat Perempuan Anti Kekerasan (SPeAK), LBH APIK, Puan Amal Hayati, LBH Jakarta, Kalyanamitra, Solidaritas Aksi untuk Perempuan dan Anak Korban Kekerasan (SIKAP), Pulih, Rumah Ibu, and others became very active in this field. The network expanded beyond women's organisation and activists to include concern parties in the Police, retired high-ranking women police officers, the wife of senior police officers, as well as professionals such as obstetricians. Many women's organizations outside of Jakarta such as Rifka Annisa in Yogyakarta, Cahaya Perempuan in Bengkulu, Nurani Perempuan in Padang, Savy Amira in Surabaya, and WCC Palembang in Palembang became active in providing assistance to women victims.

Supported by several donor agencies, the National Commission for Women facilitated study tours to Manila, Kuala Lumpur and Colombo for members of those women networks to learn about more efficient ways in providing assistance to victims of violence. The three cities had successfully established "One Stop Crisis Centre" program which provided complete treatment in one visit. The program required partnership with a hospital, which would make obstetricians, psychologists, female police officers, and lawyers ready to offer immediate treatments and assistance. It won't be necessary for the victims to recount their story over and over again. Upon their return, the National Commission for Women developed the knowledge gained from those visits to be implemented and tested out in Jakarta. They facilitated the establishment of an Integrated Crisis Centre for Women and Children at the RSU Cipto Mangunkusumo (known as the PKT RSCM) in 2011. The centre was subsidised by funding from the Jakarta government and various donor agencies. PKT

RSCM inspired women's groups and hospitals in other parts of the country to follow suit. The Bandar Lampung General Hospital and Dr. Soetomo General Hospital in Surabaya followed the footsteps and established their own integrated crisis centres.

Retired senior women police officers and the wives of high-ranking police officers who were part of the Derap Warapsari also set up the Special Treatment Room (Ruang Pelayanan Khusus or RPK). This was to make sure that victims of violence and their companies did not receive harsh treatments and even harrasments from investigators in the Police station when they reported their case. RPK made sure that the victims and their companies were handled by a female police officer and placed in a separate room. On 22 August 2007, the Chief of Police<sup>30</sup> instructed the Head of the Police Crime Investigation and all Regional Police Chiefs through instruction letter No. Pol.: B/2070/VIII/2007 to provide a Protection Unit for Women and Children Services in every provincial and city levels. RPKs have since provided support for women and children that become victims of violence.

Women's organisations and activists, which had been part of the same network for some time, worked together to provide various supports. Led by LBH APIK, they joined hands in preparing a Draft Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence. Women activists and academics at the University of Brawijaya Malang produced an academic paper in support of the Bill, which was disseminated across Indonesia by a network of organisations and activists actively involved in raising issues about violence against women. In 2004, this collective effort celebrated the passing of the bill to become a Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence or known in Indonesian as UU PKDRT No. 23/2004.

Responding to the demands for justice by women activists, the National Commission for Anti-Violence against Women investigated various forms of violence againsts women and recorded the number of vio-

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<sup>30</sup> Regulation of Head of the National Police No. 3 Tahun 2008 on the Establishment of Special Room and Procedures of Witness and/or Criminal Victims.

lent acts against women in Indonesia. The Commission also provided inputs to the government regarding laws, regulations, and policies that discriminated women, and monitored the handling of women victims of violence across Indonesia. Furthermore, the Commission also provided capacity-building programs for women organisations and institutions that provided assistance to women victims of violence as well as for government institutions that were in charge of managing the victims of violence at the national and regional levels.

The new government instilled a new enthusiasm to rethink about various initiatives to improve public life in general and the life of women in particular. In December 1998, using the momentum of the commemoration of the First Women Congress, women activists from various parts of Indonesia agreed to establish the Indonesian Women Coalition (KPI). The new organisation decided to focus on the issues of women participation in politics at the national and regional levels. KPI was one of the organisations that strived hard to re-introduce politics back into women's life. KPI encouraged women to become policy makers in the legislative or officials in the executive branches of government. Through its advocacy works, KPI has increased the awareness among women about their political rights and encourage them to participate policy making and planning and budgeting processes to make policies and budget allocation gender responsive, which in turn would ensure justice and democracy for women.

The new government also introduced regional autonomy to decentralize policy making and budgeting to the regency and city level under the goal of implementing good governance. Unfortunately, good governance was presented in very general terms to represent the interest of everyone. In reality, gender equality and justice were not explicitly stated as a principle of good governance, hence women's interests and voices were under-represented in the concept of good governance. Based on this situation, in 2002 a group of women activists established an institution focusing on research about the effect of decentralisation on women's lives. It was called the Women Research Institute (WRI).

According to WRI, women in Indonesia faced three obstacles that marginalized the role of women in the promotion of good governance. First, women had very little access to resources and decision-making; second, women were under-represented in decision-making institutions; and third, women did not have sufficient capacity to influence formal and informal policy making processes. Consequently, WRI focused its research and analysis on women's access to resources and decision-making, women's representation in decision making institutions, and women's capacity to influence decision making processes at the national and local levels. WRI uses feminist methodology in its research design and implementation to make sure that the researches would represent women's viewpoints and interests.

Hence, through its researches WRI raised the awareness of women and men that private issues are equally important as public issues, that the personal is political. WRI also examined and discussed the importance of increasing the number of women and their capacity to participate more effectively in decision making processes to voice out women's needs and interests. WRI also saw the benefits in investigating and encouraging women's political participation by examining the quota of women's participation in elections. In addition, WRI also looked at issues surrounding reproductive health and the effectiveness of reproductive health services with the goal of reducing Maternal Mortality Rate.

### **Economic Empowerment to Raise Awareness of Women's Rights**

During and in the aftermath of the 1998 economic crisis, women's groups consolidated their efforts with various NGOs to help families that were suffering from economic difficulties. They conducted fundraising to various donor agencies to help poor women fulfill their daily needs. The groups encouraged women to fight back and overcome the economic and political challenges they were facing. The Center for Women's Resources Development (Pusat Pemberdayaan Sumberdaya Wanita or PPSW) and the Association of Women Small Enterprises (Asosiasi Pendamping Pe-

rempuan Usaha Kecil or ASPPUK) facilitated their women members who experienced economic difficulties to set up joint-businesses and co-operatives to provide basic food stuffs. SIP and Kalyanamitra also assisted impoverished women to access food staples for their daily needs. SIP started to expand its activities and conducted awareness raising about violence against women and women's participation in politics.<sup>31</sup>

In 1998, Kalyanamitra formed a co-operative in partnership with a number of organisations such as the Indonesian Consumer Foundation (Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia or YLKI), the Cultural Work Network (Jaringan Kerja Budaya) and the Jakarta Social Institute (Institut Sosial Jakarta). The cooperative was to help impoverished women and their families to buy basic food stuffs such as rice, cooking oil, and sugar at affordable prices. The cooperative, however, did not last long and Kalyanamitra concentrated in providing assistance to the families of women victims of violence and women in impoverished areas.

Women activists debated the issue whether the activities related to the provision of economic relief activities was actually a regression to domestic issues, unsuited to the concepts of gender equality that women had fought for so long. However, humanitarian acts offered important strategic values as they enabled women activists to engage more people from various sections of the society including activists who had been involved in social works. The uncertainties of economic crisis drove everyone to synergise, work together, and find common strengths.

However, the question remains whether economic (i.e., domestic) empowerment initiated by feminists was simply a matter of filling empty stomachs.<sup>32</sup> Apparently not, at least for PPSW and ASPPUK. Economic independence provided a sense of confidence to the poor and marginalized women, enabling them to participate in public decision making pro-

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<sup>31</sup> *Catatan Perjalanan Suara Ibu Peduli*, Nur Iman Subono (ed.), Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>32</sup> See "Fajar Baru Gerakan Kaum Ibu", article, Maria Hartiningsih, KOMPAS, 20 December 1998.

cesses. PPSW and ASPPUK also used economic empowerment activities as means to provide the economically disadvantaged women with trainings on women's rights, including explanation about violence against women.

### Closing Remarks

This articles traced the contribution of women's movements in Indonesia to the recognition and fulfillment of women's rights and the development of democracy during the Dutch colonial era, the Japanese occupation, the post independence period, the New Order regime and 1998 Reform Movement. This article looks at these historical developments through a feminist lens. Different times and different political and economic contexts presented different problems to women. However, patriarchy remains the underlying value that stands on the way of gender equality and justice. Agung Ayu, in her Cultural Speech stated that:<sup>33</sup>

“When we consider the colonial patriarchal order and the renewed patriarchy after the independence era, we are actually dealing with ancient problems. Nearly every attempt of creating order in society have been based on the control of women's bodies and sexuality. Oppression against women took many forms from one era to another and differed in its nature between one community to the next. However, what is astounding is how every oppressive power views women sexuality and their ability to bear and give birth to new human beings as a force and simultaneously a threat to the established social and economic system.”

The works of women activists and groups in every period were dedicated to finding solutions to the problems faced by women. During the Dutch colonial period, women activists and organisations came to realise

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<sup>33</sup> See “Kita, Sejarah dan Kebhinekaan: Merumuskan Kembali Keindonesiaan”, delivered in a Cultural Speech of Anak Agung Ayu Ratih on 10 November 2008, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta.

that colonialism and patriarchy created a condition of backwardness. Schools were available only for the aristocracy, girls had to stop going to school after they menstruated, and women were kept indoors and trained in all aspects of housekeeping to become good wives and mothers. Women who did not come from the aristocracy did not have access to education and their role was to help the survival of their families.

Consequently, women activists and organisations identified education, regulations that protected women and children in a marriage, and the eradication of colonialism as the main challenges. Following the example of Kartini, most women's organisations set up schools to provide education for girls. Due to the widely practiced polygamy at that time (and until today), women activists and organisations fought for the inclusion of *ta'lik* (wedding vows) during the holly matrimony as well as the provision of allowance for widows and orphans of deceased civil servants of the Dutch colonial administration.

The Dutch colonial era also saw the emergence of the phenomenon known as *Nyais* or co-habitants who lived together with a Dutch man outside of marriage as a way for the colonial authority to regulate gender relations, including sexual and marital relations. In those period, control over sexual relations was closely allied to the need to maximise profits by reducing the welfare costs of those who migrated from the Netherlands to work in the colonial administration. The colonial government purposely encouraged the practice of *Nyais* since this would be much cheaper than importing Dutch wives from Holland. The *Nyais* were able to provide sexual services as well as household management without making Dutch companies to provide welfare expenses.<sup>34</sup>

During the Japanese occupation the role of *Nyais* took on a new form, the *jugun ianfu* or comfort women who were forced to provide sexual services for Japanese soldiers. The *jugun ianfu* experienced violence. There have been attempts to demand the Japanese government to recompensate

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* and see "In the Company's Shadow: A History of Plantation Women and Labor Policy in North Sumatera, p. 43, Working Paper, Ann Stoler, 1979.

the sufferings of the Indonesian women who were forced to become *jugun ianfu*. So far, the efforts have not yielded any results.



The phenomenon of *Nyais* as well as *jugun ianfu* was perceived as the result of women's lack of education. It was for this reason that women activists and organisations had been actively involved in fighting colonialism in Indonesia. They were involved in nationalist movement, voicing the importance of education for women.

Having gained independence from the Dutch as well as the Japanese, there was a burning question whether independence would also liberate women from their predicaments. The truth was that the problems persisted. Eventhough women started to have access to education, they still faced a myriad of other problems. The equality of women's status in the eyes of the law and in policy-making had still a long way to go. It was for this very reason, particularly relating to matrimony, that women activists and organisations decided to conduct campaign and advocacy to pass a Marital Law. Although the advocacy works started as early as 1899, the law was passed only in 1979 after 75 years of continuous and cross-generational efforts by women activists and organisations.

In the early days of the Indonesian Republic, in the 1950s and 1960s, Gerwani started to address women issues beyond marriage and education such as women and work (including women who worked as farmers), women's participation in politics, violence against women, and economic empowerment for women. With the regime change in 1965 Gerwani became a banned organisation and the New Order conducted propaganda to portray women who were active in politics as bad and evil and institutionalized the double role of women. After the fall of Soeharto, women's organisations enriched the endeavors of their predecessors. They addressed various issues such as domestic problems and violence against women, sexuality, economic empowerment for women, women's participation in planning and budgeting, and women's representations in politics.

Women activists and organisations in Indonesia have been on the move since the 19th century. They have been able to pass the baton from one generation to the next one for at least 200 years. Indonesian women

have been struggling hard to secure their rights within the household and in the public domain. Kartini was partly right when she wrote that, "...the shackle againsts women will cease only after three or four generations." After three or four generations, women activists and organizations have indeed achieved significant progresses, but more works need to be done in all sectors of women issues.



## CHAPTER II

# Women's Organizations Amidst Political Openness



Edriana Noerdin

### Introduction

Political changes in Indonesia generated by movements for democracy came to its peak in 1998. Since the economy collapsed into crises by the end of 1997, there were waves of protests - from public discussions to street rallies - initiated by a number of groups, until finally President Soeharto decided to step down from his position in May 1998, marking the end of New Order military regime administration

During the reform era, negotiation process to expand democratic space in Indonesia was pursued consistently. The feeling of freedom from the repressive and centralistic authoritarian regime has opened up spaces to revisit Indonesia's national identity. Simultaneously, there were numerous pressures to include considerations on the diverse interests of the people of Indonesia based on culture, class, gender and contextual backgrounds. The opening up of democratic spaces in Indonesia went hand in hand with the strengthening of local and religious values, which endured public pressures for years.

After the post 1998 political transition, women's movements also gained new awareness - as a group actively defining its own problems and



politics, and not just a supporting group of other organizations' political agenda. Women's movements expanded, in terms of field areas as well as geographical spread, and also in terms of diversity of actors, work themes and how they defined gender issues. Diversity and scope of work require capacity and willingness from women organizations to build and develop network, in order to deal with serious inadequacy in terms of capacity to develop work strategies, raise fund as well as promote leadership regeneration.

Reflecting on the history of women's movements in Indonesia, the definition of gender used as foundation for the advocacy has also changed in accordance to time and cultural, political and social demands women are facing. Organization characteristics, work strategies as well as leadership experience change from time to time. These changes have not only resulted in the shift of their organizational form from foundation to association and mass organization, but also in the change of their chosen work strategies and patterns as well as the involvement of actors to work and network together. Considering that the definition of gender represents the meeting point of interests of various parties, the space for organizations working in this issue also expands and contacts according to political condition.

### **Women's Organizations' Gender Definitions and Problems in the Post 1998 Era**

*Feminism consistently tries to change the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts that bring about systematic harm or disadvantage to women. Feminism values an end to the oppression of women and other disadvantaged groups. It values mutuality and interdependence, inclusion and cooperation, nurturance and support, participation and self-determination, empowerment, and personal and collective transformation.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, 1993:282, in Claire, *Fostering Empowerment, Building Community: The Challenge for State-Funded Feminist Organizations*, in *Human Relations*, June 1994:685.

Feminism, as elaborated by Claire in the above mentioned quotation, is a value and a principle which can be used to recognize social political, economic and cultural contexts and change them to end repressive and disadvantageous conditions of women and other marginalized social of groups. Values and principles of feminism respect partnership, collaboration, participation, empowerment and support transformation to improve personal and collective well being. These values and principles are used as reference by many women's groups and organizations to carry out their work in assisting women to solve their problems.

Improvement in openness in information and politics after 1998 has opened more space for women's organizations to exchange ideas, including to reflect on the substance of their movements. Openness and freedom of speech are seen as conducive to the emergence of critical thinking towards public policy, and the opening up of opportunities to participate in more transparent policy making processes. Political openness has really influenced their organizational life, program selection, and organizational strategies and efforts to build network to advocate policies.

### **Achievements of Women's Organizations in Advocating for Gender Sensitive Laws**

The success of women's organizations in the Reform era is marked with the strengthening of networking among actors who are concerned with gender justice and equality and have advocated the drafting and passing of various gender responsive laws such as Law no 23 of 2004 on Anti Domestic Violence, Law no 12 of 2006 on Citizenship and Law no 21 of 2007 on the Elimination of Human Trafficking. Women's organizations also actively advocated to change the substance of Draft Law no 44 of 2008 on Pornography and Porno-action and Law no 8 of 2012 on the Election of Members of National and Local Parliaments that had the potential to damage women. Women's movements have also actively advocated for 30 percent quota for women candidates of national and local parliament members in the Election Law of 2003 as well as 2008.

Those achievements made by women's movements in the drafting and passing of gender responsive laws should be recognized. Laws related to the life, livelihood and position of women in Indonesia are keys to the protection of women's rights as citizens. Women activists invested a lot of time and energy in the drafting and passing of those laws. Three of them are related to gender issues in both private and public domains, such as the nationality of a child born by an Indonesian mother that is married to a foreigner.

There are numerous cases of nationality status of a child born in a marriage between an Indonesian mother and a foreigner. The mother loses custody over her child after a divorce, regardless of the law they used as reference for their marriage, because Indonesia's legal system follows *Ius Sanguinis* principle. Therefore, child custody falls into the hands of the father since custody is based on the citizenship of the father. Losing custody after a divorce puts a big burden on the mother since she loses custody regardless of the age of the child. This discriminative law has been amended to allow children from mixed marriages to have double citizenship. After the child has reached 18 years old, he/she can choose which citizenship that better suits him or her. As a result, the position of the mother is legally recognized and her rights to custody remain with her until the child is declared as an adult according to the law.

Regarding Pornography law, when the draft was disseminated to the public, the substance of this draft was heavily ridden with criminalization of women's body and sexuality. Literally, this draft introduced a new terminology: "porno-action" - defined as a purposeful act to show body parts in front of the public. This article aimed people working in arts and entertainment industry whose attire was seen as "revealing." Supporters of the draft act argued that women's body should be decently covered to avoid stimulating men's libido. Not only that such definition was absurd and difficult to be used as legal reference, but it could be interpreted in many different ways and had the potential to blame women for any lewd thoughts, attitudes and acts related to sexual behaviours. Throughout 2006, there were numerous meetings and consolidations all over Indonesia to

reject this draft act, resulting in partnership between women's movement with those working in arts, culture as well as religion issues to propose an alternative regulation that would limit access to pornographic materials. The pinnacle was colossal cultural parades held in a number of cities in Indonesia in October 2008 (including Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Makassar, Denpasar, Manado and Jayapura) to refute the draft act. Women's organizations also lobbied members of the parliaments intensively, contributing to the revocation of porno-action article from the draft act, as well as the delay of the enactment. Yet two years later, this draft law was once again proposed by the parliament quietly without involving the public, resulting to its enactment in 2009. In practice, this Pornography Law is used to criminalize certain sexual (private) behaviours of celebrities as well as the general public.

Regarding domestic violence, a household or a family in Indonesia is regulated by a number of laws. One of them is the 1974 Law on Marriage, which regulates the gender roles of man as husband and father and of woman as wife and mother. Man is declared by the law to take the role as the head of the family and woman as the housewife. From the social cultural perspective, this law is very much aligned with patriarchal values that put men on superior roles in the family institution, which is supported by religious values that men should be leaders. As a leader, the husband should be respected and allowed to do anything for the sake of his "leadership" including the use of violence. In the public domain, violence is not acceptable and can be brought to the court, yet in private or domestic domain, this is not against the law. Hitting, torturing, degrading and belittling women in the household domain are seen as "educational" or attempts to mend women behaviours that are unwanted by the head of the family. Meanwhile, the woman is positioned as housewife and is not recognized as the family's breadwinner. In a number of cases, women are paid less than men even though both are working on the same jobs. Anti Domestic Violence Law is meant to restructure the discriminatory positioning of women.

Women movement in Indonesia finally succeeded in pushing the

parliament to enact this Anti Domestic Violence Law during the administration of President Megawati the first woman president in Indonesia. Law no. 23 of 2004 on Anti Domestic Violence still requires further advocacy. However, the passing of this law pinpointed a number of achievements in gender issues as follow:

1. Unbalanced gender relation between husband and wife has been revisited and revised. Women now have the rights to bring the case of violence conducted by the husband to court - which, in the past, was not considered as against the law.
2. The State is now legally responsible to protect each citizen from violence, even though it occurs in domestic or household setting. This means that the position of women as citizens is legally recognized.
3. Apart from its ineffective implementation in the field, this law forces law enforcers to consider private setting (family and household) as legal domain, which, in the past, was not considered as a locus of criminal acts.

Achievements of women's movements in advocating those above mentioned laws show that issues in private domain, including sexuality, has been the focus, and will remain the focus, of advocacy of women's movements. This marks the resistance against public opinion that political thinking and actions only occur in public domain. Democratization has eventually reached private domains and this is the most significant contribution of women's movements in the post New Order era.

The success of women's movements in organizing themselves to advocate for gender responsive public policies has been followed by organizing public pressure to pass 30 percent quota for women candidates in elections. Women's organizations filled up seats in the balcony of the House of Representatives building to monitor the discussion, of the Election Draft Law to ensure the inclusion of 30 percent quota for women in

the bill. Their efforts paid off and the 30 percent quota is now legally binding. We can see that women's organizations have been able to mobilize their concerns through movements to pass gender responsive laws.<sup>2</sup>

### Notes on the Implementation of Gender Responsive Laws

Ratna Batara Munti from LBH APIK Jakarta said that advocacy for Victim and Witness Protection Law could be added to the achievements of advocating for gender responsive laws. Although currently the use of the law is still limited to big cases such as corruption and human rights violations, it has the potentials to be used to protect women as victims and witnesses. According to her, Anti Trafficking Law no 21 of 2007 has also provided protection to women victimized by trafficking. Lastly, Legal Aid Law ensures the State to provide rooms for paralegals to provide non-formal legal assistance and mitigation. Therefore, non-formal defence lawyers can provide legal assistance.

Field monitoring should follow these successes. It is not an easy job for women's organizations since policy enforcement has been weak in the country. In the case of trafficking and domestic violence, for example, improvements in the substance of the law have not been met with effective implementation in the field. Most law enforcers do not have an open mind to new laws such as Anti Trafficking Law. They still put Anti Trafficking Law against the KUHP Criminal Code. For example a case involving a 12 to 15

<sup>2</sup> Feminism and gender are two inter-related concepts, regardless of the views of some feminist thinkers such as Christina Hoff Sommers. In her book that was published in 1992 entitled *Who Stole Feminism?*, she was against the association of these two concepts. Her position was quickly challenged by Feminist movement and theory pioneer, Gloria Steinem. In an interview published by *Mother Jones* (1995) she said that she did not believe in the conceptual separation. For Steinem, feminism and gender are inter-related because feminism is a perspective that sees the existence of gender-based discrimination in the society (see Pamela Aronson, *Feminist or "Post-Feminist"? Young Women's Attitudes toward Feminism and Gender Relations*, Michigan State University, 2003).

years old girl from West Java who was trafficked to Lombok was not processed legally because there was no work contract involved. It shows that the law enforcers had poor understanding of the Anti Trafficking law. Anti Trafficking Law still needs to be disseminated to law enforcers. Also there is a common opinion among law enforcers that once a case is successfully processed by the police, it might get easily dismissed by the prosecutor's office.

There have been obstacles to the effective implementation of Anti Trafficking Law because the multi-stakeholders task force assigned to monitor its implementation is not working properly. Since there is no standardized operational procedure for law enforcers, it requires intensive efforts to monitor the implementation of a law. The country needs to have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the implementation of each law, particularly newly enacted laws. The SOP would allow effective coordination between departments and between them and women's organizations in the field to take place.

Euphoria generated from the successes should not make women organizations forget that there are still many things to be done. Indonesian women are still treated unjustly by the Marriage Law. This law stipulates the role of women as housewife, while a man is considered to be the head of the family. The case of abortion in the Health Law also presents a big homework for women organizations. Another important home work is related to the fact that there is no specific policy or law on sexual violence. Rather than considered as criminal acts, sexual violence and harassments are treated just as inappropriate behaviours. It is important for Indonesia to have fairer legal instruments for women, specifically on the issue of sexual violence, and a system that ensures their effective implementation in the field.

Women's movements still face a myriad of problems. Women's private domain is still not adequately protected by law as show's by issues

related to women's authority over their body, polygamy, Sharia law on hijab, sexuality, and rape. Women's organizations should not just focus their attention on improving the position of women in the public sphere while they are still suffering discrimination in the private domain. At this moment, women's organizations and movements focus their attention on the discussion and drafting of Gender Equality and Justice Law to make sure that the bill ensures justice for women both in the public and private domain.

### **Common Gender Paradigm in the Society**

Freedom of speech and assembly as well as the capacity to develop organization would not generate significant changes in women's life as long as the perception of the general public still places women in subordinate positions.

The fact that most women's organizations set their vision and mission to achieve gender justice and equality and to fulfil women's rights shows that they use feminism concepts as references and guidelines for their activities. Women activists use gender paradigm of equality between men and women as the foundation for their personal, organizational and political life. They use gender construction concepts as a base of their policy advocacy for gender responsive laws and regulations.

"In 1990s, there were a number of village women who wanted to change their unfortunate situation. They started a small group discussion among village women to talk about issues such as why women have low level of education, why are women prevented from going out of the house, and why do women have to do more work compared to men. The discussions made them aware about injustices suffered by women. At the end, they made an agreement to set up and organize groups of mothers and learning centres for pre-schoolers."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, a member of Hapsari National Committee Council, Deli Serdang, 21 May 2012.

Women organizations in Deli Serdang and its nearby areas identified gender related problems and issues based on local social condition and context of fishing communities and working conditions in palm, coffee and rubber plantations. In those communities, the roles and positions of women were limited. Organizations such as Hapsari and Pesada empowered women from the communities by facilitating them to develop and manage pre-schooler learning centres. Since many women in the areas were breadwinners, the two women's NGOs also assisted the women to develop assets and gain economic independence. In the beginning, they used practical approach of persuading poor women who could not put their children in private and expensive preschools to make use of the pre-schools organized by Hapsari and Pesada. After they grew in numbers, the two NGOs started to facilitate them to discuss day-to-day problems that they face as fisherwomen and plantation workers. They discussed about unequal positions between men and women and their need to develop productive economic activities.

Many women in Deli Serdang worked as plantation workers, and many others went abroad to Malaysia and Singapore to work as migrant workers to earn more money to build a house and support the daily needs of their household. As plantation workers, the women carried double burden because they were also responsible for carrying out domestic works.

"The income from my husband who worked as a fisherman is not enough. So I went overseas to become a migrant worker."<sup>4</sup>

For Hapsari and Pesada, the right strategy was to first provide economic empowerment to women through Credit Unions (CU).

"I had an idea that gender equality could be achieved through economic empowerment. Economic independence is a vehicle for women to go anywhere they want. So we developed Credit Unions that had been adjusted to the conditions and needs of the women. CU was

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Sarah, member of Hapsari Credit Union, Deli Serdang, 22 May 2012.

our venue to groom women leaders. CUs are more than just promoting saving and loan activities. They became a place for the women to question their existence as women, to be active in organizations, and to empower other people.”<sup>5</sup>

By getting involved in the CUs and exposed to organizational activities, the women started to realize that they had been treated unfairly. In a focus group discussion, Habibah mentioned:

“I notice unfairness in the society. When husbands hold a broom and help out cleaning the house, people mock them as if the works were degrading for men. But when women hold hoes and sickles, they stay quiet and do not say a word... They should be ashamed because we can do their jobs.”<sup>6</sup>

Interviews with members of Hapsari Union show similar tones to Habibah’s comments. Those women also became conscious that they had been socially marginalized. They said that their voice was not recognized in village discussions, let alone in family discussions.

