

ries were experienced by the wives of regional leaders, including Haryanti Sutrisno in Kediri, Anna Sophanah in Indramayu, Widya Kandi Susanti in Kendal, and Sri Surya Widati in Bantul. But not only their wives, as their daughters were also becoming the successor of power owned by incumbent regional leaders, i.e. Rita Widyasari, the daughter of past mayor of District of Kutai Kartanegara, and Ni Putu Eka Wiryastuti, the daughter of past mayor of District of Tabanan in Tabanan, Bali.<sup>7</sup>

The participation of family members of past period political leaders not always result in victory. There were candidates who experienced the loss, e.g. Aida Nasution in Riau Islands, Adlina T. Milwan in Labuhan Batu, Titik Suprapti in Sukoharjo, and Emi Susanti in Surabaya. Yet, although did not win in the regional election, those woman candidates have proven that they have proper capability in competing in regional election. It was found out from



their average total votes which quite significant, i.e. more than 25%. Emi Susanti was the only one who gained lower average total votes than the others (11.13%) in regional election of Surabaya.<sup>8</sup> The considerable total votes proven that although they were only depicted as the successor of males' power (their husband or father); they actually had the capability to compete and gained significant votes in the regional election.

<sup>7</sup> Asrori S. Karni, Arif Koes Hernawan, Wisnu Wage Pamungkas (et.al), *Kepala Daerah: Pesona Perempuan di Pentas Politik Dinasti*, downloaded from [www.gatra.com](http://www.gatra.com) on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, on 15:30 WIB (GMT+07:00).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



Photo: Kompas.com



## The Challenge of Women Representation in Regional Election in Indonesia

The movement of democracy in Indonesia has stimulating variety of reformation in the governmental system. This situation also brings about the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia. Regional autonomy is held to secure the equal distribution among central government and local government in fair scheme. Thus, the transition process which undergone by the nation to be a democratic country can be accelerated. One of many improvements resulted from regional autonomy policy is the implementation of direct regional election in the community. Act No. 32 of 2004, Act No. 22 of 2007, and Act No. 12 of 2008 become the foundation to implement the regional election. Until May 2010, Indonesia has undergone 467 regional elections which consist of 33 elections of governor/vice governor, 352 elections of mayor/vice mayor in the district level, and 82 elections of mayor/vice mayor in the municipality level.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victor Asi, *Mendagri, 12 Pilkada Tanpa Konflik*, downloaded from [www.bataviase.co.id](http://www.bataviase.co.id) on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, 11:40 WIB (GMT+07:00).

Regional election has significant role in forming executive organization in the local government level, as regional election determines who will be chairing on the top level of the regional government. Problem which emerged afterwards is how to implement regional election and, at the same time, representing women. This particular question is very much related to the role of regional election as a tool of democracy, as democracy, substantially, cannot neglect women representation within. Thus, it is important not to consider regional election as political contest intended for men only. However, along the process conducted, does regional election have become political area for women? And, does effort to guarantee women representation already exist, particularly through policies which underlined regional election? These two major questions will be discussed here by revealing facts and policies implemented in regional election along this time.



Photo: paparazie\_online, hileud.com & mandailingonline.com

### The low representation of women representation in regional election

Regional election was held for the first time in Indonesia on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, when regional election for District of Kutai Kertanegara was conducted. During that time, there were no women candidate participated in regional election of mayor for District of Kutai Kertanegara. Three pairs of candidates of mayor and vice mayor were all men. This similar situation also repeatedly happened on the next regional elections. There were 79.4% regional elections that not nominated woman candidates as regional leaders during 2005 to 2006. From 296 regions that held regional elections, there were 235 regions that did not nominated woman candidates as regional leaders/ vice leaders. However, there were other regions that included more than one woman candidates in its regional election.<sup>2</sup>

The facts showed that women representation as candidates in regional election is low. Yet, discussions which related to women in regional election are not limited to the participation of women in the political process, as it is also salient to know how far women has been representing themselves. In regional election, there were two positions challenged in one contest i.e. regional leader and vice leader. In accordance to the binding regulations, the community will choose who will be the winner for both leader positions as one couple. From all regional elections which have been nominating women as candidates, there were 72.5% of all women partici-

pants who managed to achieve vice leader positions, and the remaining 27.5% became the regional leaders.<sup