“We were not aware of any information in the village and we were not involved in any village activities.”<sup>7</sup>

Jumasni explained that by getting involved in the organization, women became aware of information and could take active participation in village activities. Hapsari Union members who were also part of Serikat Perempuan Independen (SPI or Independent Women Union) of Serdang Bedagai formulated problems faced by women in their areas and then incorporated them into the goal of their organization, which is:

“To achieve justice and welfare for the people without any oppres-

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Dina Lumbantobing, founder of Pesada, Medan 25 May 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Habibah, member of SPI Serdang Bedagai, Serdang Bedagai 23 May 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Jumasni, member of SPPN Serdang Bedagai, Serdang Bedagai 22 May 2012.

sion between women and men by giving equal recognition to the rights of women and men.”<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile in Padang, the issues of discrimination against women take a different face. Yuni Walrif, a candidate member of Solidaritas Perempuan in Padang, explained that even though the customs and tradition of Minang are matriarchal in character, in practice women let men – for example husband or brother of the wife – to make strategic decisions for the family. Fitriyanti, director of Lembaga Pengkajian dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat LP2M (Center for the Studies and Empowerment for the People) in Padang said that:

“Regardless the matriarchal culture in Padang, in practice there are husbands who do not provide for the family, husbands who make decision without consulting the wives, husbands who sell lands even though the lands are traditionally owned by the women and are inherited by the family of the women according to matriarchal concept.”<sup>9</sup>

People in the Minang society, which is now under Islamic Sharia, believe that customs have their roots in the scholars and the scholars have their roots in the (Islamic) holy scripts. In conclusion, the highest reference for the Minang society is religion that views men as leader of the family. The interpretation then is that men can make decisions without consulting their wives.

“Women in Padang could not escape patriarchy. This may be because of the error in interpreting “*Adat basandi sara, sara basandi kitabullah*”.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Notes from FGD on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with SPI Serdang Bedagai, Serdang Bedagai 23 May 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Yuni Walrif, candidate member of Solidaritas Perempuan Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

Women as mothers have the role of keeping the reputation of the family, referring to the traditional concept that women are “*limpapeh rumah gadang*” or butterfly or decoration to make the house and the family beautiful. This leads men to treating women as the guardian of family reputation whose is also responsible for doing all household chores. Tia, a volunteer for Women Crisis Center (WCC) division of the Nurani Perempuan Padang NGO, said that

“Unequal role between men and women are very apparent. At home brothers will not sweep the floor, wash the dishes and do any other household chores. After a party, the sons will not help sweep the floor or wash the dishes because the community views this as taboo.”<sup>11</sup>

In a discussion with groups of mothers and small entrepreneurs that were members of the ASPPUK Padang, the women said that:

“Even though there are mothers who are breadwinners, yet the father as head of the family restricts women from taking part in organizational activities. Some of the men could not accept that women had other activities outside of the house. Inequality between men and women does not only take place in the household but also in the field of finance. Women small entrepreneurs cannot borrow money from the bank. In order to apply for a loan, they have to show collaterals such as certificates of the land, house, and car, and most of them are under the name of the husband. It is difficult, and even impossible, for women to apply for a bank loan without the approval of the husband. When there are government's grants for small entrepreneurs allocated for the village, women cannot access them because they are not engaged in the village committee that make decision regarding grant allocations. The women do not even have the information about the grants and the meetings to decide on their allocations.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Tia, volunteer for WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Notes from FGD on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with ASPPUK Padang 17 May 2012.

Inequality between men and women also takes place at the village level as well, and women in the rural areas are unable to articulate their needs and demands.

“Power is still at the hands of men. There are domestic violence cases that are not reported by the women victims because they are scared. The women victims came from both agricultural and informal sectors and also other fields of work. The women are repressed because the husbands control the finance.”<sup>13</sup>

“Women’s courage to speak out in public is still restricted, especially in the village. In the family, women take care of the kitchen, fetch water from the well, and serve the husband in the bed.”<sup>14</sup>

“We used to be degraded and were not aware of women rights. We were not recognized by the society. By getting ourselves organized, we now know what we can and cannot do.”<sup>15</sup>

In Mataram city, Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, the strong influence of Islamic values has made the conditions and positions of women similar to their counterparts in other areas in Indonesia. Due to the strong character of patriarchy in the society, married women have lower bargaining power compared to men. Teen marriage tradition has made young women quit schools because they see getting married as a way out from financial difficulties. Because of poverty and low level of education, however, they are vulnerable to polygamy and divorce. In West Lombok, divorce brings women back to poverty. Once a husband divorces her wife, he has no obligation to support his children and former wife. In Lombok, once the husband says that he divorces his wife, it is considered legitimate and there is no requirement to have an official paper.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Tanty Herida, Regional Secretary of KPI of North Sumatera, Padang 17 May 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Totalitas Foundation, Padang, 15 May 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Notes from FGD on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Pekka Mataram, Mataram 15 May 2012.

“When I first got here, 98 percent of them were married women working as workers in the field, as coolies, and as workers in the plantations while taking care of their families. When they got divorced, they ended up with nothing because the local culture here made divorced women got nothing. So I raised their awareness regarding joint matrimonial property and so forth. When they re-marry, they are no longer poor because they have developed their economic capacity. However, when they are divorced once again and they become poor.”<sup>16</sup>

“Local tradition accommodates divorce. The process is easy. The husband just says that he divorces the wife, then it is legitimate. The victims are women, because there are no obligation in the society to support the former wife or the children.”<sup>17</sup>

“Local tradition regulates that once a woman is divorced, she gets nothing. Raising awareness on joint matrimonial property should be done so when they remarry, they know about this, so when they divorce, they do not become poor again.”<sup>18</sup>

The fact that there are no policies guaranteeing women to access public services for their reproductive needs has put additional burdens on women. Eventhough at the national level there are policies guaranteeing payment for women workers who take leaves for menstruation and for giving birth, local policies do not fully comply with the national regulations.

“Most women workers in tobacco plantations – there are numerous tobacco plantations in Lombok – when they have their menstruation or giving birth, they did not receive payment. When they don’t work, they don’t get paid. Where is the responsibility of the factories? They

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Siti Zamraini, Regional Coordinator of Pekka East Nusa Tenggara, Lingsar 15 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Samsudin, Head of Grassroot Organization Panca Karsa Association, Mataram 17 May 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Siti Zamraini, Regional Coordinator of Pekka West Nusa Tenggara, Lingsar 15 May 2012.

are doing this as they please. This is too easy for the factory. They can simply fire women workers. They can just tell them not to come anymore.”<sup>19</sup>

In Lampung, most of the people live in poverty in agricultural and coastal areas. In the coastal areas, most of them work as fishermen and informal workers.

“After their husbands come home from the sea, the wives sell the fish. There is no time for them to go to health clinics. Women are busy to provide income for the family.”<sup>20</sup>

Poverty in Lampung leads to numerous rape cases. Poor people live in small houses of six family members. This breeds incest and violence. Statistics for incest in Lampung is quite high. During the period of 2005-2011, every year there were about 10 reported incest cases.<sup>21</sup> It means that the family as an institution has failed to provide a safe place for women. Incest usually occurs between a father and his daughter, or a brother and his sister. When it happens, the family usually covers it up because it is taboo. Women are vulnerable in their own house.

### **Women's Organizations and the Issues of Sexuality**

Women activists can be very vocal in voicing women's rights. However, when it comes to sexuality, they do not have the enthusiasm. A number of women's organizations have conducted discussions on sexuality. Yet the issues have not been integrated into the organizations' regular activities. The issue of sexuality loomed large during the discussions of Anti Pornography Law, drawing support from a large number of people, including women activists. However, religious fundamentalist forces put

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Beauty Erawati, Director of LBH APIK East Nusa Tenggara, Mataram, 16 May 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Selly Fitriani, Director of Damar Lampung, Lampung 11 May 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with S.N. Laila, Lampung Women Movement, Lampung, 9 May 2012.

a halt on the growing support. The State seemed to have given more opportunities to religious fundamentalist groups to define the bill.

Outside of Java, in Mataram and Lampung to be more specific, sexuality has not been considered as an important issue by women's organizations.

"In the area like Mataram, even the activists are not sure about their view on sexuality. They too are very biased."<sup>22</sup>

"Sexuality has not yet been our focus of discussion and work in Lampung. Since no one talks about sexuality, the issue disappears from public discussion. We focus on gender role division and sexual violence and have not touched the issue of sexual identity/orientation. We address sexuality when we talk about sexual violence. Here I start thinking that the issue of sexuality is important to be discussed."<sup>23</sup>

For Afank from Ardhanary Institute Jakarta, which focuses works on sexuality issues, it makes sense that organizations at the local level have not touched the issue of sexuality because in Jakarta, many women activists and organizations do not openly declare sexuality as an important issue. Also, many lesbians and gays have not come out to the public about their sexual identity because they are afraid of the consequences.

"To me, this is one of the weaknesses of women's movements – forgetting sexual orientation as organizational issues."<sup>24</sup>

"Sometimes when people want to interview us, they have to be accompanied with people we know, because not all people want to admit that they are lesbians. The situation makes us unable to provide information to the people around us who want to know more about the issue of sexuality."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Baiq Zulhiatina, Executive Council of Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Selly Fitriani, Director of Damar Lampung, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Afank, Ardhanary Institute Jakarta, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Demokrasi dan Keadilan (Coalition of Indonesian Women for Democracy and Justice) has set up a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender division in their organization. However, it is not widely known to the public. Organizations such as Ardhanary Institute have been open to the public regarding their works on sexuality, but they need to put more energy in engaging women's organizations to take up sexuality issues as well. Homophobia still lingers in many women's organizations. Desi from Harmonia Padang, during an FGD in WRI secretariat, explained that some women activists used the issue of sexuality to intimidate and weaken other women activists. During the Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia (Coalition of Indonesian Women) congress in 2010, she heard a participant saying that "If we support certain candidates (by mentioning the names) it means we support lesbianism." A friend of her even said, "Why is Desi supporting that person? She is a lesbian..." Some went as far as asking Desi directly regarding her sexual identity.

Masni from JarPUK Mataram agrees that women's organizations should take sexuality issues seriously. She said that

"I think there should be discussions among women activists at the community and district level on how to build common understanding on sexual identity and orientation. In Lombok, when we do not appear the same as other women, people ask, "Are you a man or a woman?" We need to educate the public at the local level. I myself still need to learn about the issue to make it easier for me to talk to the public."<sup>26</sup>

### Forms and Characteristics of Women's Organizations

After the downfall of the New Order in 1998 Indonesia's political situation became very open. Such a drastic change had significant impact on social movements in general and women's movements in particular. The impact was most dramatic in Jakarta, the epicentre of national political

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<sup>26</sup> Masni, JarPUK Mataram, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

discourse. Many women's organizations that emerged in the period were highly influenced by this changing political context. The number of women's organizations mushroomed in Jakarta, ranging from religious organizations to organizations that were oriented to promoting economic and political development and organizations that promoted critical and transformative thinking. Some of them took the shape as mass organizations and some others as foundations, associations, coalitions, federations, and national commissions such as the National Commission on Violence Against Women (known as Komnas Perempuan). The scope and issues covered by these women's organizations also expanded.

WRI's research shows that some women's organizations that were established after 1998 have maintained their organization as foundation and their activities cover a number of provinces, districts/cities and even villages. These organizations usually provide capacity building to local actors through trainings, public education and community organizing. Some other organizations have become associations by inviting a number of people deemed as experts to sit as members of the organizations' Board of Advisors. The boards periodically provide inputs on the directions and objectives of the organizations, and are involved in evaluating the performance of the organization. Board of Trustee or Board of Advisors supervises Board of Executives or Organizing Committee. Association is seen as an alternative to avoid centralization of power in one person or a small group of people, which takes place in a foundation. The collective nature of decision making in associations is seen as an ideal leadership style for women's organizations. In an association, the executives are controlled by the Board of Trustee and they report to the General Meeting Forum. Halwati from Panca Karsa association in Mataram said that

"Panca Karsa used to be a foundation, and now it has become an association, in response to the new Foundation and Association Laws. In foundation, the founders hold the highest decision making power and material assets are also under their control. In association, it is the yearly General Meeting of association members that hold the highest decision making power. Every three years the General Meeting elects

an Executive to run the organization. The Board of Trustee only supervises the Executive. It does not have the power to elect or fire him/her. The Executive is responsible in implementing the program and is accountable to all members in the General Meeting. This meeting also decides on the direction of the organization, including issues the organization should work on.”<sup>27</sup>

Decision making mechanism in association is not homogenous. In some associations such as Damar Lampung and LP2M Padang, the Executive/Director is responsible to the Board of Trustee and not to the General Meeting. It is the Board of Trustee who reports to the General Meeting.

“Damar is also an association, in which the control of the organization is in the hands of the Board of Trustee as supervisors and controller of the Board of Executives.”<sup>28</sup>

“LP2M used to be a foundation, now we are an association. As an association, the highest decision-making is in the hand of the Board of Trustee that elects the Executive (Director). At the end of the year, the director is accountable to the Board of Trustee. It is the Board of Trustee who reports to the General Meeting.”<sup>29</sup>

Association is seen as more open and democratic because the leadership is not in the hands of the founders who automatically sit in the Board of Executive. Board of Executive in a foundation usually comprises of former directors and a number of people that are considered as experts in organizational or substantive issues. The case of LP2M, when it was still a foundation, shows that

“It is utopian to expect a foundation, which leadership is in the hands of the founders, to make decision in participatory manner. LP2M

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<sup>27</sup> Baiq Halwati, Director Perkumpulan Panca Karsa, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Selly Fitriani, Director Damar Lampung, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

took an effort to learn how to become an accountable organization by running good management. But suddenly this organization decided to get involved in earthquake disaster relief activities, raised a significant amount of fund from donors and recruited a big number of new staff. The centralized decision making structure of the foundation couldn't cope with the sudden changes, and it led to a series of conflict of interests, – resulting in the resignation and laying off of a number of key staff.”<sup>30</sup>

The Board of Trustee of LP2M could not act neutral since the structure of foundation allowed a former Executive Director of LP2M to become a trustee member. In the case of LP2M, the internal conflicts led the Board of Trustee decided to fire the Executive Director and Program Manager.

“... LP2M experience shows how difficult it is to build a fully participatory leadership in a foundation. In a big foundation handling big amount of fund, such principle was difficult due to various interests involved. In the beginning, communication within LP2M went well, but because the former director sat in the Board of Trustee, it was difficult for this figure to be neutral. Institution like this was actually still far from democratic values.”<sup>31</sup>

Damar, an NGO in Lampung, is just another example of an NGO that changed its organization form from foundation into association to become more democratic.<sup>32</sup> However, changing from a foundation into an association is not a panacea. The association should be equipped with people who have substantive feminist knowledge and have a strong spirit of women's solidarity, which are needed to direct the organization to promote gender equality and justice. Otherwise, the association would not become an open and democratic organization either.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Desi, former Program Director of LP2M, Padang 15 May 2012.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Selly Fitriani, Director Damar Lampung, FGD Jakarta 29 October 2012.

### Challenges and Changes of Women's Organizations

Some other women activists decided to turn their movement into a mass organization that has a National Secretariat at the national level, and branches that serve as independent organizations at the province, district/city and even village levels. An example of women mass organization is Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Demokrasi dan Keadilan (Indonesian Women's Coalition for Democracy and Justice - KPI).

KPI was established through a congress on 22 December 1998 in Yogyakarta, which commemorated the first Women Congress that was held on 22 December 1928. Women activists initiated this KPI congress to grab the opportunity provided by the opening up of democratic space. They invited women activists from various geographical areas, fields of work, and interest groups. More than 500 women activists attended the congress and it showed that support for women's issues and concerns were widespread. This congress successfully identified and agreed to work on fifteen sectors related to agriculture, fisheries, domestic workers, migrant workers, commercial sexual workers, housewives, the elders, child workers, and LGBT.

Ratna Batara Munti from LBH APIK Jakarta, a member of KPI, describes the dynamism of the coalition that takes the form of a mass organization as follows:

“Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia does not oblige its members at the local level to take up national issues. Members at the local level are welcomed to conduct advocacy and other works that are needed at the local level, although they might be sensitive issues at the national level. Local KPIs are very active in certain areas because of matching works and geographical areas between the National Secretariat of KPI and its local members. Other local KPIs are not active because the local NGOs are currently dormant.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Ratna Bantara Munti, External Director of LBH APIK Jakarta, 24 May 2012.

The matching of program and geographical areas usually led to the provision of financial support from KPI National Secretariat to the local women NGOs, which had enabled KPI Padang and KPI Palembang to be active. However, not all local KPIs relied on support from the national level. KPI Makassar remained active although it had never received any financial or program support from the national level. Many other local KPIs became inactive due to difficulties in fundraising. What is interesting is that local KPI members, numbering around 500 people, from all areas have always attended KPI congress that is held every four years, even the dormant members come to the congress. Interviews done at the local level revealed that the availability of fund is the key issue for the inactivity of many of KPI local members. Meaning that many of local KPIs relied on the KPI National Secretariat to fundraise and distribute the fund to them. This lack of funding problem also applies to other women's mass organizations such as Solidaritas Perempuan, LBH APIK as well as ASPPUK.

KPI, Solidaritas Perempuan, LBH APIK and ASPPUK were established based on issues and sectors they worked on. But there are other union-based women's mass organizations that were territorial in character, such as Hapsari and Pesada in Deli Serdang, North Sumatera. Hapsari is a union of a number of women's organizations.

“...Hapsari facilitated the formation of a number of unions, which then formed a Federation as the umbrella organization of those unions. Federation is considered as the right organizational form because it encourages the emergence of leadership in each union member. Leaders of the union members sit in the Board of Executive of Hapsari Federation. Hence the union leads to the emergence of new leaders...”<sup>34</sup>

Lely Zaelani from Hapsari explains the advantage of having a Federation by comparing it to KPI's organization as a coalition.

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council of Hapsari, Deli Serdang, 21 May 2012.

“Organizations based on a collection of issues or core concerns, such as KPI, are more vulnerable compared to territorial unions that are established to address local needs such as preschool education or other local issues. Issue or concern-based organizations may not reflect local needs and the local organizations would have to constantly match local needs with issues or concerns of the national organization.”<sup>35</sup>

Members of territorial-based organizations such as Hapsari Federation are able to develop activities and programs that are tailor-made to the needs of local beneficiaries, such as in the case of preschools in villages. Women and other people in the village could see with their own eyes how the organization addressed their needs, especially when the activities received endorsement from decision makers in the village and could accommodate the wife of the local leaders.

KPI and Hapsari do have different history. KPI is a coalition of women activists who are concerned with gender inequality. Hapsari is a grassroots women's organization that grew into a union, reflecting the concerns of each member based on the need to improve women's conditions in those specific territories.

Hapsari was established in 1990 as an interest group. In 1996, Hapsari became a foundation. Due to the growth of the organization, in 1999 it set up Serikat Perempuan Independen (SPI or Independent Women Union). From 1999 to 2001, leadership in Hapsari and SPI overlapped. In order to address the overlapping leadership as well as to nurture women's leadership in increasing number of district-based unions, in the 2001 Hapsari congress established Hapsari Federasi Serikat Perempuan Merdeka (Hapsari Federation of Independent Women Unions), comprising of district unions such as SPI Labuhanbatu, SPI Sima Lungun, SPI Deli Serdang, SPI Langkat, and Perserikatan Organisasi Wanita dan Anak (OWA) Palembang (Union of Women and Children Organizations).

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Lely Zaelani, Head of National Committee Council of Hapsari, Jakarta, 28 June 2012.

The decision to become a federation took a long process of deliberation. One important consideration for the decision was the need to accommodate the desire of village women to become leaders of the federation. Their willingness to be actively involved and to take charge and get organized had convinced them that federation was indeed the right option for them. Because Hapsari was not a union of academics or experts, the members were ready to learn to organize and take charge of the whole process by doing. The federation has been financed through membership fee and income generated from the making and selling soap and coffee and other products, and they have been persistent in finding other revenue sources to develop financial independence and to become less dependent on donors. Hapsari federation's main agenda is to promote gender equality and justice in the private domain. Another issue they would like to reflect and address is related to representation – who and what issues did this federation represent?

Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) is also a union, and its individual members have one person one vote during the congress. The NGO is managed by a Board of Executive that is supervised by a Presidium. SP conducts a general meeting annually to evaluate its programs and membership. Those who are inactive could be expelled from SP. Yet due to its reliance on funding from donors, similar to the case of KPI, many members at the local level do not have any activities.

Gerakan Perempuan Lampung (GPL or Lampung Women Movement), established in 2008 by alumni of gender justice and anti violence discussion forum, also took the form of a mass organization. The establishment of GPL was initiated by Damar NGO. Actually all of 1,618 GPL members graduated from Damar's education program that was carried out since 2000.<sup>36</sup>

Changing organization form from foundation to association or from association to mass-based organization does not necessarily ensure the

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with S.N. Laila, Lampung Women Movement, Lampung, 9 May 2012.

sustainability of women's organizations. Although SP has become a mass-based organizations, it still lost a number of local chapters due to lack of funding and program activities. A number of individuals were still making effort to revive the organization.<sup>37</sup> KPI in Padang also suffered similar fate. Activities carried out by its Women's Halls (Balai Perempuan) had dwindled down.

Deeper examination reveals that the problems faced by the foundations, associations and mass-based organizations are actually not primarily rooted in the lack of funding. The underlying cause of the problem is the inability of the issue-based women's organizations to represent the needs and interests of women in the local areas. Territorial-based organizations that take the form of union or federation, such as Hapsari and Pesada, are better positioned to accommodate local women to leadership positions and hence enabling the organization to address the needs of women at the local areas. Therefore, they have performed much better than their other women's organizations counterparts.

Many women's organizations do not transform themselves to become associations, let alone federations. Many women's NGOs remain as foundations, and this does not necessarily lead them to losing resources and constituents. The key to the survival and development of their organization is the same with what has strengthened Hapsari and Pesada, which is their ability to develop programs that address and accommodate the real needs of women. But unlike Hapsari and Pesada that have an organizational structure that ensures the participation of local women in leadership positions, they need to put a lot more efforts to make sure that the programs that they develop address the real needs of the women and not the needs of donor agencies, the government, or their executive director and board members. Below are examples of programs that address the specific needs of different women groups, hence allowing the women's organizations to survive and expand their programs.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Yuni Walrif, candidate member of Solidaritas Perempuan Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

### Violence Against Women

Numerous rape cases that happened during the 1998 May riots had triggered some women's organizations and their network to focus their advocacy on women that were victims of (sexual) violence. Their persistent advocacy succeeded in convincing President B.J. Habibie to establish the National Commission on Violence Against Women, which became the momentum for women activists to establish a movement against violence. This time period witnessed the mushrooming of women's crisis centres hosted by various women's organizations to deal with victims of violence.

"In the last two years, we have been dealing with victims of sexual violence. Now our staf Mely is handling three rape cases involving school children. In most of the cases, the victims do not even know the perpetrators. Also there is one domestic violence case. But we deal more with cases of sexual violence. The victims of sexual violence are women from a variety of social classes, ages, cultures and religions."<sup>38</sup>

Works on violence against women requires the experience, knowledge and skills related to the variety of the victims' social, cultural and class backgrounds and the physical and psychological damages that the victims suffer. Therefore empowerment should also be provided both to the victims and their family members, as explained by Selly Fitriani:

"Support should be given not only to the victims but to the family as well. What has happened is not the victims' fault. Violence against women is a violation of human rights."<sup>39</sup>

The works are not just about taking care and empowering the victims and their family members. Public education is also high in the agenda. Walrif from Pandang said that

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Yefri Heriani, Director of WCC Nurani Perempuan Padang, 17 May 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Selly Fitriani, Director Damar Lampung, Lampung 11 May 2012.

“besides taking care of the victims and their family members, we also need to educate the public. We from We Can Campaign (anti violence against women campaign) advocate this issue through radio. Besides radio advocacy, we also conduct public discussions to make more people understand that this issue is our issue and anybody can be a victim of violence.”<sup>40</sup>

The field of violence against women does not stop at counselling, empowerment and public education. Litigation is an important step for the victims to demand for justice.

### **Increasing Women's Political Participation Agenda**

Another women organizations' program that has succeeded in addressing the real needs of women on the ground is policy advocacy against regulations that discriminate women. Discriminatory policies at the national and local level legitimize injustices against women. A study conducted by the National Commission on Violence Against Women showed that during the period of 1999-2009, 63 local policies that discriminated women were passed by the local parliaments. Twenty one policies regulated how women should dress, thirty seven policies authorized the eradication of prostitution and hence criminalized women sex workers, one policy regulated relations between unmarried men and women, and four policies discriminated against the rights of migrant workers.<sup>41</sup> Regional autonomy has opened up space for local governments to issue local regulations that suit local customs, religion and conditions. In reality, according to the National Commission on Violence Against Women findings, many local regulations actually end up discriminating women.

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Yuni Walrif, candidate member of Solidaritas Perempuan Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Komnas Perempuan, Atas Nama Otonomi Daerah: Pelembagaan Diskriminasi dalam Tatanan Negara-Bangsa Indonesia Laporan Pemantauan Kondisi Pemenuhan Hak-hak Konstitusional Perempuan di 16 Kabupaten/Kota Pada 7 Provinsi, Jakarta 2010.

To conduct advocacy against the discriminatory policies, many women organizations put legal and political issues as their core strategy to promote gender justice and equality. Almost all women's organizations include public policy advocacy at the national and/or local level in their programs.

Some policy advocacies were successful but some others did not yield the expected results. Currently there are still Sharia regulations in many regencies/cities in Indonesia that forbid women to go out of the house after six in the evening without being accompanied by her husband or family member. The existence of local regulations that oblige women to wear hijab was also noted in the annual report of the National Commission on Violence against Women.

Their determination to ensure gender sensitive public policies has made a number of women's organizations develop programs to promote women to become Members of the Parliament. Women organizations see occupying legislative seats as a good strategy to push for public policies that promote gender justice. Those organizations advocated for 30 percent quota for women candidates, raised political awareness of women in the work places, and provided capacity building to women candidates. Many women's organizations such as KPI assisted those women candidates in preparing their campaign kits and conducting fund-raising. Tanty, the Secretary General of West Sumatera KPI said that:

"There were 58 Women Halls in West Sumatera. We conducted discussions on various issues. We also had Presidium meeting once every three months. Nowadays the discussions are on Election preparation. We had discussions with women candidates, motivating and helping them to identify local needs for campaign purposes."<sup>42</sup>

Solidaritas Perempuan Association is among women organizations that are very active in campaigning for women's political participation.

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Tanty Herida, Secretary General of KPI in West Sumatera, Padang, 17 May 2012.

Because their motto is *Personal is Political*, they view all aspects of personal life as political,

“... our program is to provide information on women issues to women. Women need to understand that expensive daily staples and pricy school fees are issues related to national and global political decisions. We collect more information on those issues and disseminate them to women candidates, activists and leaders. We set up campus discussion series. Now we are campaigning our “Stop impoverishing women” slogan. We also organize village discussions to engage women in discussions, to relate their daily problems to global and national political decisions. We invite the public to control public decision makers. Once they develop political awareness, the women would act accordingly to promote gender justice.”<sup>43</sup>

### Legal Aid

Changing the legal system to become gender friendly is also a big field for women's organizations. The field includes the provision of legal aid to women, policy advocacy, and the mainstreaming of gender justice into the curriculum of the Department of Law in universities. While providing legal aid to women victims, LBH APIK has also been conducting advocacy to make the legal system equal for men and women to ensure the fulfilment of women's rights.<sup>44</sup> Its branch in Mataram has been working to mainstream gender justice into the School of Law curriculum in Mataram University. They organized seminars and workshops to convince the university leadership to introduce new courses such as “Women and Law” and “Gender and Law.” Lecturers are expected to integrate gender justice themes when they discuss about Labour Law, Criminal Law, and Marriage Law.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Yuni Riawati, Solidaritas Perempuan, Mataram 18 May 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Ratna Bantara Munti, External Director of LBH APIK Jakarta, Jakarta 24 May 2012

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Beauty Erawati, Director of LBH APIK East Nusa Tenggara, Mataram, 16 May 2012.

Pekka documented discriminatory practices experienced by grassroots women who did not have marriage, divorce, birth and child custody certificates. They conducted discussions to raise the awareness of grassroots women regarding the importance of those papers in the eyes of the law when it comes to marriage, divorce, child custody, and joint property ownership.<sup>46</sup> The provision of legal aid and the facilitation to get the certificates do indeed address the real need of grassroots women.

### Education

Educating women and the public regarding gender justice and constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing public discourses on women are everlasting works. Not only that younger generations need to be exposed to gender injustices, but conservative groups keep developing public discourses that discriminate women and promoting policies related to the control of women's body.

Kalyanamitra and Kapal Perempuan have been putting their priorities in providing critical education to women with the goal of developing discourses and raising awareness on gender justice and gender equality.

“We continue to provide education on gender justice, which has been Kalyanamitra's signature program. In 2012, we developed a curriculum on sexuality in partnership with Ardhanary Institute. The education sessions are open to the public and most participants were students or new staff working for women's organizations – a maximum of 15 people per session. The session is conducted once a month for a full day.”<sup>47</sup>

Kapal Perempuan as a women alternative education centre has also been conducting programs to raise awareness on gender justice and equality.

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<sup>46</sup> Notes on FGD on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Pekka Group Mataram, Mataram 15 May 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Rena Herdiyani, Executive Director of Kalyanamitra, Jakarta 21 May 2012.

“Kapal Perempuan pays special attention on poor women who have difficulties accessing education. Kapal is also focusing its program in conflict areas such as West and East Nusa Tenggara, West Sulawesi and South Kalimantan, as well as Gorontalo, which is a newly established Moslem-dominated province that used to be part of North Sulawesi province that is dominated by the Christians. We focus on conflict prevention, not conflict resolution, by educating women that would be severely harmed by conflict outbreaks.”<sup>48</sup>

Kapal Perempuan focused its works on providing critical education to vulnerable groups such as women migrant workers, urban poor women, women in conflict areas, and women factory workers. The training provided them with practical know-how such as pre-departure training for migrant workers and more strategic issues such as pluralism and multiculturalism.

### Sexuality Issues

Sexuality issues have been gaining prominence in the past few years. Opposition by Muslim hardliner groups against workshops on sexuality and threats against some NGO offices that work on sexuality issues have contributed to the development of a sense of urgency to conduct policy advocacy and public education.

Ardhanary Institute has been working to promote gender and sexual diversity, which they consider as long-term education program. Ardhanary worked with a number of women's organizations as well as mid-level formal education institutions and undergraduate studies. Its short term programs included empowerment activities such as providing counselling to lesbians, bisexuals and trans-gender (LBT) as well as their families.

“Ardhanary Institute has regularly been setting up trainings and discussion series to educate the public about LBT perspective and fight

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Misiyah, Head of Board of Executive of Kapal Perempuan Institute, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

against homophobia, which is the root of discriminative actions against LBT. We have developed partnership with Sekolah Tinggi Teologia (Theology Institute). They have routinely been sending two to three students to Ardhanary Institute for three months to actively participate in all activities organized by us.”<sup>49</sup>

Ardhanary Institute has been disseminating LBT perspective through formal and informal education to teachers and lecturers, counsellors and shelter workers who will then pass the information on LBT to people who want to know more about gender and sexuality. Ardhanary does not require its partner organizations to work systematically on LBT issues. Whatever works that they do, Ardhanary views them as important since LBT are vulnerable groups entitled to receive any kinds of assistance. Ardhanary also works together with other women's organizations that work on sexuality issues.

“Ardhanary worked together with service provider organizations such as WCC Rifka Anissa and Youth Counselling Center of PKBI Yogyakarta to integrate gender and sexual diversity issues into their counselling training curricula to increase the knowledge and capacity of their counsellors in LBT and sexuality issues.”<sup>50</sup>

For younger and other non-organized LBT groups, Ardhanary prepared pocket books containing basic information on LBT rights.

### **Women Economic Empowerment**

There has been a sustained demand for women's economic empowerment. Other than working on the issues of early childhood education and legal aid for domestic violence, Hapsari also responded to the real needs of grassroots women in the villages to improve their livelihood by facilitating the formation of credit unions to address the needs of home-based

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with Augustine, Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 22 May 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Augustine, Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 22 May 2012.

small enterprises. While conducting works on women's crisis centre and legal advocacy for domestic violence, Pesada also facilitated the formation of credit unions for women. Hapsari set up livelihood program to provide capacity building for marginalized women with the goal of improving their livelihood. Hapsari used innovative techniques in community organizing and advocacy such as the use of community radios and theatre performances.

"Our community radio is a learning media for Hapsari members to become facilitators and resource people. We also organize theatre shows on women's issues to be performed in public gatherings in the village hall."<sup>51</sup>

The main focus of ASPPUK has also been on providing economic empowerment for grassroots women by making use of local institutions. That way, the NGO network could better address the needs of local women.

"In Padang, ASPPUK has provided capacity building in financial book-keeping record, marketing, business cooperation and development building to mothers running small enterprises. We organize discussions by using the local Bundo Kandung institutions and traditions to address gender inequality that the women face in their daily life."<sup>52</sup>

ASPPUK has started to address the needs of women small businesses to conduct policy and budget advocacy. ASPPUK has started to address the needs of grassroots women that are affected by climate change impacts and natural disasters.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Riani, Head of Board of Executive of Hapsari, Deli Serdang 21 May 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Notes of FGD Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with ASPPUK assisted group, Padang, 17 May 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M, Padang 14 May 2012.

## Women's Health

Health, especially reproductive and child health, is another perennial issue for women. This field still needs a lot of work and many women's NGOs have been focusing their works on this issue. A women activist from Totalitas in Padang said that

“The biggest portion of our program is on maternal and child health to help mothers to improve their children's nutrition and become self-reliant economically. We facilitate the women to have discussions to identify and manage their economic potentials. We identify children with good nutrition in the community so that other mothers from the same community can emulate them to improve the nutrition of their own children. We also improve the infrastructure for clean water.”<sup>54</sup>

Jaringan Perempuan Pesisir (Network of Women in the Coastal Areas - JPrP) has recognized the vital role of clean water for the health of women living in the coastal areas.

“... we facilitated access to clean water that has been neglected by the government. We used CSR funding from Lampung Bank to do it. At one time, we mobilized 30 mothers to the mayor's office to demand for clean water. We also sent five representatives to the Provincial Development Planning Agency with the same message. We had built foundation for water tower. We only need the towers to start providing clean water. If they do not help us getting the towers, we would go to journalists to make sure that our voices are heard.”<sup>55</sup>

Other women organizations such as Indonesia's Foundation for Healthy and Welfared Families (Yayasan Keluarga Sehat Sejahtera Indonesia/YKSSI) have been working on reproductive health issues. YKSSI has conducted outreach, promotion and training to religious and traditional leaders on health reproductive issues concerning youths, young

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Totalitas Foundation, Padang 15 May 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Yati, JPrP, Lampung 14 May 2012.

mothers and children. They discussed about family planning and youth and women reproductive health issues.<sup>56</sup>

### Survival Strategies of Women's Organizations

In terms of issue, a number of women's organizations have moved away from the general program of empowering women economically and politically and decided to work on more specific issues such as violence against women, women's sexual rights, discriminative cultural values, discriminative religious interpretations and other gender-related issues to make their programs responsive to the needs of various women's groups. While struggling for sustainability by making its programs responsive to the real needs of women on the ground, women's organizations also develop networking with each other and with other organizations to increase the effectiveness of their programs.

One networking strategy is coalition development. One important condition for forming or joining a coalition is the existence of a common awareness on issues to be jointly advocated. Women's organizations that choose to work in a coalition attention to political momentum and calculated opportunities and threats in conducting a joint advocacy.

"In 1999 Nurani Perempuan joined the National Commission on Violence against Women learning forums. The coalition lasted until 2006. During the seven years period, Nurani Perempuan benefited immensely from the learning forum network. Our advocacy skills increased significantly and our anti-violence campaigns became more successful."<sup>57</sup>

Due to its strengthened capacity, in 2011 Nurani Perempuan was appointed to become the coordinator for learning forum for women in Sumatera. This learning forum then developed partnership with other in-

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Latifa, Director of YKSSI, Mataram, 15 May 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Interview of Yefri Heriani, Director of WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

ternational and national organizations. This year, the learning forum developed partnership with Puskapol UI, which taught them about democracy, human rights and gender.<sup>58</sup> Some other women organizations joined a coalition when they wanted to expand their work to other areas in Indonesia.

A number of women's organizations also adopted collaboration strategy that was looser than a coalition. One example of a successful collaboration was the coalition of women's organizations formed after the fall of Suharto to push the Habibie government to establish the National Commission on Violence against Women in 1998. The history of the collaboration dated back when the Voices of Concerned Mothers (Suara Ibu Peduli) movement was established during the 1998 economic crises. Women activists from various organizations and background gathered and conducted a number of intensive meetings to discuss the plight of disadvantaged women who could no longer afford to buy milk for their children due to the severe economic crisis. At that time, many women activists supported student movements by providing them with food, volunteers, mass mobilization and public opinion building. The collaboration that succeeded in demanding for the establishment of the National Commission on Violence against Women consisted not only of women's organizations but also people from the government and parliament members.

Every year, the National Commission publishes its annual report to commemorate the International Day of Anti Violence Against Women. To write the report, this institution has to collect data from a number of other institutions such as the police, the general attorney, the court (public and religious) and hospitals from all over Indonesia. This requires a long process of production collaboration, based on common agreement on objectives, platforms, and equality amongst actors involved in this partnership. This has not been easy.

Similar collaborations were responsible for the success to pass gender responsive laws such as Anti Domestic Violence (Law no 23 of 2004),

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Anti Trafficking Law, Citizenship Law and General Election Law. Parliament members and government agencies such as the Ministry of Women and Children Empowerment were part of those collaborations.

The collaboration between women's organizations and the government and parliament continued after the passing of these gender responsive laws. Regional autonomy has allowed the passing of local regulations to monitor the implementation of the gender sensitive policies. In 2011 the local government of Lampung passed Regional Regulation No. 10/2011 on Gender Mainstreaming in Development, which provides equal opportunities for men and women in development. In Lampung the collaboration succeeded in making the parliament to pass Regulation No. 6/2006 on Women and Children Victims of Violence in Lampung. Collaboration with government officials at the local level was not easy to maintain since many of them were rotated to different positions quite often.

“Damar works closely with law enforcers by building and strengthening the perspectives of the police and general attorney. Yet public officials are often rotated to different positions, and the replacements need to be educated all over again.”<sup>59</sup>

For many women's organizations, the effectiveness of their programs depends on their ability to develop collaboration with the government. Pekka and ASPPUK that provide economic empowerment to women have to work with relevant government agencies and officials and make sure that they receive the benefits from the partnership. There was no other way but collaborating with the government when Pekka assisted marginalized women to get birth, marriage and divorce certificates. Hapsari also collaborated with the government when it participated in delivering insurance services from the local government to grassroots women.

Women's organizations develop two-way partnerships with international women's networks to mobilize more supports and to increase the

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Selly Fitriani, Director of Damar Lampung, 11 May 2012.

effectiveness of their domestic works. Migrant Care, for example, has developed partnership with international organizations such as International Organization on Migrant Workers (IOM), ACIL and ICMC that have branch offices in Jakarta. Migrant Care, however, has also established branches of their national organizations in other countries such as Malaysia. Meanwhile Kalyanamitra serves as the Secretariat for CEDAW Working Group Indonesia (CWGI) to coordinate the writing of a “shadow report”. Such position had opened ample opportunities for Kalyanamitra to develop network with other women's organizations and with other CEDAW reporting organizations in the Asia Pacific region. Kalyanamitra succeeded in becoming a focal point for ASEAN Women Caucus and the International Women Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) in Asia Pacific. Other women organizations are engaged in various international networking through the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), and other incidental partnerships such as joint publication and joint advocacy.

Fundraising is crucial issue when an organization is engaged in substantial collaborations with other parties. However, although funding is key to their sustainability, women organizations do not succumb easily to the interests of international donors. Some organizations develop programs that are not the favourite of donor agencies. Solidaritas Perempuan and KPI, for example, developed a program to anticipate the dangers of globalization. Some other organizations like Rahima decided to focus on religious issues and incorporated gender perspective into the teaching and daily life of the *pesantren* religious schools to promote religious understanding that recognizes equal relation between men and women.

Many women's organizations actually did not want to rely on foreign donor agencies to achieve their long term goals. However, due to their limited capacity in raising funds, they have to negotiate with funding agencies to balance the organization's interest and the interests of donor agencies. Even the National Commission on Violence against Women, which was supposed to receive sufficient funding from the government to achieve its long-term objectives, ended up competing against other women's or-

organizations to access funding from donor agencies. Some women's organizations that have grassroots membership tried to develop financial revenues to support the sustainability of their organizations. PPSW, for example, developed women's cooperatives, while KPI and Solidaritas Perempuan developed a membership fee scheme. KPI and Kowani made significant efforts to mobilize donations from their members and sympathizers. Yet such independent fundraising is insufficient to finance the organizations and their work programs.

This has resulted in the competition among women's organizations to access donor funds. Donor agencies are more interested in 'big' or 'experienced' organizations and they consider the smaller ones as lacking the capacity to properly manage their programs and finances. This situation has weakened the ability of women's organizations, especially the smaller ones, to respond rapidly to the needs on the ground. The bigger women's organizations ended-up implementing programs funded by donor agencies, and they found it difficult to stay in line with the goals that they formulated when they established the organizations.

Funding from donors secures the financing of program implementation on the ground. However, women's organizations should find a balance between implementing donor-funded programs and pursuing their initial objectives to fight for gender justice, especially for women at the grassroots level. Moreover, 'big' women organizations should also assist the emergence of 'new' organizations promoting the same causes.

Relationship with donor agencies has indeed impacted the way women organizations organize their work. The 2009 Padang earthquake relief efforts have made the women's organizations shift their goal from promoting gender justice to follow the humanitarian concerns of the donor agencies. LP2M that used to have only around 10 to 14 staff members had to hire a lot more staff to do the disaster relief programs, and it resulted in internal conflicts between staff members and the management.

Other women's organizations such as Hapsari have been struggling to combine donor funding and independent fund raising. After Hivos com-

pleted its funding to Hapsari, the organization started to charge Rp 1,000 monthly membership fee to their members and produce soap and other products to sell. Part of the profit is used to help support the day to day operation of the organization. According to them, they are looking for support from other donor agencies:

“For fundraising, Hapsari has been sending proposals while maintaining our independent fundraising efforts through Credit Unions, as well as our business units in each union.”<sup>60</sup>

Zulfa from Hapsari said that non-government organizations also tried to get funding from local governments by developing program partnerships. Hapsari and Damar in Lampung have done it.

“Non-government organizations should be flexible and start to implement their programs together with the government to get funding. Non-government organizations should take the form of a legal entity in order to partner with others, otherwise they would not be able to do so.”<sup>61</sup>

LP2M in Padang has received funding from donor agencies such as Heks, Swiss Solidarity, Hivos, Global Fund for Women, and BFA. They have developed partnership with other non-government organizations such as Walhi West Sumatera, Konsorsium Pengembangan Masyarakat Madani (KMMM), Lingkung Derma and with government agencies such as the National Agency for Disaster Mitigation (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/BNPB). They were in the process of developing partnership with the Ministry of Women Empowerment.<sup>62</sup> Totalitas in Padang has developed similar set up. They received funding from Project Center In-

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<sup>60</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, member of Hapsari National Committee Council, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

ternational (PCI), HEIFER, New Zealand Aid, and Johan Niter (Germany), developed partnership with local NGOs such as LBH Padang, and worked together with the Department of Health, Forestry and Agriculture.<sup>63</sup>

### Closing Remarks

The 1998 political reform opened up ample democratic space for the public to voice their interests. Alongside with other pro democracy movements, women's movements pushed for the passing of numerous gender responsive laws. The successes of women's movements in this Reform era owed to the strength of networking among actors that were concerned with gender justice and equality. The introduction of various gender responsive laws is an achievement worthy to be noted. Those laws are crucial for the protection of women rights as citizens in Indonesia.

Decentralization, however, has led to the emergence of discriminative regulations at the local level, as noted in the Annual Report published by the National Commission on Domestic Against Women. Those regulations are based on religious values<sup>64</sup> that view women to be subordinate to men and that women's body need to be regulated by laws.<sup>65</sup> Besides its successes in advocating the introduction of many gender responsive laws at the national level, women's movements faced the introduction of 63 local regulations that discriminated women in various parts of the country.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Totalitas Foundation, Padang 15 May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Customary Institution, Syariah Law and The Marginalisation of Indonesian Women, Edriana Noerdin, in *Women in Indonesia, Gender, Equity and Development*, Edited by Kathryn Robinson et al, ISEAS, Singapore, 2002.

<sup>65</sup> *Feminisme dan Relevansinya*, Kamla Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan, PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama and Kalyanamitra, Jakarta, 1995.

<sup>66</sup> National Commission on Violence against Women, *Atas Nama Otonomi Daerah: Pelembagaan Diskriminasi Dalam Tatahan Negara-Bangsa Indonesia*, Laporan Pemantauan Kondisi Pemenuhan Hak-hak Konstitusional Perempuan di 16 Kabupaten/Kota Pada 7 Provinsi, Jakarta 2010.

The era of political openness has enabled women's organizations to respond to a breath of issues, making the organizations handle more diverse issues and programs, from women's political empowerment and participation to other issues such as pluralism, women in Islam, the environment and sexuality. It shows the capability of women's organizations in Indonesia to respond to the needs, interests and issues of various groups that are relevant to their goals. Besides expanding to cover more issues and programs, women's movements have also succeeded in working with more diverse actors, including government officials and parliament members both at the local and national level, in pushing for gender responsive policies, budget allocations and programs. The scope of work of national women organizations has also changed. A number of them have program activities in local areas outside of Jakarta in partnership with local organizations in the respective areas.

In order to become responsive to the diverse needs of women, many women's organizations have adjusted their organizational form. Before the Reform era, they chose foundation as their legal entity. Currently, women's organizations have adopted diverse forms of legal entity. Many of them stay as foundation, but many others have transformed themselves to become association, union, coalition, federation as well as government commission such as the National Commission on Violence against Women.

This study based on interviews and focus group discussions with women activists from five research areas of Jakarta, Lombok, Padang, Lampung and North Sumatera shows that Indonesian women's organizations after the fall of Soeharto have contributed to the improvement of women's conditions in Indonesia. Women's organizations have continued to challenge gender-based power relations between men and women. They do this by developing and implementing strategic programs to promote gender justice through education and discourse construction and reconstruction. They also organize trainings to make women aware about their rights and empower them to demand the government to fulfil their rights in health, education, and livelihood. Women organizations in this reform era also consider sexuality problems and issues as crucial since homophobia is part of the problems of patriarchal society.



## CHAPTER III

# Transformation of Movements and the Strengthening of Women's Leadership

Sita Aripurnami



### Introduction

Leadership is associated with empowerment to increase the capacity of individuals to have self-confidence and the ability to manage, persuade and mobilize other people.<sup>1</sup> Promoting women's leadership, however, is not just about improving individual capacity. Once women gain increased capacity, usually they would share their knowledge and skill to members of her family and community.

WRI's research findings show that women with access to knowledge and social and financial capital could better represent women's needs in public decision-making processes. WRI research aimed at capturing the perspectives of women activists and leaders in Jakarta, North Sumatera, Padang and Lombok who worked to provide solutions to problems faced by women in the respective areas.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 8 "Women Leading Change. Experiences Promoting Women's Empowerment, Leadership and Gender Justice. Case Studies of Five Asian Organizations", ed. Joanna Bouma, Pelagia Communications, Oxfam Novib, 2011.



### NGOs and the Concepts of Women's Leadership

Leadership is an abstract concept based on social construction. Views on 'leadership' are highly diverse, conditioned by subjective experiences of each individual throughout their life and social processes. In general imagination of an ideal leadership is structurally and culturally constructed. When those constructs are patriarchal in nature, then men would fit more with the ideal figure to lead, and vice versa. However, structural and cultural conditions are not predetermined and permanent. Actually they are always open to deconstruction and reconstruction. In the contemporary contexts, as captured in WRI research, women's movements have been influencing public imaginations of what is considered as ideal leadership. Their goal is to move the concepts away from patriarchal values to adopt more feminist values.

The main obstacle for developing the concept of feminist leadership is the dominant patriarchal discourse that dichotomizes the role of mother and father. While fathers go out of the house as breadwinners to earn incomes, mothers are supposed to stay home nurturing children. This dichotomy presents a heavy burden on women when they assume a leadership position because it does not match with the mainstream norms that expect them to stay home as housewives. However, the rapid growth of women's NGOs in the 1990s and 2000s is an important indicator on the persistence and capacity of women's movements to continue finding spaces to promote the idea of gender justice. Within the two decades, they managed to promote the idea of women's leadership that is based on the principles of gender justice and equality and sisterhood.

Based on theoretical perspectives, leadership is an idealization of values in taking action and developing strategies. W.A. Gerungan (1996)<sup>2</sup> elaborates on three characteristics of leadership – social perception, abstract thinking and emotional balance. Such ideal characteristics are a combination of the perception of the society and their social construc-

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<sup>2</sup> See page 135, Psikologi Sosial, Gerungan W.A, Bandung, Refika Aditama, 2002.

tion processes. But the role of the individual and his/her quality in the construction processes also count. Kodar and Mien from Pekka Jakarta, for example, said that

“A leader should have the ability to listen and share with members, and to generate conclusions to be agreed upon in a consensual way by the group. This is the basis of all leadership. Feminist leadership should begin with herself and then it expands to reach the others.”<sup>3</sup>

The perspective above shows the need to have a dynamic leadership transformation from the self to the social and vice versa. This social process connects private and public domain's as two separate yet integrated entities. This view is based on women's experience as the head of the family – a position of the self within the social and organizational contexts. This view would be slightly different when it is based within the context of the organization – both in local and national scale. This is confirmed by the view of the Head of National Commissions of Violence against Women Yuni Chusaifah who ran the national-scale organization:

“The practice of leadership requires co-chairing or teaming – because individual figures are not enough to run programs or implement activities that are national and inter-sectoral in character, and on top of that we need to develop synergy with the government. Teaming requires the willingness to create chemistry among individuals and the time of having worked together is one of the foundations of such chemistry.”<sup>4</sup>

The view above reflects that leadership in large-scale organizations focuses on the need of the organizations to develop collegial relationship

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<sup>3</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia, Jakarta 9 May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Yuni Chusaifah, Head of National Commission of Violence Against Women, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

within the team. The figure in charge for national organizations should definitely have large scale organizational experiences. This is different with the leadership view of women who are head of socially marginalized household families. When those women get involved in an organization, their experience and ability to lead themselves in such socially marginalized positions becomes an important factor that helps them to position themselves in the larger public spaces. At the local level, leadership values of leaders of women's organizations in Mataram also reflect local values as well. For example, according to a JarPUK (Women's Small Enterprises Network – Jaringan Perempuan Usaha Kecil) members, an ideal leader should be patient, experienced, wise and fair.

“A leader should be patient, smarter than the community, have experiences, wise and fair... A leader should be willing to spend money from his or her pocket to assist the members... A leader should prioritize the interests of the women or members, and be loyal.”<sup>5</sup>

This reflects differences of leadership values compared to the definitions of the abstract and ideal leadership concepts. The diversity of views on leadership shows that leadership is indeed a social product and social construction based on the existing contexts. Based on the view voiced by a member of Solidaritas Perempuan in Mataram, leadership goes beyond ideal views or perception but should be brought into actions and conducts that address social conditions. It means that leadership has the agency function aimed to generate changes.

“For me, a leader should fight for the people he or she leads. He or she should not be selfish, and he/she should make use of his/her leadership to address the needs of the society.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with JarPUK group, Central Lombok, Jakarta 16 May 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Baiq Zulhiatina, Executive Council of Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram, Mataram 15 May 2012.

For members of Panca Karsa association, the important characteristic of a leader is his or her ability to appreciate the opinion of others and to work with other people and organizations to solve problems faced by members of the groups – in the case of Panca Karsa migrant workers and their families.

“A leader should have the honesty, responsibility, and capacity to fight for the rights of the groups. He/she should be brave to speak up and to be transparent and impartial ...those are the things we want. A leader should be bright and smart - a fool could not become a leader. In order to be a leader, he or she first has to invite all mothers to attend trainings, meetings and to motivate them continuously. Then he or she has to follow the rules of the organization and respect other people's opinion. Another one is that he or she has to be able to work together with everybody, including networks, and have charisma.”<sup>7</sup>

Similar view is voiced by Merry from Nurani Perempuan, Padang:

“A leader should understand the problem of the people. He or she should be willing to listen to their aspiration, to what they need. He or she does not merely create policies that nobody in the community wants since it only wastes energy, thoughts and materials. A leader should understand the situation and what the people want.”<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, since a large part of the poor consist of women, women leaders should also have the capacity to address poverty issues. A woman activist from Lampung says that women's issues are not restricted to just gender issues. Poverty and violence are two big issues that women have been facing. Hence women leaders should also be visionary in term of reaching a wider goal related to poverty.

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<sup>7</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Panca Karsa Association group, Mataram 17 May 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Merry, volunteers from WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

“Women leaders should have the capacity to go beyond their local context, such as Sri Mulyani.”<sup>9</sup>

From the field of Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (LBT) or special age groups such as adolescence-early adulthood (18 to mid 20 years), Agustin from Ardhanary Institute in Jakarta expressed her agreement that a leader should be accurate in capturing the needs and the interests of the group and has the skills to communicate with them.

“Due to our age differences with the youths, we should remember that our communication style may be seen as too serious, so they don’t get the message.”<sup>10</sup>

Ardhanary solved this problem by asking the youths to evaluate and give feedbacks to them regarding appropriate ways of communication. According to Agustin, feminist leadership requires a medium of the same age to communicate with the groups or the communities. According to Latifa from Yayasan Keluarga Sehat Sejahtera Indonesia (YKSSI) in Mataram, effective communication is important because an ideal leader should be able to motivate the group he or she leads.

“A leader should be able to identify and understand the characteristics of those people he or she leads and motivate them to achieve their common goals.”<sup>11</sup>

This means that a leader should have prominent characters and behaviors that make them stand out from the community. In terms of organization, Kodar and Mein from the National Secretary of Pekka in Jakarta emphasized the ability of a leader to listen, share, and generate conclu-

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ahmad Yulden Erwin, Coordinator of Anti Corruption Committee, Lampung 15 May 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Agustin, Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 22 May 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Latifa Bay, Director of YKSSI Mataram, Mataram 15 May 2012.

sion to be agreed upon by the group. On the other hand, the figure as an individual should have the capacity to represent his/her institution in strategic forums and network meetings, as highlighted by LBH APIK (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan) as well as KPI (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan dan Demokrasi). According to Ratna Matara Munti from LBH APIK and Dian Kartikasari from KPI, individual leadership is crucial especially in dealing with government institutions. According to them, it was very important for women's NGOs to have credible chair with profound presence that cannot be ignored. Hence, the individual and organizational leadership quality is important for the positioning of women's organizations. Organizational leadership is needed to facilitate the institution in decision-making processes. Individual leadership is needed in facing the government in public forums to assert the position of their respective organizations. Hence it is necessary to equip the ones in charge with 'leadership technique' such as listening and decision-making skills – all can be provided through special training, obtained through and experiences in organizational management.

Women's leadership is inseparable from leadership practices within the organization because leadership is about managing power relations based on consensus regarding who is the leader and what are the values that he/she should promote. There are ideal values that should provide guidance to feminist leaders. Dina from Pesada said that

“... a woman who leads should respect differences, including differences in strategies. Since feminism fights for women, a feminist leader should have the capacity to do both gender and power analysis so that women are not oppressed by others or oppress the others.”<sup>12</sup>

Members of JarPUK and Solidaritas Perempuan in Mataram also expressed their view on the capacity of a leader. According to them, when

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Dina Lumbantobing, founder of Pesada, Medan 25 May 2012.

dealing with diverse contexts, a leader should be able to hold democratic principles so he or she would be able to appreciate differences. Putri from WCC Nurani Perempuan in Padang also voiced out the same idea:

“An ideal leader accepts differences on how the public think, as well as their backgrounds. A leader should also be able to accommodate, synergize those differences into a unity. Many leaders are not ready to accommodate differences; and that’s a pity. We talk about Pancasila, unity in diversity.”<sup>13</sup>

According to Beauty in Mataram, abstract thinking as well as gender knowledge would allow a woman leader to offer solutions to problems faced by women:

“A leader should have knowledge on gender, pro-women attitude, know how to accommodate staff, update information, and develop strategies to achieve justice for women.”<sup>14</sup>

Isnaini from Totalitas Foundation in Padang offers the same perspective as Beauty:

“A good leader should be committed to the organization. He or she should be accountable, responsible, honest and – the most important thing – have gender perspective because all issues are related to women’s issues.”<sup>15</sup>

The characteristic of emotional balance is mentioned by almost all resource people from the five research areas. Emotional balance is required if a leader wishes to tap the feeling and aspiration of all members in order to successfully implement his or her mandate. A Pekka member

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Putri, volunteer of WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Beauty Erawati, Director of LBH APIK NTB, Mataram 16 May 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Totalitas Foundation, Padang 15 May 2012.

offered an example on how a leader should be able to listen and stay alert in dealing with problems and complaints from members of the organization or the neighboring community.

“A leader should care for others and knows when to take emergency responses, to help when the situation calls for it. He or she should be alert to act quickly when there is a domestic violence or a sick person that needs medical care.”<sup>16</sup>

Emotional balance includes knowing clearly the objectives of his or her action.

“A good leader should understand what he or she is doing for the organization. Reputation is useless when one has no clue about the objectives as well as the risks – because otherwise anything that he or she does would not be focused and easily challenged by others.”<sup>17</sup>

Tya from WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang, mentioned the same thing:

“An ideal leader should know the conditions of the people he or she leads. He or she should know what they need and – the most important thing – not becoming an authoritarian leader.”<sup>18</sup>

Yuni Walrif from Solidaritas Perempuan Padang mentioned that balanced or equal relationship between the leader and the staff is an important characteristic:

“... it is simple, a good leader is one who is accepted by the group and he or she can also understand the organization (in term of goals

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Totalitas Foundation, Padang 15 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Tya, volunteer of WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Yuni Walrif, candidate member of Solidaritas Perempuan Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

and objectives) and understand the staff as well. There are smart leaders but they are not accepted because they are arrogant and complacent. In my opinion, they are not good leaders, because good leaders are those who are able to develop balanced relationship.”<sup>19</sup>

In an FGD, members of Hapsari in Deli Serdang provided a conclusion to their understanding of women's leadership:

“An ideal leader should come from the grassroots, implements mandates according to the needs of the group, and builds sisterhood in advocating freedom from repression and gender injustice. A leader should know where to go, show the way, and provide direction to achieve the objectives. This can be achieved by building women leadership from the village to the national level in order to support the development of a dignified women movement.”<sup>20</sup>

All organizations visited by WRI in the five research areas were led by women. As leaders in their respective organizations – both at the grassroots and network level – they are able to manage their organizations and members well. According to members of grassroots organizations such as JarPUK in Mataram or Hapsari in Deli Serdang, the existing leadership matches with the characteristic of the ideal women leadership. Although they still had flaws, members of Pekka in Mataram and Nurani Perempuan in Padang thought that the existing leadership in their areas has the capacity to identify and solve problems faced by their members.

“As head of the groups ... she is able to motivate her members ... she can solve problems well by bringing everybody together.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Hapsari union members, 28 May 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with JarPUK group, Mataram 16 May 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Pekka West Nusa Tenggara group, Lingsar 15 May 2012.

Based on the views of WRI's resource people, we can see differences and similarities in what they think as ideal leadership. They mentioned ideal quality of a leader such as "holding a stand against repression and injustices and having the ability to develop collectivity." Moreover, all resource persons confirmed the relationship between leader with the grassroots community, and that a leader should emerge from the communities and develop maturity from her experience in organizing and playing the leading role.

Meanwhile, a leader should also have the capacity to communicate with the public. This shows that leadership is a social process rooted in organizational experience. Organization is an important field for women to learn and develop herself to become a leader. In the beginning, she leads herself, moves to lead her colleagues, and then leads the public to fight against women repression and gender injustices. The involvement of women in organizations is not only to equip one with organizational experience but also to gain, nurture and then disseminate ideal values on leader and leadership to the public.

Other than "holding a stand against repression and injustices and having the ability to develop collectivity" there were other leadership characters that were considered important by some resource persons such as recognition of organizational hierarchy.

"... in Hapsari, hierarchy is part of our leadership concept as it is inseparable with Hapsari's structure as a federation. At the national level, Hapsari has a National Committee Council and a Chair. Each of the federation member has a regulation that manages the relations between a member and the federation at the national level. According to Hapsari, structure and hierarchy are important in an organization as it is needed for decision-making."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Rusmawati, Board of Supervisor of National Committee Council Hapsari, FGD Jakarta, 29 October 2012.

Therefore, leadership in Hapsari did not negate hierarchy. In Hapsari, clarity in structure and hierarchy has led to clarity in division of tasks and responsibilities in carrying out its mandate.

“We need to think through when we talk about values that are against hierarchy. Most of us want democracy, but sometimes we end up not respecting decision making authority. We tend to wish for a fluid organization and do not respect decisions that have been made by the organization. This would lead to chaos and endless conflicts. We should respect the leader that we have elected, and respect decisions that have been made under his or her leadership. In my opinion, as long as the decisions are made through the formal mechanism of meetings as agreed upon, we should be able to exercise the mechanism of a hierarchy democratically.”<sup>23</sup>

Ratna from LHB APIK confirmed the need for an organization to have hierarchy. According to her, there were decisions that require meetings and there were those that did not have to go through such a formal mechanism. The organizational structure that has been agreed upon is to facilitate and make them easier to carry out their works. Existing mechanism implemented by a leader should be respected. According to Ratna, hierarchy should be understood in a wider perspective. Hierarchy is not necessarily negative, but it should be based on the existing structure and be implemented accordingly in order to deal with the tasks and problems faced.

Based on the accounts above, it is clear that concepts of ideal leadership among women organizations are highly diverse, so does the concepts on feminist leadership. In essence, leadership values such as “respect to hierarchy, against injustice and repression, collectivism, sisterhood, sharing, compromise, recognition of differences in opinion are the basis of leadership implemented in women organizations and, in some ways, even mentioned in the organization’s article of association. In practice, interpretation varies. A specific note should be made on various opi-

<sup>23</sup> Ratna Batara Munti, External Director LBH APIK Jakarta, FGD Jakarta, 29 October 2012.

nions stating that hierarchy is inseparable with structure. Those women activists thought that hierarchy was not necessarily negative since it could help regulate the work of a leader in the organization. Women leaders who believed in hierarchy, did not implement their belief strictly. In practice, when they tried to solve problems they used a more inclusive strategy by embracing other actors. Many of them may not call themselves “feminist leader” yet they view that feminist approach is important to exercise those leadership principles on the ground. The term feminist leadership is still open for discussions.

### **Challenges Faced by Women Leaders and Their Strategies**

There are many challenges faced by women leaders. Challenges come from outside and inside the individual women related to the private and public domain dichotomy. One example is that women have to constantly convince people both in their private domain as well as in their community that they can play the role of a leader. Men don't have to do it. Since leadership is not part of the concept of “mother,” women leaders are seen as an anomaly. Therefore, women leaders have to develop specific strategies to negotiate with her husband and communities. The toughest negotiation takes place around the issue of husband-wife power relations in the private domain since it is in the private domain that motherhood norms is the strongest, as confirmed by a source from Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram.

“Ever since I worked, people from my neighborhood seemed to be more respectful to me. Now things are different. They no longer raise their eyebrows when I go home late at night. The biggest challenge comes from my mother after I got divorced. It took me quite sometimes to make her understand. I showed her the invitations and news articles in the papers to make her understand why I had to come home late at night from time to time..”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Baiq Zulhiatina, Executive Council of Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram, 15 May 2012.

Hapsari members said that attracting women to join the organization has not been easy, especially when they have to face family values that women have to stay at home and only men are allowed to join organizations and have activities outside of their homes.

“She was first allowed by her husband to join the organization, yet when she became a parliament member candidate, her husband was furious. He tried to stop her from running for office by saying, “Don’t do it. It makes me uncomfortable if you become a parliament member. Even now, our neighbors sneer at me because you are way ahead of me...”<sup>25</sup>

This is not a simple thing to deal with because this happens every time the organization recruits new members. Hapsari’s members developed a strategy of persuasion, by getting to know the whole family well. Hapsari arranged events and invited them at times that do not interfere with domestic or family responsibility in order to avoid conflicts with their husbands. After such approach has been done continuously, their husbands usually become convinced that their wife’s involvement in the organization brings benefit to themselves and the family. Another challenge is dealing with gossips from the neighbors when husbands do household chores at home. This is an easier challenge to meet. The strategy used to counter these gossips is by doing it persistently, and usually other women in the community started to demand their husbands to help them do household works.

The value that puts women in the private domain presents another challenge. Women are considered inappropriate when they take part in activities in the public domain, especially when they are being critical to decision-makers, most of them are men. The dichotomy between public and domestic domains, between men and women, is a disabling discourse to women leaders since it views women leaders as against social norms. A resource person from Mataram, Lombok, said that

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

“When I raised problems regarding Direct Cash Transfer (Bantuan Langsung Tunai/BLT), the neighbors especially village officials said bad things about me. “Women should not speak like that, women should not challenge the head of the village,” they said. Gender relation in Lombok is far from equal... because women are seen to stay home dealing with domestic chores. This is related to religion factor as well, which necessitate women to nurture their children, to stay at home and be accompanied by the husband when they go out, and to do all household chores themselves. Even women believe these values themselves.”<sup>26</sup>

Members and outreach personnel of Panca Karsa Association mention the same thing:

“We see how women were restricted in their communities and homes. The elders also asked “*Nine nine nendek ngurus sak mene-mene?*” (Why do women want to get involved in these issues?). They were under-estimated, their voice was not heard, and they were not supported by the community of migrant workers families. For the family and the community, women should stay at home and do household chores. Now we have set them ‘free’ as now they can take part in development planning at the village and even district level. Their existence does matter. This is done by persistently inviting them to take part in our activities.”<sup>27</sup>

A father representing Puan Amal Hayati organization confirmed about men's resistance against women leadership in Islamic organizations.

“Nahdlatul Ullama's (NU) culture is still very resistant to women leaders, unless they just lead women groups.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Masnim, Kopwan JarPUK Rindang, Mataram 18 May 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Notes on Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with Panca Karsa Association group, Mataram 17 May 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with A.W. Maryanto, Secretary General of Puan Amal Hayati, Jakarta 9 May 2012.

This shows that Islamic cultural values of the NU only allow women to lead women but not men. As a result, when women take public leadership positions, they are given much heavier attributes compared to men leaders. Along this line of thought, a quite senior women participating in the FGD added:

“To lead, women need more than just courage. Courage itself is not enough.”<sup>29</sup>

All kinds of leadership practice have their own challenges, whether they come from personalities, skills and knowledge, or social and cultural constraints. A number of women activists said that women should just ignore the criticisms related to the role of women in the public domain, they should just ignore the social labelling.<sup>30</sup>

Women's leadership and feminist leadership are indeed inseparable with social cultural factors. This is related to the objective of women's organizations to achieve social changes for gender justice and social justice. When women get organized to achieve the objectives, they have to take risks and face backlashes.<sup>31</sup> In many places, women's involvement in various activities has been responded with resistances. In a Focus Group Discussion (FGD)<sup>32</sup> with leaders of women's organizations and other resource people in Jakarta, challenges on feminist leadership came in fact from a male discussion participant.

“Women face difficult burden when they become leaders! Our political culture places heavy burden on women leaders. When women

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Miryam S.V Nainggolan, Head of Board of Executive of Pulih Foundation, Jakarta 9 May 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Sitti Zamraini, Regional Coordinator Lingsar Pekka West Nusa Tenggara, Lingsar 15 May 2012.

<sup>31</sup> See p. 44-45 Batliwala, Srilatha. 2010. *Feminist Leaderships for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud*. For CREA (Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action).

<sup>32</sup> Focus Group Discussion, Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia, Jakarta 9 May 2012.

become leaders, they have to be successful, they can do no wrong, and they have to be great.”<sup>33</sup>

Such view is related to the social position of women of being “unblemished” since women are culturally sacred. This view adds burdens on women leaders when they take charge because they are expected to do no wrong. Men do not face the same burden, regardless of their leadership approaches or styles. The social pressure is actually meant to discourage women from taking leadership positions. Resistance from men against women leaders is seen as normal.

The views above are based on an assumption of the strength of a leader as an individual. However, history shows that social movements do not always require strong and solid individual leadership. For example the Piqueteros and Piqueteras from Argentina who were very successful in leading the villagers to close down mining sites by using dispersed and non-individual leadership style. In the context of feminist leadership, Batliwala (2011)<sup>34</sup> said that:

“Our concern is not merely with increasing the capacity of more women to play leadership roles, but to assist them to lead differently by using feminist values and ideology and to advance the agenda of feminist social transformation in a way that cannot be done through other forms of leadership.” (p. 13).

It means that challenges faced by women leaders go beyond their personal characteristics and capacity. There are challenges that come from the social and cultural environments where they exercise their leadership. The issue is how women use their leadership to handle conformity and resistance in those specific contexts of power relations. Women leaders should expose themselves to deal with different backgrounds such as age,

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<sup>33</sup> Wahyu Susilo, Board of Executive/Policy Analyst Migrant Care, FGD Jakarta, 9 Mei 2012.

<sup>34</sup> See p. 13, Batliwala, Srilatha. 2010. *Feminist Leaderships for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud*. For CREA (Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action).

gender, ethnicity, experiences or seniority as inputs for their decision making regarding strategies. Women should expand their network to include bureaucrats and politicians. According to Ratna Batara Munti from Jakarta,

“The more women are constrained and isolated from competition, backstabbing and hostility commonly found in practical politics, the smaller their chances to build up experience to deal with resistance – from casual to serious ones that cannot be ignored.”<sup>35</sup>

However, women leaders should not just copy the masculine political behaviors of men leaders. It is not easy to develop the characters of women's leadership. Fatiha, the coordinator of ASPPUK Padang, said that

“When we are strict, people protest; when we are soft, people do not respect our rules. It is a dilemma.”<sup>36</sup>

Being “strict” is often seen as contradictory to the “ideal values” of feminist leadership that is based on anti-repression, inclusivity, collectivity, sisterhood, and collegiality. Women leaders have to develop an art of women leadership so that when they are firm, they are not perceived as being authoritarian. Otherwise, they would create uncertain power relations between the leader and the members of the organizations and they would not be able to enforce organizational rules and make decisions for the sake of the organization that they lead.

It is clear that women leaders face numerous and formidable tangible challenges both in the private and public domain. They have to develop strategies to face obstacles in the private domain and at the same time they have to develop feminist strategies to deal with problems that they face in their organization and field of work. On top of that, they

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Ratna Bantara Munti, External Director of LBH APIK Jakarta, Jakarta 24 May 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Fatiha Yendreni, Coordinator of ASPPUK Padang, Padang 14 May 2012.

have to continue promoting women's equality and rights. Women leaders basically spend most of their energy to meet those numerous and formidable tangible challenges. They do not have much time and energy left to deal with intangible power agenda that is hidden in the cultural domain. Women leaders have not yet created a significant change in the reconstruction of the cultural domain.

### **Implementation of Women Leadership in the Field**

Leadership is related to the development of self-confidence and personal capacity to mobilize others. How can a leader use his or her knowledge and personality to persuade others to do something? More specifically, how do women leaders view power relations when they exercise their leadership? How do women leaders respond to disagreements and conflicts? How do they prepare the next generation of women activists to continue their work in achieving gender equality and justice?

Experiences captured in WRI's five research areas show different pictures. Women leaders adopted various strategies, personal and organizational, to persuade other women to join their efforts to promote gender equality and justice. At the personal level, Dina Lumbantobing from Pesada said that women leaders should start from their internal strength as women.

“Do not separate your own experience as a woman from your leadership style. You are a leader who are single or married and with or without children. That's what you are as a woman. You have to convince yourself that people do not have the right to judge you...”<sup>37</sup>

Organizational strategies implemented by women leaders vary from place to place. Many women leaders exercise their leadership by engaging others who share the same concerns to take part in their program activi-

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Dina Lumbantobing, Founder of Pesada, Medan 25 May 2012.

ties. Riani from Hapsari in Deli Serdang, for example, expressed her opinion that representativeness is key to the success of women's leadership.

“to ensure that women's interests in labor issues are represented, Hapsari took part in building labor organizations and made the concerned women members to become committee members.”<sup>38</sup>

Representation is also important for women leaders from Solidaritas Perempuan in Mataram. In Solidaritas Perempuan, it was the umbrella organization that makes important decisions on the orientation, vision, mission and articles of association, and on sensitive issues such as whether a member can become a cadre of a political party or not. The women leaders in Solidaritas Perempuan made sure that elements of the association were well represented in the decision making body.

Almost all women leaders interviewed, whether they came from a foundation or association, said that they used the strategy of conducting decision making that is open, participatory and democratic.

“... Solidaritas Perempuan has annual national council meeting, where all regional and national committee members come to discuss and make decision on a resolution on women issues in the local, national as well as global levels.”<sup>39</sup>

“Hapsari every three month has a plenary meeting to discuss and make decision about program monitoring, policy making, and daily accountability reporting. This is how the National Representative Council works.”<sup>40</sup>

“Hapsari's experience shows that one can lead only for a maximum of two terms in a row. In the first term, she is still learning on how to

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Riani, Head of Board of Executive Hapsari, Deli Serdang 21 May 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Yuni Riawati, Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram, Mataram 18 May 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 21 May 2012.

be a leader. Ideally she should be re-elected for the second term to make optimum use of her learning curve and implement her programs effectively. She cannot be re-elected for a third term.”<sup>41</sup>

Even when solving personal problems among the staff, some women leaders also implement an open and democratic strategy. Fitriyani from LP2M in Padang said that

“When there are problems among staff, I do not want to jump to any conclusion. I always ask inputs from committee members, coordinator and related staff before making the final decision. After listening to all parties, I decide what is best.”<sup>42</sup>

Other women organizations made use of different strategies to ensure participation in decision making. Women leaders in YKSSI in Mataram developed an alternative decision-making mechanism that allowed field officers to use telephone and SMS to express their opinion when they could not attend internal meetings.<sup>43</sup>

When they were not sure about their capacity, some women leaders did not hesitate to make use of other people as resource people to help them make the right decision. When women activists in Lampung were in the process of separating themselves from Elsapa Foundation to establish a new NGO called Damar, they used the service of an organizational consultant. Later on when they wanted to transform Damar from a foundation into an association, to respond to demands for openness and inclusiveness, the women leaders used the same strategy of hiring a consultant.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Lely Zaelani, Head of National Committee Council of Hapsari, Jakarta 28 June 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Latifa Bay, Director of YKSSI Mataram, Mataram 15 May 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Selly Fitriani, Director of Damar, Lampung 11 May 2012.

Especially at the local level, when conflicts erupted and the situation became complicated, local women leaders contacted the umbrella organization KPI to come over and give them assistance. Dian Kartikasari from the National Secretary of KPI in Jakarta was often overwhelmed with requests from KPI members.

“I am ready and willing to mediate, yet this is not the most cost, energy and time effective ways.”<sup>45</sup>

Nani Zulminarni from the National Secretary Pekka in Jakarta said that it was not always a good thing to intervene at the local level.

“We cannot continue breastfeeding them. Otherwise, they would not become independent. We have to give as much opportunities to women at the local level to practice their leadership. We should know when to turn down their request and just play supporting role. We should only provide them with assistance in emergency cases.”<sup>46</sup>

However, due to inadequate capacity of women leaders at the local level, many local NGO wanted to be guided by the umbrella organization because they considered the leading figures from the national level to have more legitimacy. The National Secretariat of Pekka in Jakarta was careful in providing assistance to its local members when they were forming Pekka unions in their respective areas. The National Secretariat limited its role to just disseminating information to all of its local members, regardless of their maturity as a member of Pekka,<sup>47</sup> regarding how to set up Pekka unions and how to obtain legal status.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Dian Kartikasari, National Secretary Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, Jakarta 30 May 2012.

<sup>46</sup> *Op cit.*

<sup>47</sup> See p. 53, “*Executive Summary Impact Assessment Program Pekka di Delapan Wilayah*”, Women Research Institute 2009.

### **Challenges Faced by New Women Leaders**

Women leaders face various challenges when they exercise their leadership to manage their staff members in their respective organizations. One challenge faced by a newly appointed woman leader is the loyalty of the staff members to the previous leader. They consider the former leader as more charismatic and have more access to resources compared to the newly appointed leader. Failure to overcome this challenge would lead to ineffective leadership of the new leader.

Yuni Chuzaifa, head of National Commission of Violence against Women in Jakarta, faced the same situation when she just started her job. Her leadership was overshadowed by the image of the previous leader who was considered as more popular and wiser. Yuni said that it was difficult to deal with comments such as “When X was in charge, things were different...”, “Why is the situation different situation now? This is unlike when Y was still in charge...” This situation makes it difficult for the new leader to express and exercise her leadership style. According to Yuni, such tension could only be resolved over time by showing evidence that her different leadership style generated good results for the organization. As a new leader, Yuni opted to stand on the shoulder of her predecessor by continuing the good works of the previous leader while at the same time identifying weaknesses to make improvements.<sup>48</sup>

Damar in Lampung also experienced a similar problem after a leadership transition. The former director, Laila, was considered as the embodiment of the organization. Laila is Damar and Damar is Laila, and the staff thought that nobody would be able to match Laila's leadership.<sup>49</sup> Luckily, the new director, Sely, was trusted by Laila. Laila's mediation was the crucial for the success of Sely to gain the trust and full support from Damar staff. But not all new women leaders were equally successful

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Yuni Chuzaifah, Head of National Commission of Violence Against Women, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Selly Fitriani, Director of Damar, Lampung 11 May 2012.

in gaining the trust and support of the staff. In PL2M, the staff ignored the decision made by the new Director to appoint a program manager.<sup>50</sup> They showed their protest by not attending an important meeting with donor agencies. They came after the meeting carrying posters which demanded the Board to replace the new director because she was considered as having conflicting interests. The “vested interests” made it difficult for the new leader to manage the organization that had plenty of financial resources.

Beauty Erawati,<sup>51</sup> Director of LBH APIK in Mataram, said that when a leader showed flexibility, his staff might abuse the leniency and violated agreements that had been agreed upon collectively. According to her, a leader should be firm to ensure discipline in the organization.

“One of my staff often came late to work. She also spread rumors that I made all decisions in LBH APIK. If she didn’t like me, why did she spread rumors that could damage the reputation of LBH APIK? Other staff asked me to be firm, to directly reprimand her. Perhaps I was being too lenient to her?”

The case of Hapsari showed that the solidity and unity of an organization played an important role to a smooth leadership transition in an organization. During the leadership transition, Hapsari’s staff basically kept their consistency to the internal rules that had been agreed upon collectively.

“In my opinion, since we have a strong sense of collectiveness we trust and follow our leaders. Since she is in charge, her decisions should be followed. No debate. We could discuss about her leadership in our regular meeting that is held every three months.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director of LP2M, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Beauty Erawati, Director of LBH APIK NTB, Mataram 16 May 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

The adoption and implementation of organizational rules would help an organization to avoid destructive challenges to the new leadership.

### **Principles and Values of Feminist Leadership**

Before discussing about feminist leadership, we should first discuss about feminism and the meaning of being a feminist. *Jurnal Analisis Sosial*, November 4, 1996 published by AKATIGA (p. 57), quoted *Women's Thesaurus'* definition of a feminist as someone who is aware of repression and oppression against women in the society, in the public domain and in the family, and takes deliberate action to change the situation. Therefore, a feminist leader should be able to make people aware about oppression and discrimination faced by women in the public and private domains and mobilize them to change the situation. A feminist leader could be female or male. It is the values that make a person a feminist leader, not the sex.

Michele Williams<sup>53</sup> wrote that according to the conventional and traditional definition, a leader refers to a person that has the highest position and the most power in an organization. Power is not something to be shared but to be contested. According to Williams, feminist organizations have a completely different perspective. They have a vision that a leader should share power and provide opportunities for all members of the organizations to develop and improve their leadership skills. Hapsari from Deli Serdang is a true believer in this leadership style that upholds the principle of power sharing.

“We have to achieve our objectives through sharing. We share with party members and parliament candidates. None of us is higher than the others. We are all equal. Their success is our success.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> “Principles for Feminist Leadership. Struggling to Share Power”, Michelle Williams, essay by DisAbled Women in Action (DAWN) of Ontario, October 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

African women activists from the “Building Feminist Leadership – Looking Back, Looking Forward” workshop organized by CREA in South Africa in November 2008, took a similar position and said that feminist leadership should have

“a clear, shared decision-making process that pools strengths of participants, and allows everyone to have some power, and an atmosphere that facilitates every person’s strengths. Each person in an organization must have some authority, as well as tools, information, responsibility and accountability.” (Batliwala, 2011, p. 49).

Being accommodative, responsive and sensitive to women’s issues is what separates a feminist leader from the rest.

“What makes feminist leaders different? They stand out because of the issues that they focus on. For example, they argue for the importance of having a nursing room in the Posyandu Health Clinics and in traditional markets. Women’s presence has been dominant in both places, but so far the need to have a nursing room has not been proposed.”<sup>55</sup>

In principles, feminist leadership should give space to all generations, embrace diversity and prioritize inclusion instead of exclusion (*ibid*, page 50). Therefore all organizational members are able to understand their roles in the organizational structure and able to be involved in decision-making processes. All members in a feminist organization should know the organization’s agenda and rules of the games and they should be able to decide what styles of work that suit the organization.

In other words, collectiveness, sisterhood, non-violence and care for others are the principles and values of feminist leadership. A women activist from Padang explains:

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<sup>55</sup> Muhammad Firdaus, Deputy Director of ASPPUK Jakarta, FGD Jakarta, 29 October 2012.

“Yes, there are values that we have adopted as the rule of the game in our organization such as anti-corruption, openness, and anti-violence. So we cannot act abrasively and aggressively in meetings. Since the rules have been written in our Standard Operating Procedure, we have to live by them.”<sup>56</sup>

Baiq Halwati from Mataram talks about family values that glue the organization together.

“Panca Karsa has adopted a family-like system. When there are conflicts, we communicate like a family. The system has been translated into an SOP that guides the operation of the organization.”<sup>57</sup>

Riani from Hapsari in Deli Serdang talked about similar sisterhood and family values practiced by her organization.

“We never have resolute conflicts. When we have disagreements, we resolve them together. For example, we would like to engage in a new education program but we don’t have enough budget. We sit down together to discuss the financial condition of other programs to find ways to share resources.”<sup>58</sup>

The Lampung Women Movement and Damar also used the principle of sisterhood, through the mechanism of discussion and sharing, to resolve problems. So did the local Pekka branch in Lingsar, West Nusa Tenggara:

“Through gender analysis training conducted by the National Secretariat, I know how to identify problems faced by mothers and develop programs together to fulfill their needs to protect their rights in relation to marriage and divorce.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director LP2M, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Baiq Halwati, Director Perkumpulan Panca Karsa, Mataram 17 May 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Riani, Head of Board of Executive Hapsari, Deli Serdang, 21 May 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Sitti Zamraini, Regional Coordinator Lingsar Pekka NTB, Mataram 15 May 2012.

Feminist leadership also follows the principle of care. According to Mariana from Jurnal Perempuan, a woman becomes a feminist leader by cultivating the feeling of caring in all of her activities. Mariana explained that not all women are feminists. Feminist leaders should have an ethic of caring, which means that she should not be judgmental and she should never downgrade her fellow women activists.<sup>60</sup> The ethic of caring allows them to take care of each other and at the same time protecting themselves.

The ethic of caring is not given. It needs to be developed within the context of collective leadership in order to cultivate synergy instead of competition. Desti from the National Commission on Violence against Women explained the process of developing the ethic of care in her institution.

“The three of us – me, Yuni and Masruchah – needed more than three months to find a comfortable mode of communication that allowed us to complement instead of compete against each other. With other commissioners, it took us almost two years to do so. Collective leadership takes time.”<sup>61</sup>

The ethic of caring allows a feminist leaders to show empathy to their staff members<sup>62</sup> and prevent them from using their power to silence them from expressing their opinions.

Another principle of feminist leadership is the acknowledgment of the need to reflect on past experiences to see whether program management was conducted in participatory manner to accommodate the aspiration of individuals, group and institution. Kodar from Pekka explained that the reflection should be conducted in participatory manner, following the principle of sisterhood and family values.

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<sup>60</sup> Interview with Mariana Amirudin, Director of Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta 2 July 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Desti Murdiana, Vice Head as well as Secretary General National Commission on Violence Against Women, Jakarta 21 May 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Masnim, Head of Kopwan JarPUK Rindang, Mataram 18 May 2012.

“We include everybody when we conducted reflection so that everybody had the chance to look back, extract lessons learned and use them as references for improvement.”<sup>63</sup>

The participatory approach is used by feminist leaders to reduce the knowledge gaps between leaders and staff and between them and their partners. Ratna Batara Munti said that

“... leaders should serve those they lead, lend them their expertise to increase their skills and knowledge.”<sup>64</sup>

Feminist leaders implement participatory approach to catch the diversity of needs and objectives, which are then used as inputs to develop methods of training and capacity building that are responsive to the different needs of individuals and groups.

There is an agreement among women activists across different parts in Indonesia that feminist leaders should practice their leadership in accordance to the principle of equality, sisterhood, participation, non-violence, diversity and care. Those are the principles that make their leadership feminist, regardless of their sex.

### **Leadership Practices in the Private and Social Domains**

Nira Yuval-Davis in her book *Gender and Nation* (1997) explains the dichotomy of roles between men and women. Society positions women in the domestic areas to carry out their reproductive roles and men in the public sphere to carry out their wage earner roles. Discrimination against women has its roots in the dichotomy, which is then institutionalized by state regulations. Women are constructed to be dependent on men and

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Kodar, National Secretary Pekka Jakarta, Jakarta 15 May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Ratna Batara Munti, External Director LBH APIK Jakarta, Jakarta 24 May 2012.

husbands (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Yuval-Davis argues further that in general, women are oppressed in their social relationship due to unequal distribution of power and material resources. Important decisions are made by men according to their roles in the public domain as leader. And women only play supporting roles.

“In my family, my father makes important decisions and relates with those outside the family. My mother deals with domestic issues. Paperwork is the domain of my father. He takes care of external affairs and my mother deals with internal matters. When my mother comes across external matters, she hands them over to my father, who then takes them over immediately.”<sup>65</sup>

When women cross the line between the public and private domain, they would be reprimanded.

“My father talked to me that he had been reminded by the officials in the sub-district office because I went home at eleven in the evening. Such gossips led him to come and talk to me. He advised me to spend the night elsewhere instead of coming home late at night.”<sup>66</sup>

However, the dichotomy between the private and the public has been slowly eroded in many parts of Indonesia. More and more fathers and husbands supported their daughter and wife to play roles in the public domain.

“At first I was not confident to join the training, but I wanted to learn. I told my husband what I gained in the training and he praised me, “Now you know how to talk.” My husband allowed me to play roles outside the house.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Isnaini, Director of Yayasan Totalitas, Padang 15 May 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Murni, Secretary of Serikat Perempuan Lampung Selatan, Lampung 14 May 2012.

In Deli Serdang, WRI found out that more and more fathers and husbands granted permission to their daughter and wife to go out of their house to join Hapsari's activities.

"For us, husband's approval is an achievement. Our husbands understand what we do and are proud of what we have done. There are challenges but we do not give up. For us, it is a success when our cadre can secure approvals to go out of their houses to participate in the organization and receive supports from their own families."<sup>68</sup>

As consequence, there are more women taking active role in organizations and even in development planning meetings at the village level and sub-district level from Lampung to North Sumatera.

"I joined Panca Karsa in 2005 and became a Community Organizer. At that time I was the only woman in the office and the only one among 102 men in a planning and budgeting meeting in Labuanbatu Sub-District. Things have changed now."<sup>69</sup>

"Our women cadres were involved in village meetings such as the Musrenbang Development Planning Assembly at the village, sub-district and even district level. They expressed their opinions regarding the distribution of subsidized rice, health care, and coverage for pregnancy and delivery."<sup>70</sup>

In many places, within the household itself the dichotomy between the private and the public is also changing. From Lampung in Sumatera to Mataram in West Nusa Tenggara, women are able to negotiate with their husband and other members of the family. Imas from Teater Satu Lampung said that her husband taught her about gender equality. Her husband

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Lely Zaelani, Head of National Committee Council of Hapsari, Jakarta 28 June 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Participant of Kelompok Panca Karsa, FGD Mataram, 17 May 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

Iswandi told her that domestic chores were not just the responsibility of women.

“My husband is probably a feminist. My children are closer to him. He even cooks better than me. I manage the theatre and he carries out the domestic tasks.”<sup>71</sup>

“My husband always says that I can commit to the organization regardless of the domestic chores. My children are closer to him because I often went out of the house. At one time, I even had to leave my one-month old baby because I had to attend a cooperative meeting in Jatinangor.”<sup>72</sup>

“My father said that women should have high education. So when they get divorced, they could survive. My father does not want her daughters to be vulnerable.”<sup>73</sup>

### **Leadership and Women Political Positions and Roles**

Women's organizations have definitely contributed to the dissemination of the values of gender equality and justice, breaking down the domination of discriminative religious interpretations against women. Although the discourse of patriarchy remains operational, more and more women are becoming empowered and aware of their rights. ASPPUK disseminated feminist leadership ideas through its women economic empowerment activities.

“By joining JarPUK women can no longer be underestimated. Men are not the only ones doing the hard work...”<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Imas Sobariah, Founder of Teater Satu, Lampung 13 May 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Masnim, Head of Kopwan JarPUK Rindang, Mataram 18 May 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Sitti Zamraini, Regional Coordinator Lingsar Pekka West Nusa Tenggara, Lingsar 15 May 2012.

<sup>74</sup> FGD Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia with ASPPUK Central Lombok, Centra Lombok 17 May 2012.

Economic empowerment gave the women a sense of self confidence. Being entrepreneurs made them at par with men, even men in power. Their participation in public decision making institutions made the women's confidence increased even further.

"In the past, I could never speak with the Head of the Village. After I joined the organization, my involvement in the village was recognized and I became the facilitator in a number of forums in the community up to the village level."<sup>75</sup>

On top of that, women's organizations from Medan and Padang also provided the women cadres with capacity building to groom their leadership potentials.

"This is our model. For some women cadres, the trainings were provided through case handling activities. Other women cadres were provided in class trainings on gender and volunteerism."<sup>76</sup>

"Hapsari provided compulsory education and training, including trainings in gender justice and role sharing among members. Leadership education was provided to members who had shown leadership potentials. Later on, when there were invitations to attend seminars, workshops and trainings, the Board of Executive would carefully decide who would be sent there. Criteria were based on the existing needs, experience in participating in similar activities and whether the theme matched the interest of the members."<sup>77</sup>

Hapsari's efforts had succeeded in increasing the self-confidence, knowledge and skills of its women cadres, enabling them to become decision-makers in their community. As a result, Hapsari's cadres were now 'courted' by political parties who wanted them to join rank.

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Murni, Serikat Perempuan Lampung Selatan, Lampung 14 May 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Yefri Heriyani, Director of WCC Nurani Perempuan, Padang 17 May 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Riani, Head of Board of Executive Hapsari, Deli Serdang, 21 May 2012.

“Now our cadres in the village are courted by political cadres. We have to set agreement to regulate such alliances. If one joined a certain political party or agency, we would like to make sure that people understand that it was Hapsari that facilitated them to gain such an achievement.”<sup>78</sup>

Similar processes took place in Lampung. The participation of women cadres in seminars and workshops had allowed them to improve their knowledge and network

“My first assignment as a trainer in a Damar training was also my first time of taking a flight. I gained the confidence to become a facilitator who disseminated my knowledge to other women.”<sup>79</sup>

LP2M in Padang also provided opportunities to its women cadres to attend trainings, seminars and workshops.

“We sent our cadres to go to a number of trainings in finance, disaster mitigation, women movement, and gender budget organized by Asia Foundation, IDEA, Rifka and KPI.”<sup>80</sup>

Damar also facilitated its cadres to get involved in PNPM management, to run as village heads and village secretaries. Members of Serikat Perempuan Bandar Lampung (SPBL) and Fakta Tanggamus helped other community members to develop their capacity.

“One of our members runs for village head, and even received supports from people from other villages. Now we understand that people welcome women leaders.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Zulfa Suja, Member of National Committee Council Hapsari, Deli Serdang 24 May 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Desi, Serikat Perempuan Bandar Lampung, Lampung 14 May 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Fitriyanti, Director LP2M, Padang 14 May 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Sri Suharni, Member of Forum Anti Kekerasan Tanggamus, Lampung 12 May 2012.

Fakta's women cadres also ran to become a village head in Tanggamus. Other cadres of Fakta became involved in the General Election Commission, Monitoring Committee as well as other agencies. Believing in women's representation, Fakta pushed for women representative quota and the involvement of women in village government. In Mataram, ASPPUK and Panca Karsa facilitated their women cadres to meet public officials at the district level to conduct budget advocacy.

"We carry out our hearing and advocacy in Central Lombok in partnership with ASPPUK/JarPUK, the Consortium and other women organizations to endorse traditional weaving as uniforms for civil servants."<sup>82</sup>

Women cadres in Lampung, Deli Serdang and Mataram had shown their capacity to actively participate in public as well as political domains. The picture, however, is not all rosy. Some women's organizations in Padang, for example, experienced setbacks and they had problems in conducting capacity building to prepare for leadership regeneration.

### **Closing Remarks**

The development of women leadership in WRI's five research areas shows that many women have succeeded in increasing their capacity and gone beyond their domestic roles to assume leadership positions. Practices of feminist leadership in those five areas have been able to improve the capacity of women, especially in the economic and political domain, enabling them to negotiate their needs and interests to improve their livelihood.

Sustainability in capacity building should be maintained to strengthen women's position in the society. In the future, more initiatives will be

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<sup>82</sup> Notes of FGD Research on Feminist Leadership in Post Authoritarian Indonesia Panca Karsa group, Mataram 17 May 2012.

needed to increase the number of women leaders and their capability to deal with diversity. Here are some initiatives identified by the women respondents in the five research areas.

1. Trainings for trainers for women, especially on the issues related to sexuality (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and religion (hijab and Sharia local regulations).
2. Participation of women cadres in decision making institutions at the village, sub-district, district and national level.
3. Networking between women groups across Indonesia on specific issues such as health and reproductive rights and political participation.
4. Reflection on the effectiveness of the programs of women organizations in promoting gender justice.
5. Documentation on best practices of women's participation in economic and political institutions and processes and the impacts on their welfare.

Post-authoritarian Indonesia has opened doors for women to participate in public domains, partly due to capacity building provided by women's organizations. The number of women participating in the public and political domain keeps increasing. They take part in the decision-making process from the village up to the district level. They have gained the skills to negotiate regulations, policies as well as budget allocations. It needs further research to see whether there is indeed a positive correlation between increasing role women leaders in the public sphere and their welfare. Has their political participation been successfully translated into improved quality of life?

Women, however, still need more time to achieve equal relations in the private domain. Even though public-private dichotomy has been eroded, the discourse and structure of patriarchy are still in operation in the society. Women's achievements in the public domain are expected to help shift the domination of patriarchal values in the domestic sphere.



## CHAPTER IV

# Building Economic and Political Strengths of Grassroots Women's Organizations in North Sumatera



Ayu Anastasia

The province of North Sumatera comprises of twenty five districts and eight cities. This province hosts manufacturing industries and plantations and has rich coastal areas for fish and shrimp farming that are vital to its economy. According to the data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics, up to 2010 more people in North Sumatera lived in the rural instead of urban areas. There were around 6.6 million people living in the rural areas (50.84 percent), while city dwellers comprised of 6.38 million people (49.16 percent). The livelihood of people living in the rural areas in North Sumatera depended on plantation and the exploitation of coastal areas. Plantation areas, especially oil palm plantations, skyrocketed during the New Order era, specifically in 1980s when state's revenues from oil and gas started to decline.

The expansion of plantations did not improve the quality of human resources. Work forces in North Sumatera were dominated by elementary school graduates, and many of them did not even graduate from elementary school.<sup>1</sup> Their low level of education, combined with the decreasing land due to plantation expansion, gradually degraded their capacity to

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<sup>1</sup> Sumatera Utara Dalam Angka 2011, Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sumatera Utara.



earn a living. Many worked as daily laborers or in People's Nucleus Estate (Perkebunan Inti Rakyat/PIR) after their land became part of the plantation.

In the coastal areas, fisher communities felt the impact of the decreasing mangrove forests, which was caused by aggressive development of fish and shrimp farming since the 1980s. The damages of the mangrove forests led to decreasing fishermen's catches and forced them to sail further to the Malaysian border to catch more fishes. Sea patrols from the neighboring country often caught and punished them, making them going home empty-handed. The Fisherwomen Union (Serikat Perempuan Nelayan) of Hapsari organization considered this as a serious problem because it is hurting the livelihood of their members.

To make things worse, in 2003 the Deli Serdang district government issued a policy to enable fishermen to access credit to buy trawlers. Only large fishermen could make use of the credit facility. Not only that the credit program did not benefit small and poor fishermen, but it even made their living condition worse. Trawlers indiscriminately caught big and small fishes and damaged the ocean habitat. Since small fishes were also caught, the fish stocks got depleted even further, hence decreasing the catch of poor fishermen. The fishermen were also engaged in predatory "Boss-Sailor" relationship and relied on loan sharks, known as 'Bakri' (Batak credit lenders),<sup>2</sup> to make their ends meet during bad times. Therefore, they became heavily indebted and it was very difficult for them to break the poverty vicious circle.

Fishermen had different characteristics compared to those working in the plantations. Women were more prevalent in fishermen villages, because their husbands usually sailed away for one week. Those fisher women provided food for their children and husbands and processed the fishes that their husbands caught. In the plantations, both men and women worked in the field. Men worked through the afternoon while women returned home in the afternoon to take up their roles as housewives and to

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<sup>2</sup> A stereotype of people from Batak ethnicity.

tidy up the house and prepare food for the family. Women carried out a double duty to take care of the family in the private domain and earn a living in the public domain.

Although patriarchy reigned in both communities, women in the fishing communities had more authority and independence because they became decision makers when their husbands sailed away for quite a period of time. Such opportunity was not present for women working in the plantations.

Due to the combination of patriarchal values and dire economic conditions, they prioritized sending boys, and not girls, to school because men were seen as breadwinners and contributors to the society. As consequence, women remained uneducated and were restricted from having access to productive resources. When women worked outside their home, they were discriminated in terms of remuneration and status. Women working in the plantation were all daily laborers. If they skipped work for just one day, they could be fired. This did not happen to men. The discriminative working arrangement made it difficult for women's organizations to ask their members to have a meeting in the afternoon.

"It is difficult for Serikat Perempuan Independen (SPI) in Serdang Bedagai to gather their members to have a meeting in the afternoon because they are daily laborers. Once they skip work, they would be fired and replaced by a new laborer. Therefore we schedule our meeting in the evening after prayer time."<sup>3</sup>

Since women did not make enough money from working in the plantations, many of them decided to work as migrant workers in Malaysia and Singapore.

Lack of access to education and information and other forms of discrimination both in the public and private domain had prevented the women to gain self-confidence. Their voices were not heard in their own

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Endang, Member of Board of Executive of Desa Bintat SPI Serdang Bedagai, 23 May 2012.

family and in the village. Women could not voice their concerns in the public domains.

“Before I joined the organization, I felt so afraid when I had to enter the village office, I even took off my sandals before coming in.”<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1990s, two women organizations, Hapsari in Deli Serdang and the nearby areas, and Sada Ahmo Association (Pesada) started to work with fisher women and women laborers in the areas to improve their condition. Lely Zailani, a founder of Hapsari, was concerned with heavy work loads that girls in the family had to carry out and blatant discrimination that they experienced. In addition her concern on the discriminative culture against women, Dina Lumbantobing, a founder of Pesada founders, was troubled by policies such as family planning and the character of bureaucracy that were insensitive to women's needs. These two organizations raised awareness on gender injustices and educated women in the area with feminist perspective.

### **Establishment of Hapsari and Pesada**

Hapsari started as an organization of mothers at the village level initiated by grassroots women. Established in the New Order era, Hapsari adopted strategies that were in line with the government's Family Welfare Program (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/PKK) and adhered to “the norms of mothers” as important values in the community. They decided to set up pre-schools to respond to the existing needs to educate children in general and girls in particular. They involved mothers to take active part in their effort to promote collective child education. Since Hapsari was able to respond to the needs of grassroots women in the area, they were able to mobilize women to get actively involved in addressing their own concerns.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Kurniati, SPPN Serdang Bedagai, 22 May 2012.

Pesada, previously known as Sada Ahmo, was first established in a remote area of Pakpak ethnic group in Dairi district. Women in the area woke up very early in the morning to prepare food for the husband and the whole family, and then they went to work in the plantations. After returning from the plantations, women worked to prepare lunch and dinner and did other household chores. Meanwhile, after coming back from work men spent their time in the local coffee shops (lapo). Staying in a lapo for hours was a symbol of pride for men, as this public domain of theirs was where information was exchanged.

Compared to men, women had lower quality of life. They had longer work hours compared to men, and they did not consume quality food since good food was meant for the husband. When their husband passed away, it was the family of the husband that received inheritance and the wife did not get anything. Women did not have access to productive resources to support their life because men controlled everything. Pesada was concerned with the roles and positions of women in the male-dominated Dairi social context.

Hapsari and Pesada were set up differently. While Hapsari was established by local women, Pesada was set up by external facilitators who organized women from the communities to implement programs initiated by Pesada. Hapsari represented the efforts of women from the communities to promote social change. Members of the two organizations were also different in character. Members of Hapsari mostly came from Malay and Java-Malay ethnic groups that provided rooms for the wives to make decisions and to own assets. Although men were the ultimate decision makers as the head of the family, women were the actual financial managers of the family. Members of Pesada, on the other hand, were dominated by Batak ethnic group that had strong patrilineal culture. Batak culture was more limiting towards women. In Batak communities, men and their family made decisions, owned assets and managed the money.

During its ten years long partnership with Hivos, Hapsari implemented various programs to create awareness about domestic violence, support entrepreneurship among women, and provide leadership trainings

and political education to its members. Also supported by Hivos, Pesada concentrated its works more on providing economic empowerment to support grassroots women entrepreneurs. As mass-based women's organizations, both organizations have reached more or less similar milestones. Regardless of their differences in social contexts and competitive advantages, they have complemented each other in addressing the needs and interests of grassroots women.

These two organizations have empowered women to gain more ground both in the private and public domains. In the private domain, the organizations have strengthened the ability of women to negotiate with their husbands. For example, Hapsari members now have the capacity to negotiate equal domestic role sharing with their husbands. Pesada members have improved their position in the family since now they have productive assets to match those contributed by their husbands. Both organizations have succeeded in improving women's position in their gender relation in the private domain. In the public domain, the experience of running the organizations has granted members the capacity to articulate themselves better. They have gained the capacity, knowledge and social network to improve their negotiating power with men in the public domain.

### **Work Areas and Activities of Hapsari and Pesada**

In the beginning, Hapsari and Pesada's vision, mission and programs were directed to promote gender justice and fight against poverty. Both organizations that emerged during the New Order era faced a number of political obstacles which made them operate in clandestine manners. People were conditioned to see government-supported organizations as the only legitimate institutions. They preferred to join government-sponsored organizations such as PKK rather than community-based organizations because they were afraid to be branded as part of the Indonesian Women Movement (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Gerwani) and the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia).

Faced by the political obstacles, Hapsari and Pesada developed a strategy to address the real needs of the communities. Hapsari's decision to set up pre-schools in the communities and Pesada's decision to provide economic empowerment to women were based on the result of their community needs assessment. In order to increase the sense of ownership of the grassroots women in their programs, both Hapsari and Pesada used participatory method in planning and monitoring the programs. In order to minimize resistance, both organizations did not present themselves as promoting radical feminism.

“Pesada's approach is not based on radical feminism that puts the blame entirely on men. Our approach is not radical.”<sup>5</sup>

Their participatory assessments have led Hapsari and Pesada to implement programs that were responsive to the needs of the communities, namely economic empowerment, education, and anti violence against women.

To carry out its economic empowerment programs, Hapsari set up unions, which comprised of a number of business units, to improve the women's welfare and to support their empowerment programs. Hapsari's unions provided economic empowerment programs to increase the capacity of marginalized women to improve their livelihood by producing soaps, floor cleaning solutions, handicrafts, batiks and coffees. Those economic activities provided more income for the women and generated revenues for the organization.

Hapsari worked in areas where women's aspiration was not heard and they did not participate in development processes. For example, Hapsari decided to work outside of North Sumatera in Kulonprogo district, Yogyakarta, where grassroots women did not have access to knowledge (such as capacity building and skill development), technology, capital and market. Hapsari facilitated one of its women unions, which was the Independent Women Union (Serikat Perempuan Independen/SPI) of Kulonprogo,

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Dina Lumbantobing, founder of Pesada, Medan, 25 May 2012.

to support the emergence of new women cadres at the grassroots level.

While Hapsari started to facilitate the establishment of credit unions only in 2010, Pesada had done it since 1994. Since the beginning, Pesada educated its members, including disseminating feminist perspective, through economic activities. Pesada founders believed that gender balance could not be promoted on its own, but through economic empowerment activities such as how to facilitate economically vulnerable women to establish credit unions in the villages. By 2010, the number of Pesada's CU had come to 131, with 9,040 members and 104 groups. Two big CUs were established in four districts in North Sumatera, namely in Dairi, West Pakpak, South Nias and Main Nias.

Both Hapsari and Pesada were concerned about issues related to violence against women. One Hapsari's union, Labuhanbatu SPI, had agreed to focus its works on violence against women and children. Women and children were vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence in the palm oil plantations. Most of the committee members and cadres of SPI Labuhanbatu were women who experienced domestic violence, but they succeeded in overcoming it and became defenders of other women victims. Currently, the main program of SPI Labuhanbatu was "Eradicating Gender-based Violence" which provided gender awareness education and support for women victimized by violence. SPI Labuhanbatu's programs also included advocacy and campaign to eradicate violence against women and education about democracy and politics for women in the villages. This program was done in partnership with Labuhanbatu district government, related government offices as well as organizations at the local and national level.

SPI also managed Safe House for Women and Children for victims of violence in Labuhanbatu. Through out 2008-2009, SPI Labuhanbatu managed three temporary shelters (known as Safe Houses) for women victimized by gender-based violence in Rantau Prapat city and 10 Coordinating Posts for Domestic Violence at the village level.

Pesada also ran programs on women against violence by facilitating the establishment of Women's Crisis Center (WCC) Sinceritas. In 2010,

WCC Sinceritas processed 80 cases and 61 of them were cases related to domestic violence. WCC Sinceritas organized routine discussions and provided capacity building to women from the communities as well as Pesada's cadres.

The education programs of both Hapsari and Pesada centered around the setting up of pre-schools (Taman Bermain dan Belajar Anak/TBBA), which they used as a strategy to approach communities. Currently there were 148 children (78 of them were girls) enrolled in Pesada's six pre-schools. Seventy percent of the pre-schools were self-funded. In Nias, Pesada facilitated the establishment of five healthy children groups that were now managed by local communities and the government. Meanwhile, Hapsari facilitated the establishment of nine pre-schools around the vicinity of its unions. Hapsari also managed religious schools that integrated gender education and human rights into the curriculum.

Hapsari facilitated the establishment of community radios, which were managed and used by Hapsari members as a learning media to disseminate information. Meanwhile, Pesada relied more on printed publication in local languages, such as the publication of 500 copies of bi-monthly bulletin in local language for village women in Nias island. In 2010, they had published six editions.

### **Networking to Expand Social Capital**

In developing its networks, Hapsari had gone beyond North Sumatera and reached out to grassroots women in Central Sumatera, Yogyakarta, Central Java and East Kalimantan. Hapsari had facilitated the establishment of ten SPIs in the five provinces, which belonged to Hapsari Federation. Meanwhile, Pesada focused its works in North Sumatera and it had facilitated the establishment of 131 Credit Union groups in four districts and one Women Crisis Center in Medan.

Hapsari members were entitled to participate in gender justice education and training to disseminate the concept of role sharing. Hapsari's senior members provided the trainings, which they also called "learning

together” events. In the period of 1999-2000, HIVOS provided funding to Hapsari to finance the training activities. The trainings also had the goals of grooming cadres to manage and lead SPIs.

“The training has allowed me to see injustices in the society. When a husband holds a broom and cleans the house, men in the neighborhood make jokes as if household chores are unsuitable for men. However, when a woman holds hoes and sickles, they do not say a word. They should be ashamed that we do men’s jobs as well.”<sup>6</sup>

Hapsari members that were selected to join the trainings were the ones who had leadership capacity and dedication to develop the organization. Besides trainings, Hapsari also organized seminars and workshops. Hapsari’s Board of Executive carefully selected who should become participants to the seminars and workshops. Selection criteria were based on the needs of the organization and the capacity of the members. Only members that have passed advance training level were selected so they could contribute actively in the events.

Hapsari developed programs and activities that were popular to the public and attracted the participation of district and village officials. Some Hapsari members became partners to the government in the implementation of certain government programs. The partnership increased the confidence of Hapsari members regarding their capacity and potentials.

Meanwhile, Pesada’s networks in North Sumatera relied on its Credit Unions and Women Crisis Centers. To expand the networking and movements of grassroots women, Pesada coordinated a forum that consisted of 29 non-government organizations in Sumatera (FBCB) and consistently worked with WCC in eight provinces in Sumatera as well as the Association for Women Small Enterprises (ASPPUK) and Indonesian Women Coalition (KPI) at the national level. At the international level, Pesada developed partnership with Just Associate (JASS) and the Asia South

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Habibah, member of SPI Serdang Bedagai, 23 May 2012.

Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPABAE). In developing partnership, Pesada set up criteria not to work with the World Bank or with corporations that destroy the environment. The partners should also be in line with Pesada's principles and values. Pesada had never partnered with the government and this is what made it different with Hapsari.

The fact that Hapsari and Pesada that worked at the local level developed national and international networks showed that social transformation processes involved the interaction between empowerment at the local level and leverages at the national and global level. At the national level it was necessary to keep the national government not to suppress the development women's mass organizations. Partnership with international donors also brought significant political and economic influences to women's organizations in North Sumatera.

### **Organizational Strategies**

Hapsari and Pesada had adapted their organizational strategies to respond to the social and political environment of the post New Order era that started in 1998. Hapsari struggled to find the right organizational form that would suit their vision and mission. They changed the form of their organization from a union to a federation to better support their aim to become a women's mass organization. By becoming a federation, Hapsari strengthened the legitimacy of the organization and member unions vis-à-vis the public and the government, which then allowed Hapsari to provide better support to women's leadership at the grassroots level, ensure regeneration of leadership and campaign for women issues at the local and national level. At the union level, Hapsari focused on concrete issues to address individual needs of women members of the union, setting up and managing pre-schools, campaigning against domestic violence and promoting environmental conservation.

Hapsari also changed its partnership with some other civil society organizations in accordance to its effort to find the right form of organization. For example, Hapsari developed networking with national organizations such as KPI. When KPI was established, Lely Zailani, a founder of Hapsari, became a member of KPI presidium representing women from the fishery sector. However, Lely then resigned from KPI and chose to become member of Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) because she thought that SP's vision and mission were more in line with Hapsari's. After being a committee member for a number of periods, Lely resigned because SP wanted to remain as a community organization instead of a union.

“...SP is different as it is limited to a certain community only, comprising of a group of people. Their SP Deli Serdang community only worked in that particular community and did not want to cover Deli Serdang from the district to the village level.”<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1999, Hapsari started developing partnership with local governments that had become more open to NGOs. This strategy of engaging local governments made Hapsari formalize its organization by getting legal papers and registered itself to the government. Hapsari then pushed its women grassroots members to sit in decision-making positions in the Village Representative Agency (Badan Perwakilan Desa/BPD) and other public decision making institutions at the village level to participate in negotiation and decision-making. The partnership with local governments had allowed Hapsari to act quickly when Deli Serdang district was split into two districts, namely Deli Serdang and Serdang Bedagai (Sergai). Hapsari was able to quickly set up a new union in Sergai district called Sergai Independent Women Union and Sergai Peasant and Fishermen Union (Serikat Perempuan Petani dan Nelayan/SPPN).

The partnership with local governments allowed Hapsari members to work together with them to manage the implementation of national poverty reduction programs such as the National Program for Commu-

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Lely Zailani, Hapsari National Council, Jakarta, 28 June 2012.

nity Empowerment (PNPM), seeds distribution from the local forestry office (SPPN Serdang Bedagai) and health insurance program of the Ministry of Social Affairs. To secure its long-term strategy, Hapsari and their unions developed partnership with the police, local government hospitals as well as the local health clinics.

After working for fourteen years, Hapsari Federation had 10 women union members from five provinces, namely North Sumatera, Central Sulawesi, Yogyakarta, Central Java and East Kalimantan – with members comprising of around 2,000 women. Hapsari viewed that many existing policies were discriminative to women and that the public should know about it. Hapsari continued its efforts to put women in public decision making positions to make policies become more responsive to the needs of grassroots women. Hapsari's internal meetings often discussed strategies to support candidates to run for local elections.

Pesada also adjusted its organization form to respond to the reform era after 1998. In order to become more independent, transparent, democratic and participatory, in August 2003, Yayasan Sada Ahmo (Pesada) decided to change its organization form into an association and formulated a new set of vision and mission. Pesada decided to combine women empowerment with political education in 1998/1999 and in 2003 they decided to develop programs on women's representation and participation.

Contrary to Hapsari, Pesada did not develop affiliation with the government in order to avoid potential conflicts and cooptation and to maintain political independence. Pesada focused on educating grassroots women with gender analysis, encouraging them to think critically about gender injustice and how feminist perspective could help them strengthen their movements to improve their welfare. For example, using gender perspective and analysis Pesada raised awareness among grassroots women about ownership and control of productive assets by challenging the traditional concept that land was owned by men. They promoted an alternative concept that would prevent land to be automatically handed over to men, and that men should sign an agreement with women on asset ownership. Assets such as gold could be saved in Pesada's safe deposit box. This ini-

tiative offered protection to women's assets and raised awareness on the importance of asset ownership.

### **Patriarchal Culture as the Main Challenge**

In order to achieve their vision and mission, both organizations had developed long term and short term strategies, and adjusted their programs to the changing political and social contexts and the needs of their respective beneficiaries. Their utmost challenge, however, remained the patriarchal relationship between husband and wife in the household and the public sphere. Many Hapsari members experienced difficulties in participating in the organization because they could not get approval from their husband. The women also suffered from negative comments from community and family members that wanted to see them stay as housewives. Hapsari's strategy to develop partnership with the government was effective in resolving this situation because gradually the public saw that by becoming Hapsari members they could get benefits from government programs.

Hapsari also developed close relationship with traditional and religious figures and persuaded them to incorporate gender perspective into their sermons and teachings. Hapsari's efforts had started to contribute to the improvement of women's position both in the household and in the public. First, Hapsari members showed a higher degree of self-confidence. Second, they gained respect from family members because they could think and act positively when dealing with family problems. Third, increasing number of Hapsari members became actively involved in village meetings and voiced out their concerns in the implementation of public policies such as rice for the poor and various types of public health insurances.

One serious challenge that Pesada faced was the concept of traditional ownership and inheritance that was based on the culture that discriminated women. The number of Pesada's members came to almost 10,000 spread all over villages and districts in North Sumatera. Their members

were knowledgeable about feminist values. That strength, however, had not significantly improved the position and bargaining power of women in relation to asset ownership and inheritance. Pesada had succeeded in developing credit union (CUs). However, the case of ownership and inheritance proved to be a difficult challenge for the CUs. The CUs then developed a strategy to encourage women to develop their own assets by setting aside their personal income in form of gold and jewelries. The CUs set up saving boxes for their members, and Pesada taught the women about ownership and the right to manage and use their assets. Now both men and women understood that men could not sell women's asset without their approval.

Pesada also faced another challenge from the patriarchal culture of the society. Many husbands did not oppose the participation of their wives in CU after they saw the economic benefits that they had gained. Instead, they forced their wives to take loans to be used by the husbands. To overcome this challenge, Pesada prepared a tight contract to ensure that the CU members were not taken advantage by their husband. Pesada's CUs did not only provide economic empowerment to women but also legal knowledge protection to their members. When active in a CU, women gained the values of active participation in the public domain. They took part in decision-making, asset management and ownership because CU's strategies were aimed at creating opportunities for women to manage their assets and had access to loans. Pesada's CUs were learning institutions as well as economic and political empowerment vehicles for women. By being a member of a CU, women were legally protected and their assets were safe.

Although not as large and as extensive what was done by Pesada, Hapsari also developed CUs to provide economic empowerment to its members. Hapsari's unions had businesses such as soap, handicraft, and batik making and coffee shops to increase the income of its members. This activity also contributed to the finances of the unions.

In order to face the challenge of lack of access to information and means of communication, Hapsari set up community radios to give its women members the venues to articulate their experience and needs. The

community radios were used to mobilize women to come to Hapsari's events and to voice issues faced by women in Hapsari areas. Community radios were important because they provided women with access to information and knowledge.

### **Closing Remarks**

The process of promoting equality between men and women was an agenda that was continuously pursued by Hapsari and Pesada. Realizing that gender equality might be a foreign concept to the community, they approached grassroots women by addressing their urgent needs. Hapsari started with involving mothers to establish pre-schools to provide education to their small children. Pesada involved grassroots women to become CU members to get away rid from loan sharks and to increase their income. These tactics required long-term approach and they experienced various challenges from the patriarchal culture. Patriarchy remained the most formidable challenge faces by both organizations.

In the beginning, the husbands would not give permission to their wives to attend public meetings because they were expected to stay home to do household chores. After the husbands realized the economic benefits from the involvement of their wife in the CUs, they pressured their wife to borrow money from the CU to be spent by the husband. Moreover, they also started criticizing Pesada for excluding men in the CUs, hence, they said, violating the inclusive principle of the saving and loan associations. However, Pesada was firm in its stand that women needed to be prioritized because of their marginalized position. Women's position and role as owners of economic assets were gradually accepted by family and community members. Hapsari's efforts to promote the participation of women in decision making position at the village and district level would, in the long term, contribute to the amendment of policies that were discriminatory to women and the introduction of new policies that recognize the equality between men and women. In the longer term, budget allocations to address women's needs and interests should also go up.

## CHAPTER V

# Women's Movements and the Discursive Reconstruction of Minangkabau Tradition and Islamic Values in Padang

Edriana Noerdin & Rahayuningtyas

The majority of West Sumatera's population and public decision makers are of Minang ethnicity, which follows a matrilineal culture. Important elements in Minangkabau's matrilineal culture are regulations on kinship, inheritance, communal ownership, the tradition of rantau (male migration outside the community to earn a living) and beliefs about democracy.<sup>1</sup> Since regional autonomy was enforced in 1999, there has been a process of reconfiguring the socio political identity of West Sumatera, which is a combination of Minangkabau tradition and Islamic values.

As the Minangkabau clan lineage follows a matrilineal line, Minangkabau women are the owners and caretakers of the family's fortune and property. Men, on the other hand, are raised since childhood to live outside the home and they move away to other areas to look for education and work opportunities (merantau). When a Minangkabau man decides not to go merantau, after marriage he would live in the home of his wife. The belief that unmarried women bring shame on the family lasts until today.

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<sup>1</sup> Saskia Wieringa, "Matrilineality and Women's Interest" in Saskia Wieringa ed., *Subversive Women: Women's Movement in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean*, (London: Zed Books, 1995), pp. 242-243.

“Unmarried women like us are scorned by the family as well as by everyone in the village and in the workplace. That’s why many women marry young. Even though there’s no guarantee that she’ll be better off raising a family of her own.”<sup>2</sup>

Minangkabau families living in the cities still raise their female children to play a domestic role. Not only that the division of labor is not based on the child’s interests, but it limits a girl’s access to the world outside the home.

“When I was in junior high school, unlike my brothers I didn’t have the freedom to leave the house. I even got scolded when I came late from school. Furthermore, I couldn’t hang out at the stall near my house to read newspapers or chitchat. I was not allowed to sit there even just for a while. Girls and women were not allowed to sit in the stall because that’s where men meet day to day to discuss various matters related to their surroundings, the nation and even the world. I didn’t really like domestic works. But in the meantime, it was my duty to do it.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Women’s Rights and the Reconstruction of Cultural and Religious Discourse**

Minangkabau culture as the dominant social norm in West Sumatera is aligned with Islamic values as shown in the Minangkabau’s cultural credo of “*basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah*” (culture is based on the law, the law is based on religion). The Minangkabau people themselves realize the possibility of a conflict between a matrilineal culture and patrilineal Islam. However, they feel that they have successfully reconciled the tensions between the two norms in their everyday live.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with an LP2M source in Padang, May 14, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with an LP2M source in Padang, May 14, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> See *loc. cit.*

The introduction of decentralization in 1999 opened up opportunities to redefine local identity, and it reinvigorated the discussion on the relationship between traditional culture and Islamic values. Interviews with women NGO activists from West Sumatera showed that the discursive reconfiguration of Minangkabau culture and Islamic values made it more difficult for women to fulfill their economic, political, and social rights. For example, the local government bowed to the pressure from Islamic conservative groups to issue a local government decree that made school girls wear a headscarf (jilbab) to cover their hair.<sup>5</sup> In the city of Padang in particular and in West Sumatera generally, all female students in public schools, from elementary to high school, are obligated to wear a headscarf. Moreover, the local government also issued a by law to introduce a curfew on women who leave their house without being accompanied by a relative (muhrim).<sup>6</sup> Women's rights organizations opposed those discriminative local regulations.<sup>7</sup> However, they did not conduct advocacy against them because they were afraid of being attacked by conservative religious groups.

The same goes for the issue of polygamy. Although women's rights organizations in West Sumatera opposed polygamy, they did not conduct advocacy against it because they did not want to create animosity with traditional and religious groups in the area. Minangkabau people believed that "polygamy is God's decree"<sup>8</sup> and Minangkabau's cultural and religious

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<sup>5</sup> Padang Mayoral Decree No. 451.422/Binsos-III/2005, dated March 7, 2005. This policy was introduced with the assumption that the decline of morality among Padang youth and teenagers was caused by their non-Islamic attires. The policy that was meant to strengthen Islamic identity created unease among non-Muslim population in Padang since there was a tendency in several schools to force non-Muslim female students into wearing the headscarf (jilbab). Padang Mayor Fauzi Baharmade a statement in a local television that non-Muslims could wear the jilbab since Catholic nuns also cover their hair.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on this local law, see Edriana Noerdin et al, *Representasi Perempuan dalam Era Otonomi Daerah*, (Jakarta: Women Research Institute, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Notes from field Research on Perspective, Startegy Pattern and Gender Agenda of Women Organizations, Women Research Institute, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

communities allowed the practice to take place. This is despite the fact that polygamy is officially banned by the Indonesian Law on Marriage.<sup>9</sup>

Although they knew that those discriminative local policies made it more difficult for women to exercise their political, economic, social and cultural rights, women's rights organizations in West Sumatera did not dare to openly participate in the discursive reconstruction of Minangkabau culture and Islamic values. Therefore, they focused their works on promoting women's access to public decision making processes.

“KPI is more focused on improving women's political skills to demand for a minimum quota for women legislative candidates. KPI is now also trying to be active in the issue of women trafficking.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, since local branches of KPI, Solidaritas Perempuan and LBH APIK were affiliates of national networks and coalitions and they were financially dependent on them, they tended to follow the programs of their national affiliates. Obviously, the reconfiguration of local West Sumateran discourse on tradition and religion was not in the main agenda of those national networks and coalitions.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, local organizations such as Nurani Perempuan were founded to address the issue of violence against women. This goal was in line with the work experience of its founder in organizations such as PKBI. Nurani Perempuan was an organization without a legal body and it relied on donations to run the organization. Nurani Perempuan provided services to women victims of violence. Although the roots of violence against women could be found in social and religious discourse that discriminate women, Nurani Perempuan decided not to participate in the discursive reconfiguration of the Minangkabau's culture and Islamic values.

<sup>9</sup> Wieringa (1995) quoted a national census from 1930, showing that rates of polygamy in Java and Madura were 1.9%, whereas in Minangkabau it was 8.7%.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with an LP2M source in Padang, May 14, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Notes from field Research on Perspective, Strategy Pattern and Gender Agenda of Women Organizations, Women Research Institute, 2005.

LP2M, ASPPUK, and Harmonia also stayed away from the discursive processes. They focused their work on facilitating women to achieve financial independence. They thought that financial independence would greatly help women's efforts to participate in local politics. Meanwhile, LBH APIK Padang, the Indonesian Women's Coalition for Democracy and Justice (KPI), Solidaritas Perempuan (SP), Nurani Perempuan, and Totalitas saw the necessity of relating women's human rights to the provision of basic rights such as health and sanitation.

### **Similarities and Differences of Women's Rights Organizations**

WRI selected eight women's organizations in Padang to be interviewed. LP2M, LBH APIK Padang, Totalitas, Harmonia and Nurani Perempuan were foundations, where as, KPI and Solidaritas Perempuan were associations. They had similarities in their vision and mission to promote greater access for women to political and local decision-making processes. A closer look at their activities revealed the similarities of differences of the programs carried out by these eight women's organizations.

- a. LP2M, ASPPUK and Harmonia choose to focus their programs more on women's political participation to increase women's access to economic resources. They organized groups of women small business owners to access capital and markets, and push for their involvement in the local decision making process to open up a space for women small business owners.
- b. Nurani Perempuan and LBH APIK focused their attention on issues of violence against women. They tried to achieve legal redress for issues of violence against women, both in the home, such as domestic violence, including polygamy, as well as outside the home such as rapes and other sexual assaults. KPI also had a program addressing violence against women in Padang.

- c. KPI and Solidaritas Perempuan focused their attention more on the struggle to achieve women's human rights by participating in public decision making processes. They facilitated the formation of women's associations to advocate for women's political rights by holding group discussions, seminars, and public dialogues.
- d. Totalitas focuses its activities on the provision of basic needs for women such as access to health care, clean water, sanitation, poor nutrition, etc.

They also have differences and similarities in terms of the vision of the organizations.

- The vision of LP2M, Harmonia and ASPPUK was more about women's welfare than gender justice. They assumed that gender justice could be achieved through the fulfillment of welfare needs. These organizations linked the goal of achieving welfare and gender justice with the efforts to increase women's awareness about the importance of improving women's access to economic and political decision making processes as a way to achieve gender justice in society.
- LBH APIK Padang and Nurani Perempuan based their work on a vision to change unjust power relations between men and women in the society. These organizations identified economic, political, and cultural inequalities within the society. However, they placed more emphasis on unequal gender relations that led to violence against women. KPI also raised the issue of violence against women in their campaigns.
- Meanwhile, KPI had the intention to promote the realization of women's rights in all areas of life. Similar to Solidaritas Perempuan, this organization placed more emphasis on ethics in democracy, human rights, and gender parity, and clearly stated feminism as its value. Like LBH APIK Padang, KPI and Solidaritas Perempuan had the same goals as their national level organizations, and did not draw up their own vision and mission statements.

## Activities of Women's Rights NGOs

### a. Improving women's access to the economy

At the economic front, LP2M conducted activities to strengthen women small business owners and women's financial organizations by providing trainings in accounting, management and marketing. The goal was to enable the women to develop networks fellow business people to help them expand the market for their products. At the political front, LP2M conducted activities to increase women's political participation in the Southern Coast, working together with the Global Fund for Women. LP2M conducted policy advocacy to make the government guarantee women's rights to participate in public decision making processes and provide supports for women to be involved in politics, whether as candidates or voters. Beneficiaries of LP2M's programs were all women.

In addition, LP2M conducted activities in the field of climate change and disaster prevention. LP2M collaborated with Bread for All (Germany) to promote and conduct tree planting, biophore making, and land conservation activities. With HEKS (Germany) and Swiss Solidarity funding, LP2M conducted three programs to promote post-disaster economic recovery. The first program was disaster risk reduction, including the formation of a committee on disasters in the community and the provision of trainings in disaster response, including the provision of first aid for earthquake victims. The second program involved economic activities to assist the recovery of earthquake victims by developing cooperatives, improving skills, and providing assistance to access equipment to businesses. The third program was the provision of clean water and sanitation for disaster victims. The three programs started in the wake of the 2009 earthquake in the city of Padang.

Four years ago, LP2M conducted an evaluation regarding government budget allocations to see whether the local government had adopted the principles of gender responsive budgeting. LP2M would then work with local government departments that were directly related to women's welfare

to disseminate ideas about allocating budget to address women's needs. However, because of the 2009 earthquake and its involvement in disaster relief programs, LP2M's advocacy works went into decline.

ASPPUK in Padang also conducted activities to improve the welfare of women small business owners in Padang. ASPPUK was engaged in routine discussions with members of the Women's Small Enterprises Network (JarPUK) on various themes from entrepreneurship to gender awareness. Women small business owners were given information to enable them to understand that current gender inequalities made things very difficult for them as entrepreneurs, particularly in obtaining startup loans. ASPPUK taught the women to distinguish between family assets and assets that they privately owned, which could be put as collateral for a loan from banks or other financial institutions. ASPPUK also conducted accounting trainings to make women have better control over their finances. ASPPUK facilitated group discussions with all JarPUK members to exchange experiences and learn from each other to expand the marketing of their goods.

To assist women small business owners to increase the sale of their products, ASPPUK facilitated them to meet with the government to get, for example, *halal* labels Health Department License Numbers for free. ASPPUK also facilitated the formation of savings and loan cooperatives. At this point, they were planning to turn the cooperative into a general purpose cooperative to allow ASPPUK members to sell their products.

ASPPUK organized discussions in the community by involving *bundo kanduang* women leaders as well as men. ASPPUK believed that the discussions would increase people's understanding of the benefits of equality between men and women. However, their efforts stop short from addressing the reconfiguration of traditional and religious values that have discriminated women further.

The many activities and discussions that ASPPUK organized had made its members gain the confidence to speak in public. The women became aware that they had the right to voice their demands out and the capacity to get involved in development activities in their village. The women

participated actively in the bottom up Multi Stakeholder Consultation Forum for Development Planning (Musrenbang) at the village to the city level.

Unlike ASPPUK, Harmonia was a recent establishment. It was created in 2010 by ex-board members of LP2M, who left the organization due to an internal conflict over the management of earthquake relief programs after the big earthquake that hit Padang in 2009, killing more than 6,000 people. Many donor organizations came to Padang with humanitarian relief programs, and LP2M was selected to be a local partner. LP2M organized other women's groups to manage around Rp. 8 billion that was provided by the donors. LP2M staff actually did not have sufficient capacity to manage that large amount of money and they recruited many new staff members and volunteers. Ensuing conflicts made two of its leaders leave LP2M to form a new organization called Harmonia. Despite of limited funding, Harmonia succeeded in carrying out its programs to improve women's awareness about their rights and how they could develop resources to improve their welfare. Harmonia facilitated the development of grassroots women's network to establish savings and loan initiatives or community funds that could be used for financing start-up businesses or providing assistance to cover children's school fees and other basic needs. Harmonia also conducted policy advocacy to promote gender justice to change the status of women in the society.

#### **b. Improving legal access and stopping violence against women**

LBH APIK Padang focused its activities in providing legal services for women who were facing divorce or legal cases involving indigenous land rights. This organization developed partnership with a radio to present women speakers in talk shows and with a local newspaper to publish women's views. The media partnership only lasted for two years due to the limited number of personnel working for this organization. Due to lack of funding, LBH APIK Padang became inactive and its staff went to

work somewhere else. LBH APIK suffered from the shift of donor's policies to move away from law and gender justice issues to humanitarian needs.

KPI Padang's works also focused on issues related to victims of domestic violence and polygamy. KPI accompanied the victims to report the case to the Regional Police and provided assistance all the way until the court trial. They focused their works in six *nagari*s (sub-districts) in the Solok region.

Meanwhile, SP in Padang formed an alliance to carry out routine campaigning activities, called we can campaign. Issues that were raised in these campaigns included anti-violence, community awareness, and increasing gender awareness for women. Funding for this we can campaign was provided by the Indonesian we can campaign alliance, which was funded by Oxfam through the national secretariat of SP. The we can campaign over the radio was free of charge and it addressed issues of violence against women.

Another organization providing services for victims of violence against women was the Nurani Perempuan Women's Crisis Center (WCC), which specifically accompanied victims of physical, sexual and gender-based violence. Nurani Perempuan worked together with the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) to organize a 16-day campaign on violence against women in West Sumatera, helping the Special Services Room (a Police institution) provide services to victims of violence. Besides providing accompaniment to the victims, the organization worked with a local radio to provide weekly counseling via telephone. Nurani Perempuan WCC also conducted many media campaigns about violence against women through newspapers, television and Facebook.

The media campaigns proved to be effective in increasing reports of gender-based violence in Padang. The number of reports received by WCC increased from 54 in 2010 to 84 in 2011.<sup>12</sup> In 2005, WCC had a hotline

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<sup>12</sup> <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2011/12/17/01404492/WCC.Temukan.84.Kasus.Kekerasan.terhadap.Perempuan>, accessed on June 11, 2012 at 15.52 WIB.

number that could be contacted at anytime by violence victims. However, the hotline was finally closed since it received many threatening calls. Efforts to revive the hotline were on the way. WCC also conducted many routine discussions every one or two months, attended by around 15 people consisting of college students, women activists, and the general public. They chose the topic of discussion in accordance to current issues facing the community.

Nurani Perempuan was able to survive due to its ability to mobilize volunteers. Besides receiving funds from its partnerships with other organizations like Komnas Perempuan, this organization also collected funds from independent groups and individuals.

### **c. Improving women's political participation**

KPI and Solidaritas Perempuan carried out activities to strengthen women's political participation through a series of meetings and discussions leading to the 1999 general elections. KPI conducted empowerment and political education activities for organizational leaders, as well as advocacy for public policy in West Sumatera to be more gender responsive and democratic. The personnel of this organization actively conducted partnerships with broadcast and print media to raise gender issues in the province.

KPI also conducted routine activities in 58 Women's Town Halls (*balai*) that existed throughout West Sumatera. Activities in the Women's Town Halls were usually related to current topics of discussion in the community. The discussion themes were determined after the presidium conducted coordination meetings every three months. After deciding on the themes, the presidium had the responsibility to carry out the Women's Town Hall discussions. At this time, the themes of the Women's Town Halls discussion focused around affirmative action and the preparation of KPI members to register as legislative candidates. Discussions were being carried out to foster understanding of and regain momentum towards fighting for a 30 percent quota for women legislative candidates. One purpose of the discussion was to motivate KPI members to run for office.

Several KPI members stated they would register to become parliament candidates and started to speak with community members to find out their current needs. There were also several other legislative candidates that were not KPI members, but they treated KPI as a kind of consultant for the issue of clean water. To fund its activities KPI Padang wrote a proposal to the KPI's National Working Committee in Jakarta.

#### **d. Facilitating the fulfillment of health and sanitation rights**

The Totalitas Foundation was created to respond to the inadequate public service delivery to address basic needs. Over time, they realized that women were the most vulnerable in the community and they had limited access to basic needs such as access to health care and sanitation. Totalitas volunteers focused their work on improving women and children's access to nutrition by conducting discussions to increase women's knowledge on nutrition. They also provided nutritional support in the form of food for children, as there were still many cases of poor nutrition and malnutrition that occurred in Totalitas' areas of work. Totalitas foundation implemented the method of "positive deviance" in Pesisir Selatan, Lima Puluh Kota, and Solok Regencies. The method was to find best practice of households that were vulnerable to malnutrition and had similar economic situations and characteristics as other poor household in the community. These households were then made into examples for others, so that the others could see that regardless of their limited economic capacity they could live healthily and have good nutrition.

Totalitas Foundation also provided community empowerment to address the issue of sanitation and access to clean water. Those who already had sources of clean water were assisted in channeling the water to other households in the regions. This work had been conducted since 2001 and the communities were now able to fulfill their need of clean water and they formed the NGO BPSADS (the Organization for Management of Clean Water and Sanitation Facilities). They received donations from citizens for the management of clean water facilities and they had an office with computer facilities.

Totalitas Foundation also conducted trainings in advocacy to allow village people to fight for their rights. The training activities in administration and agriculture related skills were conducted only for women farmers in the villages. At that time, there were mining activities that were conducted in the area that would pollute the paddy fields. The women farmers were taught to advocate to their *nagari* to stop the mining project. Within one year, the *nagari* stopped the mining operation.

Totalitas Foundation worked in four Regencies. Those regions were chosen based on four criteria: they all had marginalized communities, there was a lack of access to the local government, there was an imperative issue to be addressed in the community, and the community itself had the potential to resolve the problem. Based on those four criteria, Totalitas helped the regions that were often neglected by the government.

### Organizational Strategies

LP2M and ASPPUK used the method of empowering grassroots women groups to become local organizers. The implementation of the strategy was evaluated periodically to determine the next steps.

“Getting involved in ASPPUK was quite influential in the home life of these grassroots women. One effect was an increase in income since ASPPUK provided information about products and marketing. There were also those who said that we’re raising their awareness about our rights as women, as wives. There’s also the issue of how should we raise our children, no longer treating girls and boys differently, for example in doing household chores. There’s also the awareness that as women, we have the motivation to improve ourselves that we know that in fact, we can fight for this right.”<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, KPI used the strategy of facilitating the emergence of women politicians.

“We organize a certain number of grassroots women, but what we want is in fact larger than that. We don’t want to reach only 500 or 700

women. We want to have an impact on the Minangkabau community as a whole in West Sumatera. If we are only so many hundreds of women in number, well, it won't be significant. Now we are facing a question whether we are satisfied with providing empowerment, or should we encourage the women to become policy makers at the *nagari*, local parliament, and then the provincial level. The affirmative action policy during the past election actually provided a huge opportunity for women.”<sup>14</sup>

However, many of the women were actually not ready to run for public offices.

“We aren't brave enough to stick our heads out in politics yet [as legislative candidates]. There are only one or two women that are brave enough to do it. I realize that it's important for the women we've empowered to occupy strategic positions in politics. However, most of the women would rather discuss about marketing strategies, product packaging, and how to obtain funds and savings and loan services to fulfill their daily needs”.

### Closing Remarks

The space to bring gender issues to the surface became greater following the political changes that took place in 1998. The number of women's rights NGOs in West Sumatera increased significantly. Some of them were initiated locally and some others were facilitated by national NGOs that wanted to develop branches in the local areas. Those women's NGOs decided to work in the areas of policy advocacy, economic empowerment, and legal aid to provide services victims of violence against women.

The growth of these women's organizations required assistance in the form of human resources, funding, and knowledge that were not

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

sufficiently available in West Sumatera. Therefore, many of them associated themselves with national women's rights or non-women's rights organizations to get access to funding, bearing the risk of having to follow the agenda of the national organizations.

Women's right NGOs in West Sumatera developed partnership with non-traditional institutions to restructure gender relations. Rather than working with cultural and religious institutions, they worked with women's entrepreneur groups, community discussion groups, and local parliaments. These choices revealed their strategy of improving the welfare of marginalized women by facilitating their participation in decision making institutions that were currently dominated by men. Most women's rights NGOs in West Sumatera stated their fear of being rejected by the community if they adopted confrontational attitude towards traditional and religious institutions.

Women's rights organizations in West Sumatera faced internal challenge in form of funding insufficiency and external challenge in form of community resistance towards efforts to make Minangkabau culture and Islamic values gender responsive. Limited funding and difficulties in getting communities to support their efforts to democratize the dominant discourse made them allocate their energy and financial resources to address more pragmatic women's issues related to basic rights and political representation. However, failure to reconfigure the subjugation of women by Minangkabau culture and Islamic values would make women in West Sumatera to be discriminated socially and culturally, which stand on their way to claim bigger portion of seats in political decision making institutions in the future.





## CHAPTER VI

# Organizational Restructuring and Network Development to Strengthen Policy Advocacy in Jakarta

Ayu Anastasia, Frisca Anindhita,  
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Under the authoritarian period before 1998, most women's organizations were established in Jakarta in form of foundation and they promoted basic ideas of feminism and justice. Since 1998, the organizational form and the work focus of women's organizations in Indonesia had become more diverse. WRI selected seven work areas of women's organizations and looked at how ten Jakarta-based women's organizations had struggled to adjust their organizational forms and work focus and develop networking across geographical areas to respond to the changing social and political contexts in the post 1998 reform era.

Among the ten women's organizations, *Kalyanamitra*, *Solidaritas Perempuan* (Women's Solidarity, SP), LBH APIK, Migrant Care and Pekka were foundations. Three other women's organizations, *Institut Kapal Perempuan*, *Asosiasi Pendamping Perempuan Usaha Kecil* (Association of Women Small Enterprises, ASPPUK) and Ardhanary Institute, were associations. Meanwhile, the National Commission of Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) was a national commission set up by the government, and *Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia* (Indonesian Women Coalition, KPI) was a mass organization. This chapter looks at the works of the ten women's organizations in the field of information and communication management, politi-



cal empowerment, economic empowerment, education, violence against women, women migrant workers, and sexuality and how they adjusted their work focus and developed networking to make democracy in Indonesia gender responsive by promoting gender justice and open better access to decision making processes for women.

### **Information and Communication Management**

Kalyanamitra was the first women's organization with feminist approach that was established during Soeharto's New Order era. Its mandate was to become a center of communication and information on women and feminism issues that was equipped with a documentation center. Included in the information and documentation center were database development, library services (printed and digital materials), and publication of original and translated books. Kalyanamitra also had a website and organized Kalyanamitra Facebook network. According to the Global Fund for Women,

“Kalyanamitra came to defy the taboo against speaking out, and advocated stronger legislation against violence, while conducting public awareness campaigns. Today Kalyanamitra is an established information and documentation center, of which many other women's rights groups take advantage. The center holds gender analysis trainings for other women's groups and activists.”<sup>1</sup>

Later on, however, Kalyanamitra, decided to change the focus of its work. We will see in the accounts below that since 2008 Kalyanamitra shifted its role from an information provider on women's issues and a support provider for women victims of violence to an institution that provided economic empowerment and conducted education on sexuality issues. No other women's NGOs in Indonesia had taken over Kalyanami-

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Desti Murdiana, Vice Head as well as Secretary General National Commission on Violence Against Women, Jakarta 21 May 2012.

tra's previous role as an information and documentation center for women's issues.

### **Political Empowerment**

KPI was in the forefront in the issue of women's political rights and it claimed to have 28,257 members from all over the country that represented 18 interest sector groups. KPI decided to focus its work on promoting women's participation in political processes. For this purpose, KPI set up Women Halls at the district and city level as activity centers to help KPI members reach out to grassroots women at the village level.

"Now there are small successes— because our friends can feel the benefits of our achievement. The organization is running as well as the advocacy. Each Women Hall has different issues according to its local context. Our strategy needs to be improved to be able to deal with different issues in different villages."<sup>2</sup>

KPI provided political education to women to help them occupy decision-making positions such as becoming parliament members or officials in government offices. KPI raised the awareness of women regarding their political rights to participate in planning and budgeting processes as well as in other public policy making mechanisms.

The goal of KPI was to make national public policies responsive to women's needs. Within almost one decade, KPI had contributed to the enactment of various regulations at the national level such as anti-trafficking law, migrant worker law, health law, and social security law. KPI was also involved in the anti violence against women campaign and worked with other women's organizations to push the government to establish the National Commission of Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*). KPI also contributed to the revision of penal code articles that were disci-

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Dian Kartikasari, Secretary General of Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia, Jakarta 30 May 2012.

minative towards women. Together with other women's organizations, KPI worked to amend the Election Law, making it mandatory for political parties to implement 30 percent quota for women candidates. Gender responsive budgeting was also in KPI's advocacy agenda. KPI's achievements were attributed to its ability to develop networking with other women's organizations that worked in the same fields.

While KPI conducted policy advocacy at the national level, Pekka concentrated its political activities at the community level. Pekka provided political empowerment to poor and marginalized women at the grassroots level to enable them to participate in public decision-making processes such as in the bottom up Multi Stakeholder Consultation Forum for Development Planning (Musrenbang) at the village level. Pekka had three goals in carrying out its political empowerment programs. First, to improve the "critical awareness" of Pekka members. Second, to improve the "participation" of its members in policy making processes. Third, to increase women's control over public decision-making processes. Pekka's activities consisted of public education, community organization, and capacity building. Achievements of Pekka's non-economic activities varied.

In Adonara, West Nusa Tenggara, Pekka succeeded in making village officials issue a regulation to make social customs less burden some for women. The village regulation reduced the amount of money that had to be paid as funeral donation. Another success story was the ability of Pekka members to pressure village government to issue a regulation that made men pay dowry. This was a strategy to minimize the possibility of divorce. Through their political programs, Pekka members in Adonara competed for decision-making positions at the village level by taking part in village meetings. Some even managed to become village head.

In 2008 Kalyanamitra started to provide political empowerment to urban and rural poor women, just like Pekka. In the urban areas, Kalyanamitra worked in the sub-district of Prumpung and Muara Baru in Jakarta and in the rural areas they worked in Pasrujambe sub-district in Lumajang, East Java. Kalyanamitra developed empowerment programs for grassroots

women to increase their knowledge and leadership skills. The goal was to enable the grassroots women to voice their concerns in the Musrenbang bottom up Multi Stakeholder Consultation Forum for Development Planning. Kalyanamitra appointed one program staff to specifically managed its activities in Lumajang.

“We appointed one staff to manage discussions, to run group database, to set up profile, and to maintain group development. Other works are done mostly by local partners.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Economic Empowerment**

Pekka did not only provide political empowerment to grassroots women. Just like ASPPUK, Pekka also conducted program to provide economic empowerment to improve women’s welfare.

“One of the reasons to establish Pekka was to fight against injustices face by women who were family heads. In Indonesia, men were considered as family heads. Although data from the Central Bureau of Statistics show that 14 percent of family heads are women, their existence have never been recognized.”<sup>4</sup>

Even though beneficiaries of both organizations are different – women as family heads for Pekka and women small entrepreneurs for ASPPUK– they used similar methods of providing education and training to their grassroots women partners. Pekka program managed to improve the economic welfare of its members by providing them with resources to increase their economic security. The economic resources were in form of savings and loans associations that was supported by Micro Finance Institute (*Lembaga Keuangan Mikro/LKM*). LKM provided Pekka with funds

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Rena Herdiyani, Executive Director of Kalyanamitra, Jakarta 21 May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Nani Zulminarni, National Coordinator of National Secretary of Pekka, FGD Jakarta, 9 May 2012.

to finance productive small businesses or provide emergency loans to enable its members to get health and education services. According to a survey conducted by Pekka in 2009, Pekka's members from various parts of Indonesia confirmed that their participation in saving and loan programs had increased their economic welfare and individual income.

Meanwhile, ASPPUK restructured its organizational form to become more effective in implementing economic empowerment programs. ASPPUK was established in 1994 and in 1997 it became a Foundation called YASPPUK. In 2001, however, their members changed the organization form into an association, which was considered more democratic. YASPPUK carried out the adjustment through a consensus building initiated by its NGO members. All members of YASPPUK agreed to implement the organizational adjustment.<sup>5</sup>

“The members saw that foundation was not democratic because the Board of Founders could not be changed and they acted like they were the owners of the organization. In 2001, our foundation was changed into an association, hence the name the Association of Women Small Enterprises or ASPPUK. Our friends said that we became more democratic compared to when we were still a foundation. Now we can change the leadership structure through a National Forum.”<sup>6</sup>

The change of its organizational form from foundation to association did not only make ASPPUK more democratic but it also allowed the organization to become more responsive to local needs. Each member could participate in deciding the policies that suited local contexts.

ASPPUK facilitated grassroots women to become women small entrepreneurs (*Perempuan Usaha Kecil*, PUK). ASPPUK divided its work into

<sup>5</sup> Bottom up approach is established from grass root – a consensus of a group of people, representing an experimental process and local context ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top-down\\_and\\_bottom-up\\_design#Management\\_and\\_organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top-down_and_bottom-up_design#Management_and_organization), accessed on 23 September 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Muhammad Firdaus, Deputy Director of ASPPUK Jakarta, Jakarta 27 June 2012.

five areas to facilitate better coordination, and it established a Regional Forum in each of the five areas as the highest decision-making forum. Those five areas were Sumatera, Java, Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Up until 2012, ASPPUK had 54 NGO members that worked in 21 provinces in Indonesia, and its 22 PUK Networks (JarPUKs) could be found in 14 provinces.

As a network of NGOs that provided economic empowerment to women small entrepreneurs, ASPPUK had a set of membership criteria. The criteria were formulated in a national forum that was attended by representatives of Regional Forums. According to the criteria, ASPPUK members should be non-profit or non-government organizations that have the capacity to deliver empowerment with gender perspective to PUKs, have sufficient experience in delivering the empowerment, and have delivered assistance to around 100 PUKs. In addition, member candidates should not be affiliated with any political parties, government institutions, the military as well as the police. Also, they should have vision and missions that are in line with ASPPUK. Once an NGO became a member of ASPPUK, they would be evaluated regularly.

“We have an accreditation mechanism that is implemented to every NGO member. Members are assessed yearly and if they do not meet the criteria, for example they no longer deliver assistance or no longer have grassroots support, we would ask them to resign from ASPPUK because their work and ours are no longer in line.”<sup>7</sup>

NGOs were interested to become members because they were attracted to ASPPUK’s capacity building programs, such as trainings in how to develop a cooperative to support grassroots women to set up small enterprises. ASPPUK was also attractive because of its extensive network across provinces in Indonesia, which offered opportunities to exchange information and learn from each other’s experience.

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Muhammad Firdaus, Deputy Director of ASPPUK Jakarta, Jakarta 27 June 2012.

“The job of ASPPUK’s secretariat is to provide capacity building for our members, as they have paid their annual fee. Our job is to strengthen the capacity of the NGOs to provide assistance to grassroots women. This is perhaps what makes them interested to join ASPPUK. Some of them joined the organization because they already had friends in ASPPUK and they wanted to be able to share experiences in facilitating the development of women small entrepreneurs. We also set up an alternative financial institution for women to develop integrative economic development. This has also attracted non-members to join.”<sup>8</sup>

In 2008 Kalyanamitra, which was known as the center of information and communication for women, decided to provide political empowerment and economic assistance to poor women. They decided to work with grassroots women in Muara Baru and Prumpung sub-district in Jakarta and in Pasrujambe sub-district in Lumajang, East Java. Through its economic empowerment programs, Kalyanamitra provided trainings to help grassroots women improve their marketing skills to earn more income from the sale of snacks and accessories that they produced. Kalyanamitra also facilitated the women to develop independent economic groups such as saving and loans associations.<sup>9</sup> In 2011, the fund managed by these groups came to around Rp 20 to Rp 25 million (US\$ 2,000 to US\$ 2,500), which was used to provide financial assistance to support their businesses.<sup>10</sup> By the end of 2011 Kalyanamitra had facilitated the formation of five grassroots women groups in Muara Baru and Prumpung and six groups in Pasrujambe. The number of members in Jakarta and Lumajang came to 51 and 221 respectively.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Muhammad Firdaus, Deputy Director of ASPPUK Jakarta, Jakarta 27 June 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Muhammad Firdaus, Deputy Director of ASPPUK Jakarta, Jakarta 27 June 2012.

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 14-28, “Perempuan Memberi Makna pada Perubahan. Laporan Tahunan Periode 1 January-31 December 2011”, Kalyanamitra, January 2012, Jakarta.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* pp. 27-28.

## Education

Kapal Perempuan Institute focused their activities on educating women about gender equality and justice. Aiming to become an education center for poor and marginalized women,<sup>12</sup> Kapal Perempuan Institute worked to strengthen women's bargaining position so that they would not be repressed, exploited and victimized.<sup>13</sup> To carry out its missions, Kapal Perempuan Institute focused on organizing four activities, namely providing critical education, facilitating policy advocacy, conducting research and issuing publication. Kapal Perempuan Institute also provided capacity building to other NGOs on how to mainstream gender and MDGs into the planning and budgeting processes of local governments. It was difficult for many local governments to mainstream MDGs into their development programs.<sup>14</sup>

Another women's organization, Pekka, also provided education to poor and marginalized women. Pekka provided tutoring to women to enable them to pass Package A, B and C exams to earn Primary and Secondary diplomas. In addition, Pekka set up preschools as entry points to approach grassroots mothers. While their children were in the classrooms, Pekka educated the mothers about gender equality and justice.

While working on the same issues, Kapal Perempuan Institute and Pekka took different positions concerning the World Bank. While Kapal Perempuan Institute refused to develop cooperation with the World Bank,<sup>15</sup> Pekka made use of the World Bank's Justice for the Poor program to strengthen its efforts to empower women family heads.

Kalyanamitra did not only provide education on gender equality and justice but also on sexuality.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* pp. 31-33.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Rena Herdiyani, Executive Director of Kalyanamitra, Jakarta 21 May 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Misiyah, Head of Board of Executive of Kapal Perempuan Institute, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Misiyah, Head of Board of Executive of Kapal Perempuan Institute, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

“We organized gender and sexuality education every month, and it was open for the general public. We have created a curriculum on gender and sexuality education that caters to all participants, and it is disseminated through Facebook. The one day training is limited to fifteen participants. Resource persons can be from Kalyanamitra or from other NGOs such as Ardhanary. We select our participants based on their concerns on education by asking them to write a short essay about what they think about gender and sexuality. We would sort our participants from those essays. People who have contradictory views are not going to be accepted. Mostly, our participants include students but there are also mothers as well as activists from other organizations.”<sup>16</sup>

Ardhanary Institute was in line with Kalyanamitra in term of the need to provide education on sexuality. However, Ardhanary did not only organize sexuality education for the general public but also to LBTs. Ardhanary did not only conduct education and training but also counseling, and it succeeded in encouraging LBTs to get organized and either developed or joined existing LBT communities. Moreover, Ardhanary also succeeded in encouraging LBT communities to conduct fundraising activities and use the proceeds to help finance trainings on political education of sexuality.<sup>17</sup>

Ardhanary made use of the educating and training sessions to assess the character and needs of the participants. For example, the trans genders wanted their identity to be recognized in the training and education sessions. Meanwhile, the lesbians felt that the society did not welcome them individually. However, after setting up a community, they found out that the society accepted the community.<sup>18</sup> Based on the assessment results, Ardhanary redesigned their training and education sessions to meet the specific characters and needs of the different LBT groups.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Misiyah, Head of Board of Executive of Kapal Perempuan Institute, Jakarta 14 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Lily, Vice Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 16 May 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Lily, Vice Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 16 May 2012.

## Violence Against Women

Concerns regarding the lack of services for women experiencing violence were voiced out by women activists from various women's organizations, as well as from a number of academicians from universities in Jakarta, Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan and Papua in 1991. Police reports in the period of 1986-1989 showed that rape occurred every five hours in Indonesia. Kalyanamitra used this data to invite women's organizations and those concerned with women's issues to set up a joint anti-rape campaign.

It is interesting to observe how organizations decided to change their activities. Kalyanamitra was founded in 1984 to provide gender analysis education and training. After seven years they decided to initiate anti rape campaign through a national workshop and set up a network of NGOs on the issue. While still continuing to provide gender analysis trainings, anti-rape campaigns became Kalyanamitra's main activity. During the workshop, participants identified two main problems that needed to be addressed by the anti-rape network. First, there was a need to amend the Criminal Law, especially how women and family were defined in the law. Second, there was a question regarding how they should deliver assistance to women victims. The anti-rape campaign network hosted regular weekly meetings in LBH Jakarta office to follow up the recommendations produced by the workshop.

In 1995, Kalyanamitra strengthened its campaign on violence against women by directly handling a number of rape cases. Kalyanamitra's role in the anti-rape campaign culminated in the 1998 May Riot, focusing on the rape cases of ethnic Chinese women. Kalyanamitra became the secretariat for Volunteer Team for Humanity (Tim Relawan Kemanusiaan) for rape victims in Jakarta.

Since then, Kalyanamitra continued to work on issues related to violence against women. In 1999, the organization decided to set up a Victim Assistance Division within the organization and later on it set up supporting divisions such as Education Division, Campaign Division, and Library and Documentation Division.

Twenty years later, cases of violence against women remained rampant in Jakarta and other organizations had emerged to provide services and assistance to the victims. In 2008, Kalyanamitra decided to shift its focus of work away from violence against women. The NGO decided to provide economic empowerment to poor women. Therefore, Kalyanamitra conducted works on women economic empowerment, education and training on gender and sexuality, and gender responsive policy advocacy.

As a legal aid institution for women, LBH APIK provided legal aid to women victims of violence and assisted them in litigation processes. The mandate of LBH APIK was to promote legal reform to make laws and regulations and legal institutions become gender sensitive and taking the side of the victims.”<sup>19</sup> To carry out its legal reform activities, LBH APIK conducted studies, documentation and publication, campaign and policy advocacy.

“Our main programs are providing legal assistance to women and promoting legal reform. Therefore, we set up legal assistance division and legal reform division. Challenging a discourse to promote legal reform is not easy. It is easier to use a case to do public campaign, and it is more attractive to funding agencies too.”<sup>20</sup>

LBH APIK was actively involved in legal advocacy network such as the women's network for national legislation (Jaringan Kerja Perempuan Pro Prolegnas, JKP3).

The national tragedy in form of sexual assaults and rapes of the ethnic Chinese women during the 1998 May Riot shocked the public. Many individuals and religious organizations developed networking to provide services for the women victims. The public pressures made the government took a proactive stance to eradicate all forms of violence

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Ratna Batara Munti, External Director of LBH APIK Jakarta, Jakarta 24 May 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Ratna Batara Munti, External Director of LBH APIK Jakarta, Jakarta 24 May 2012.

against women in Indonesia. The government formed an independent fact gathering team to investigate the rape and sexual assault cases and the President issued Presidential Regulation No. 181/1998 to establish the National Commission of Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan).

The Presidential Regulation No. 181/1998 was based on Law No. 7/1984 which ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW itself was issued in 1979 by the United Nations. Using the convention as reference, women and human rights activists formulated the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women that demanded the government to eradicate violence against women. In 1999, the government issued a commitment by signing up a joint declaration of Zero Tolerance Policy, which allowed zero tolerance to any form of violence against women and prioritized the safety and security of women. The approach was then used as the basis for the implementation of the National Action Plan of the Eradication of Violence Against Women by the Ministry of Women Empowerment.

The National Commission focused its work on preventing, handling, and resolving violence against women. The institution reported to the President and the public once a year. According to the 2011 Annual Report on Violence Against Women, there were 105,103 reported cases of violence against women in 2010. Ninety six percent of the cases took place in the private domain, three and a half percent took place in the public domain, and the rest happened in the state's domain. Ninety seven percent were cases of violence against the wives and took place in the domestic domain, while half of the cases that happened in the public domain took the form of rapes, rape attempts, sexual assaults and sexual harassments. Meanwhile, violence against women that happened under the State domain took the form of forced eviction against women, religious and moral related violence and human trafficking.

The annual reports were the main achievement of the National Commission. The report was compiled from data on violence against women reported by NGOs, the police, hospitals and the court. The annual report

was published every March 8 on Women's International Day and it was disseminated through a press conference. National Commission also promoted 16 Days of Anti-Violence Against Women Campaign (25 November – 10 December) by organizing cultural and political events to invite the public to show their stance against violence against women.

The National Commission's programs were implemented by its divisions, such as Legal and Policy Reform, Education, Recovery, Monitoring and Public Participation. The National Commission also responded to specific issues that were beyond the reach of the divisions by setting up task forces. Three task forces had been set up so far, namely task forces on Papua, Migrant Workers and Women in National Legal Constitution.

The National Commission faced the challenge of ensuring that its activities to promote, protect and guarantee the fulfillment of human rights in Indonesia were gender responsive. The National Commission should maintain collaboration and build synergy with all actors, including legal and social political actors, from the executives and legislatures at the national and local level as well as CSOs and the private sector.

Another contribution of the National Commission was its provision of alternative services to victims of violence against women that were referred to by legal aid organizations as well as law enforcement in Indonesia.<sup>21</sup> Pekka was also known to provide legal aid services for widows and women victimized by violence. Pekka's legal aid services, however, were more focused on cases related to birth, marriage and divorce certificates. Pekka also offered legal counseling to women victims of violence.

### **Women Migrant Workers**

There were a number of women's organizations providing services to Indonesian migrant workers – most of them were women. Migrant Care

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<sup>21</sup> See "Layanan Yang Berpihak: Buku Rujukan untuk Menyelenggarakan Layanan bagi Perempuan Korban Kekerasan", Adinda, et.al, Komnas Perempuan, second edition, 2005, Jakarta.

and Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) provided assistance and education to migrant workers before they left the country and while they were abroad, especially to those experiencing difficulties in the country where they worked. Migrant Care did not call itself a feminist organization, but in fact it provided services and assistance mostly to Indonesian migrant women.”<sup>22</sup> In order to provide assistance to the women migrant workers, the two NGOs developed networking with other organizations in Indonesia and abroad. SP, for example, developed partnership with LBH Jakarta, LBH APIK, and Migrant Care to work on litigation cases both at the national and local level.”<sup>23</sup>

“Migrant Care set up a branch operation in Malaysia, managed by Malaysians, since it was difficult to set up a non-government organization in Malaysia due to the authoritarian character of the government.”<sup>24</sup>

In carrying out its mandate to provide critical education, Kapal Perempuan Institute also worked with migrant workers. In collaboration with Migrant Care, Kapal Perempuan Institute set up pre-departure trainings for migrant workers to equip migrant workers with basic skills and legal knowledge. Kapal Perempuan Institute also developed networks to assist family members of Indonesian migrant worker to access information regarding the condition of their children or wives in the respective country where they worked.

“The government did not have preparation and support programs for migrant workers, especially those sent to the Middle East. Migrant workers were seen as unskilled labors that required no special preparation.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wahyu Susilo, Board of Executive/Policy Analyst Migrant Care, FGD Jakarta 9 May 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Wahidah Rustam, Executive Director of Solidaritas Perempuan, Jakarta 19 July 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Anis Hidayah, Executive Director of Migrant Care, Jakarta 4 July 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Budhis Utami, Vice Head of Board of Executive Institut Kapal Perempuan, FGD Jakarta 9 May 2012.

Migrant Care did not only conduct training and advocacy at the national level, but also develop international networks for global advocacy to deal with the transnational issue. At the regional level in Asia, Migrant Care developed network with Migrant Forum in Asia. At the international level, Migrant Care joined Global Platform on Migrant Worker Convention in Geneva to better utilize international instruments to strengthen its policy advocacy works. Migrant Care also monitored the development legal cases involving Indonesian migrant workers abroad to make sure that the government provided legal aid through the Indonesian embassy.”<sup>26</sup>

### Sexuality

Sexuality is a profound experience related to physical, emotional and spiritual well being. Sexuality is often viewed as a personal issue, yet it has political implications. There were various sexual identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ). On top of that, there were other sexual relationships that did not define sexual identity, for example women could have sex with women without becoming lesbians, or men could have sex with men without becoming gays. There were also individuals who were uncomfortable with the sexual organ that they were born with. Not only that they refused to be categorized either as a man or woman by the society but some of them wanted to change their sex as well.

Agustine from Ardhanary Institute said that public norms and values in Indonesia stigmatized LGBTIQ. In general the public and their families rejected them. Many of them ran away from home to escape the violence perpetrated by their fathers or other male family members. Many of their parents denied access to fund for their education. Those who already had a job would stay in the closet for fear of losing their job.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Anis Hidayah, Executive Director of Migrant Care, Jakarta 17 July 2012.

Many lesbians and gays were reluctant to get reproductive health services. Ardhanary found out that they did not want to deal with questions from health service providers such as, “Are you really a woman? Why do you want to have a pap-smear test?”

Ardhanary was established in 2005 in Jakarta and focused its works in conducting research, publication and advocacy for lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. Since the beginning, this organization aimed at eradicating homophobia through education, training and discussion on freedom of sexuality as human rights.

“Ardhanary fights against injustices experienced by LBT friends who are denied their rights. Sexual expression is not the only problem. Ardhanary is critical against gender binary concepts that do not recognize the third gender.”<sup>27</sup>

Ardhanary has the vision of a society that respects and protects sexual preferences and the rights of lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. To achieve this vision, Ardhanary worked to strengthen lesbians, bisexuals as well as transgenders to challenge public discrimination. Individual empowerment was done through counseling and long-term education. Counseling of LBT and their families was conducted through partnership with other service providers such as Rifka Anisa’s Women Crisis Center (WCC) and the youth counseling center of the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association (*Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia*, PKBI). They asked Ardhanary to provide their shelter staff and counselors with trainings in sexuality issues and perspectives.

“There are many LGBT organizations but Ardhanary is the only one that aims to become a center of information and education. We provided capacity building to LGBT outside of Jakarta and supported them to become community organizers and set up organizations. Through-

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<sup>27</sup> Lily, Vice Director of Ardhanary Institute, FGD Jakarta 9 May 2012.

out its three-year period, Ardhanary has facilitated the establishment of six LGBT organizations.”<sup>28</sup>

Another organization that worked on sexuality issues in Jakarta was Kalyanamitra. Since 2012, Kalyanamitra provided public education on sexuality issues in partnership with Ardhanary. KPI also worked to educate the public in Jakarta, Makassar and Yogyakarta about LBT and sexual rights issues. In Surabaya, discussions on sexuality were conducted by addressing reproductive health rights issues such as HIV.

### Closing Remarks

The Jakarta-based women's organizations had different organizational forms and worked on diverse issues. However, some of their work areas actually overlapped and they collaborated with each other. Overlapping activities could generate more impacts, but they could also generate inefficiencies. Due to their overlapping activities, Kalyanamitra and Ardhanary boasted the closest collaboration in the field of sexuality. The success case of Kalyanamitra to work with Ardhanary on sexuality issues actually exposed the challenge faced by other women's organizations to open up space for discussions regarding gender relations and sexuality. Not all women's organizations had an open mind when it came to sexuality issues.

Meanwhile, the National Commission faced the challenge of how to develop complementary division of labor and coordination with women's organizations that worked to provide services to women victims of violence. The overlap between activities conducted by the National Commission and women NGOs raised some concerns because the National Commission should focus their works on policy advocacy, policy making and monitoring of policy implementation. The National Commission should play more role as policy enforcement and not conducting services

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Agustine, Director of Ardhanary Institute, Jakarta 22 May 2012.

that were provided by women NGOs in the field of violence against women. Division of labor and forms of coordination between the National Commission and women's NGOs needed to be worked out further.

KPI had actually played more roles in term of conducting policy advocacy at the national level to pass regulations and budget allocations that promote the fulfillment of women's rights. The National Secretariat, however, faced a challenge of developing similar vision and mission across localities. For example, KPI members that worked in an area that consisted of 50 villages tended to go their separate ways because each village had its own concerns.<sup>29</sup> There was insufficient communication and coordination among KPI members. As consequence, KPI members at the local level relied on the National Secretariat in Jakarta to solve their problems. This became burdensome for the National Secretariat since they were not sufficiently staffed and they relied more on volunteers.

Pekka faced similar problem concerning the capacity of its cadres to become independent. Local staff of Pekka still relied on the National Secretariat to resolve their problems. Nani Zulminarni, founder of Pekka, said that

“Just like dealing with our babies, we have to be strict to stop breast-feeding them. Otherwise, they would never become independent. We need to provide ample opportunities for members at the local level to face and solve the problems themselves.”

Migrant Care faced challenges that in some instances were insurmountable. While they had succeeded in developing relationships with local organizations in Malaysia and Singapore to provide legal assistance to Indonesian migrant workers, they still needed to overcome much political hurdles in Saudi Arabia concerning accesses to the legal procedures.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Dian Kartikasari, Secretary General of KPI, Jakarta 30 May 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Anis Hidayah, Executive Director of Migrant Care, Jakarta 3 July 2012.

The respect and fulfillment of women's rights are inseparable from political processes. A number of the Jakarta-based women's organizations had worked to improve governance at the national and local level to allow women to participate in planning and budgeting. Works to promote the mainstreaming of MDGs, which were related to women's interests and needs, into government's planning and budgeting, had also been done. However, women's participation in policy making and budgeting is still far from reaching satisfactory level. The women's organizations should find the right combination of policy advocacy to open up rooms for women to participate in public decision making processes, and political empowerment to enable poor and marginalized women to actually participate in decision making processes. Better coordination between the supply side (governance) and the demand side (empowerment) would allow the women's organizations to help generate more favorable policy environment and more budget resources to support their activities.

## CHAPTER VII

# Women's Movements and Organizations in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara

Sita Aripurnami & Frisca Anindhita

### Gender Inequality within the Family

West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province is the field of work of myriads of NGOs. It is also a region that contributes the largest to the government's foreign exchange reserve because it is currently the largest supplying area of Indonesian women migrant workers for the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> The Indonesian Central Bank data shows that the amount of remittances sent home from all destination countries by NTB women migrant workers reached IDR 195.68 billions in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Regardless the huge flows of remittance, news regarding poverty incidences in the region still occupy the media. The district of Central Lombok gives an example of the face of poverty in NTB. In term of Human Development Index (HDI), with the score of 338 the district occupied the lowest position among other districts and cities in the province. With the score of 298, the district was in the second worst position in the province in the Human Poverty Index (HPI).

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<sup>1</sup> "Dewan Akan Surati Presiden", Lombok Pos 6 July 2010 ([www.lombokpos.co.id](http://www.lombokpos.co.id)).

<sup>2</sup> op.cit

NTB is also a region with culture that is influenced strongly by Islamic values that are interpreted in patriarchal way by the population. Decision making in the household is in the hand of the husband, which is in line with the interpretation of an article in the Qur'an that men are leaders for women and consequently men are the head of family and women take care of the household.<sup>3</sup> Gender is perceived from the eyes of religious teachings. The assumption that men are responsible for the livelihood (the public domain) and the duty of women is to take care of the children and the household (the domestic realm) is widely accepted among the population. When a woman works, she still is held responsible for doing household chores. In fact some people hold the opinion that women are not allowed to go out of her home unless accompanied by her *muhrim* (kin), which therefore constrains women's freedom to be present in the public sphere.

The women-men relations in the NTB province fit the category of an asymmetric relationship, whereby men enjoy a superior position vis-à-vis women. Such a gender imbalance demonstrates itself in important aspects of life such as marriage, work and family inheritance. An issue of concern for women in NTB is early age marriage that usually ends up in early age divorce. The wedding ceremony is supposedly a sacred moment in someone's life, but that is not the case for some people in NTB's rural community. Generally speaking, the society in NTB observes a wedding custom of *Sorong Serah Aji Krama*. The procession of such a custom begins before the "*ijab kabul*" wedding ceremony, whereby the bride's family would decide on the amount of dowry (*mahar*) from the groom's family. If such a *mahar* were fulfilled, the bride's family would then give away their "princess" to the groom's family for the wedding. On the contrary, if the groom's family could not pay the dowry, the bride's family would not allow their daughter to be married. The value of dowry for a girl goes up when she belongs to an aristocratic family in the society.

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<sup>3</sup> Research Report on Perspective, Patern of Strategies and Gender Agenda of Women Organisation, Women Research Institute, October 2005.

The custom of *Sorong Serah Aji Krama* does not apply uniformly within NTB. Some regions still adhere to such a custom, some do not. In various parts in the country side in NTB, the custom is only partially observed. Whereas the objective of the custom is to raise the value of women, the reality in some parts of NTB's rural population runs to the contrary. In many parts of the province, *mahar* for women has become very low. A man could get married by paying a dowry of a mere IDR 50,000, a few glasses of plain tea and boiled peanuts. Weddings would only be attended by family members, neighbors and is legitimate with the presence of the *ullama* (*penghulu*) who conducts the wedding ceremony. Pre-marital pregnancy and poverty have contributed to the emergence of this cheap dowry phenomenon.

The combination of cheap dowry and the absence of legal status and official wedding certificate for such a marriage spell bad news for women in NTB. First, cheap dowry and the absence of official marriage certificate make it easy for the husband to divorce the wife. The situation gets worse because the society accepts the norm that it is the husband who has the rights to divorce. When a woman wanted a divorce, the society would put a bad stigma on her because she was considered as disobeying her husband. Even when it was the husband who divorced the wife, as a widow the woman was looked down by the society. Therefore there is big disincentive for women to get divorced.

Since divorce usually was not done officially in court, women were put in disadvantage position concerning alimony and custody. In determining the splitting up of the couple's wealth and custody, the husband's family had the upper hand. There were cases where the man received two third of the assets. Other cases showed that the man took the assets in form of land and fish farms, and the woman only received part of the revenues generated by the asset. In term of custody, there were cases whereby the ex-husband's family or the husband unilaterally took the child without asking permission from the ex-wife. In many cases, the former husband prohibited the mother to meet the child. Or, the ex-husband deliberately left the child with the mother and decided not to give child

support at all. Consequently, it is the women who bear the heavy responsibility to raise and feed her children.

The unequal relations between men and women in marriage showed how strong were the influence of patriarchal values in the society. The unequal relations within the family inevitably led to violence against women and children. The tradition of drinking and gambling (cock fighting) among men fuelled practices of domestic violence against the wife as well as the children. Women were usually afraid to fight their husband because they did not want to be divorced. The women also seldom report such a violence to others including to her family. The wife's family usually preferred to be silent when problem arose in the family of their daughter, since they had fully handed her to the husband. The family even went as far as it goes as far as sending away their daughter when she wanted to return home to escape from her violent husband. The wife's family would only accept their daughter home when she had been divorced.

It was not easy for a widow to earn income to provide for herself and her family. The unfair distribution of wealth when they got divorced also contributed to the economically weak position of the wife. For many of them, the fruit of their long-time work was invested in the joint property, which was then expropriated by the ex-husband. It follows that a divorced widow would not be able to reclaim her property that she earned before the divorce. It aggravates the poverty of the already poor widows.

In addition, women faced tougher challenge at work than their male counterparts. The same job provided male workers with higher wages than that of female workers. To illustrate, a male construction worker would get IDR 20,000 per work-time unit whereas his female colleague would only get IDR 15,000 for exactly the same work. The inequality between men and women did not stop here. Rules on family's inheritance also discriminated women. According to the widely accepted customs in NTB, the male in the family would get one portion of property, while the female family member would get one-third of the portion. It also applied to the case of inheritance that hard assets such as farm, paddy field or fish pond would only go to the male members in the family, and the women would

only get a portion of the revenues generated from the property. Women in NTB hardly had any access to economic resources.

### **The Works of Women's NGOs in NTB**

Women's organizations started to emerge in NTB since the end of the 1980s, propelled by the desire to address women's issues in the region. In 1989, as vividly remembered by the informants, there was a seminar on "Sasak Women" in Mataram. The seminar discussed a wide array of issues that women in NTB were facing and it had promoted the birth of women's organizations such as the Panca Karsa Foundation as well as the women studies program in the various universities in Mataram. Women's organizations in NTB worked more on issues concerning small scale economies and credit associations. It reflected the condition of poverty in NTB that put women difficult positions.

Panca Karsa Foundation (YPK), Pekka and ASPPUK were women's organizations that provided empowerment to grassroots women. YPK began its activities in 1988 and focused its programs on accompanying women migrant workers who had come back home to their family. Pekka NTB was a branch organization of Pekka Jakarta and it started its activities in 2003. Since 2010 Pekka NTB operated a centre to carry out economic empowerment to provide credit to widows who were family heads. In many cases, being a widow and a female household head made the women face very tough challenges from within the society due to social stereotyping. They were frequently treated violently. Pekka wanted to fight for their rights as equal human being. Meanwhile, ASPPUK that was established in 2000 also tried to respond to the problem of women's poverty by way of carrying out economic facilitation as well as credit extension for women in small-businesses.

In 2002 YPK changed its organizational form from a foundation to an association because they thought that the new Foundation Law prohibited foundations to conduct advocacy. The name was changed into Perkumpulan Panca Karsa (Panca Karsa Association) or PPK.

“Family members of our friends in East and North Lombok experienced violence. We decided to start getting involved in the issue of violence against women, but without neglecting our economic empowerment programs. Our advocacy of migrant workers includes organizing, promoting popular economy, and conducting policy advocacy.”<sup>4</sup>

For the PPK members, economic empowerment and access to credit programs would strengthen the women economically and enable them to survive and eventually address many other aspects of their life. As an example, the PPK is now bringing in discussions on women's rights and the importance of fighting for their rights as women. Today the ex-migrant women workers and their family have been able to lobby decision makers as well as organizing themselves for protests or for voicing the cases whereby the rights of women migrant workers get violated.

Besides PPK, Solidaritas Perempuan (SP/Women's Solidarity) is another women's organization in NTB that worked on migrant worker issues. SP, which calls itself a community, was established in 2001 and it worked to advocate the violated rights of women migrant workers. SP had been very keen in promoting women's rights awareness, and it carried out capacity building through feminist analyses of social issues that impacted women. SP activists believed that by way running the so-called feminist education, they could encourage many women, particularly SP members, to strengthen their capacity, and consequently, to become more capable in accessing decision making processes to secure their rights.

Since the violations of migrant workers' rights became more rampant, women's organizations in NTB realized that they needed to respond to the situation. Especially because the parliament just passed Law No. 23/2003 on the elimination of domestic violence. These organizations also spread the words on the importance of conducting public education about domestic violence and at the same time accompanying women victims.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Samsudin, Head of Grassroot Organization Panca Karsa Association, Mataram 17 May 2012.

They did not just facilitate the development of micro economic activities and credit programs, but also strengthened the capacity of their partner groups to get themselves organized to lobby and advocate against the violation of their rights as women.

For such a purpose, women's organizations in NTB collaborated with LBH APIK, an organization that provided legal aid services to women. Although LBH APIK was only established formally in 2010, it had been actively supporting other women's organizations since 1998. LBH APIK also carried out educational services concerning human rights and gender as well as conducting gender studies on Islam, which was a majority religion in the area. LBH APIK identified religious figures, commonly known as *Tuan Guru* ("Master Teacher"), who had an open mind towards gender perspectives. The social position of *Tuan Guru* was very strategic in helping the efforts to enforce women rights. *Tuan Gurus* were considered by the people as socially and culturally knowledgeable and that he was the guardian of Islamic values. LBH APIK organized trainings for *Tuan Gurus*, with the hope that after they came to an understanding of women's rights they could show that the commonly held values were actually very harmful to women.

Meanwhile, Yayasan Kesehatan Sehat Sejahtera Indonesia (YKSSI/Indonesia's Foundation for Healthy and Welfareed Families) that was established in 1989 carried out programs to address the issues of health problems faced by women and children. The NGO disseminated information concerning reproductive health issues and access to health services in order to reduce maternal mortality incidents in NTB. YKSSI also conducted other activities such as accompanying women with extra-marital child to acquire birth certificate using the mother's name. Legally speaking, it had been allowed as stipulated in Law No. 12/2006 on Citizenship, Article 4. Nevertheless, the prevalent values that stigmatized women with extra-marital child and the lack of information about the Law had made many children unable to enter formal schooling because they did not have birth certificate. The past regulation required that the extra-marital status should be stated in the birth certificate, making many women decided not to process their child's birth certificate.

## **The Vision and Mission of Women's Organizations in NTB**

In general, women's organizations in NTB shared similar vision of empowering women to develop a society that is prosperous, gender just, and dignified. More specifically, the organizations translated such a vision into missions that they would realize through various activities as follows.

### **a. Economic Empowerment**

Organizations that worked to provide economic empowerment were Pekka, ASPPUK, and Perkumpulan Panca Karsa. The rationale for picking up such an issue was that women suffered the most from the worsening economic condition which triggered many problems such as the difficulty in securing land tenure and in getting access to public services such as education and health. Economic empowerment led to the improvement of women's economic status, which would enable them to access public facilities and eventually improve their position in the society. PPK, Pekka and ASPPUK worked to provide economic empowerment by developing saving and loan associations.

The three organizations shared the same method of grouping women into credit associations. Such women's credit associations would be facilitated to access capital through micro-credit facilities. Their ability to support their family life would boost their self esteem. Moreover, economic empowerment also introduced knowledge on women's rights in relation to reproductive health, law and justice, violence against women and gender perspective. They had difference women's groups as targets. PPK worked for with women migrant workers and their family, Pekka worked with women family head and ASPPUK worked with women in small business.

### **b. Violence Against Women and Gender Justice (Legal Aid)**

LBH APIK, Solidaritas Perempuan and PPK shared some similarities in their efforts to bring about gender justice for women, be it through

advocacy activities or knowledge acquisition through training and awareness rising regarding women's rights. LBH APIK wanted to change the way of thinking as well as the behaviours of the society to promote a just and gender friendly legal and political system. Solidaritas Perempuan carried out advocacy to protect and strengthen the bargaining position of women migrant workers and their family vis-à-vis decision makers. Such an advocacy aimed at building up a framework of protection and empowerment for Indonesian migrant workers, as well as strengthening their rights by forming a union. As of PPK, the NGO worked to advocate and accompany women migrant workers in seeking justice for their legal cases. The post 1998 period provided more fertile ground for their activities, particularly the introduction of Law No.23/2003. The women's organizations, such as Solidaritas Perempuan and Perkumpulan Panca Karsa also extended their work focus to areas that were beyond their traditional scopes of work.

In their efforts to address the issue of violence against women each organization had their own programs in accordance to the specificity of their works. Pekka put more emphasis on providing training to their members in the rural areas to promote a vision and awareness of the society regarding the elimination of violence against women. Meanwhile, Solidaritas Perempuan and Perkumpulan Panca Karsa focused their works on women migrant workers that had been subjected to sexual violence and were in the process of seeking justice. LBH APIK focused its attention on violence in general that were experienced by women and children.

In carrying out activities to address violence against women and to provide legal aid, LBH APIK also acted to change public discourse through political education. The alternative discourse should be gender friendly and based on the concept of gender equality. Women should be educated to make them critical and become more aware that the state should protect their rights as human beings and citizens. The goal was to enable women to fight for their rights and to get involved in the decision making process at all societal levels.

The decision to focus on the issue of women and the law stems from the reality that there are many regulations and laws that have not taken side with women. LBH APIK specifically worked on this issue.

...the purpose is to embed gender in the curricula of the law faculty. So we organized seminars and workshops with the expectation that there would be Women and Law courses, or Gender and the Law at the law faculty so university lecturers would, as much as they could, integrate legal instruments that ensure justice and equality in labor law, criminal law, marriage law...”<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the informant from LBH APIK suggested the need for a more just and equitable understanding of gender, as well as a solid understanding about the need to resolve such a societal problem, to avoid negative biases that may influence the women organizations' agenda setting.

...many problems have come up. In general it reflects the absence of respect of women's rights that caused so many cases of violence against women. Therefore LBH APIK provides legal aid for women whom hitherto have been marginalized.<sup>6</sup>

Solidaritas Perempuan underscored the importance of providing political education for women. Politics in this context was not limited to formal politics but also broadly concerned women's ability to fight for their rights.

“We need to inform women that the current problems such as skyrocketing prices and kids could not attend school are related to national and global political decision. The women should understand that and fight back. So we organized campus discussion sessions to talk about women and poverty. The theme of the campaign was to stop women's poverty, but the core work was to run village discussions whereby

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Beauty Erawati, Director of LBH APIK East Nusa Tenggara, Mataram, 16 May 2012.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

women should get encouraged to join discussions to be able to see the connection between their problem and the national or global political decision.”<sup>7</sup>

### **c. Women and Children's Health**

YKSSI focused its work on the issue of women and children's health. YKSSI picked such a focus with the consideration that women were vulnerable to experiencing health problems due to their reproductive role and their burden of responsibility in the family.

On the other hand, due to poverty and limited knowledge, women could hardly access health care facilities. Meanwhile, they were also lacking adequate knowledge about their body and reproductive health. Such a condition led to bad nutrient intake for pregnant mothers, high maternal mortality rate, or unsafe abortion (that contributed to an increase in maternal mortality).

Many women who were considered as working in high risk occupations, such as female sexual workers and migrant workers, did not properly understand the danger of HIV and AIDS. With their limited knowledge, it was hard for them to get adequate help from medical professionals. Therefore YKSSI decided to focus on adult and adolescent women, particularly poor and marginalized women. YKSSI worked hard to disseminate reproductive health issues and to advocate the importance for women to gain access to reproductive health services to reduce maternal mortality in NTB. The NGO also actively worked towards the fulfilment of women and children's rights as citizen.

### **Organizational Strategies of Women's Organizations**

Planning is the most important part of an organization. It includes issues selection, decision on organization's programs, as well as financial planning

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Baiq Zulhiatina, Executive Council of Solidaritas Perempuan Mataram, 15 May 2012.

in accordance to the organization's vision and mission. There are different ways to run a proper planning, one of them is by way of strategic planning, which could be used to formulate changes in vision and mission, organizational structure, decision on programs and strategy to run activities.

### **Decision Making Mechanism Withinan Organization**

Decision making concerning changes in leadership usually takes place through a national deliberative mechanism such as a congress. Some, however, simply appointed their leader without regular elections. Almost all WRI's women's organization respondents took the form of foundation or association, and they were all for employing a democratic and open organizational decision making mechanism.

### **Issues selection**

The process of selecting issues of concern in an organization is not simple. There are various factors that may influence the decision regarding which gender issues to address. On top of that, they also have to take account the interests of donor agencies. Pekka, for example, came into existence as a response to the need of the National Commission on Violence Against Women and a foreign donor agency for information and documentation on the condition of widows in conflict regions. While fulfilling the need for information and documentation, at the same time Pekka was able provide economic empowerment and gender awareness raising to women headed households.

The process to decide which gender issues/agendas to address in an organization got done by a national assembly attended by the regional organizational representatives. Collectively they identified the most actual problems in their region and selected the most relevant to the priority and policy of the organization. Selection of issues was also determined by source of funding of the respective organizations.

“...the issues that emerged locally are taken as a campaign subject at the national level, and then we will congregate to find partners at the international level to work together on the particular issue.”<sup>8</sup>

### Change of Issues

Over time, organizations made changes in the issues that they advocated in order to respond to certain political or cultural conditions as well as problems arising in the society. The economic crisis in the end of 1990s that worsened economic conditions in NTB was an example. Since the economic difficulties forced many more women to work as migrant workers abroad, several organizations then decided to have an advocacy agenda to address the issue of violence against women, particularly in relation to the rights of women migrant workers. Apart from those issues another fact showed that the low women's representation in local parliaments remained a serious issue throughout the regions in Indonesia, NTB included.

...in the beginning until 1995, Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) had a mandate to carry out advocacy for migrant workers. In 1998, we added violence against women to our advocacy agenda. In 2001 we began to observe that many problems faced by women in Indonesia are related to globalization issues. Nowadays, we consider that women in Indonesia have five enemies, namely patriarchy, globalization and its derivatives, militarism, fundamentalism, and authoritarianism.<sup>9</sup>

### Closing Remarks

Women's organizations in NTB had been working on diverse issues such as violence against women, including domestic violence, migrant workers' rights, political awareness, gender justice and equality, women's repro-

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

ductive health, poverty, women's economic empowerment and gender responsive regulations. After 2001, some organizations in NTB added new issues such as globalization, authoritarianism and militarism as causes of women's poverty, into their advocacy agenda. Solidaritas Perempuan, for example, organized discussions to relate those new issues with the conditions of women in NTB. The works of Solidaritas Perempuan in NTB were now the same with what Solidaritas Perempuan did nationally.

In general, the women's organizations in NTB focused their programs in promoting human rights, gender equality, as well as advocating more just and equitable power relations between men and women in various aspects of life. To carry out their programs, the NGOs work with different target groups in accordance to their respective program themes. Other than the changing political, social and cultural situations in the society, donors' interests also influenced the decision of the NGOs regarding what programs they would like to pursue. In pursuing their programs, the NGOs faced limitations such as scarcity of funding and qualified human resources. On top of that, managerial capacity to manage the programs and human resources were not sufficient either.

In some cases, the NGO activists were not sensitive enough to be responsive to local issues. Sometimes it was the interest of donors that made them unable to focus their programs on issues that they considered as having higher priority at the local level. Accordingly, there should be some ways and strategy to overcome such constraints and limitations. Collaborating and networking among organizations should be pursued to overcome those limitations.

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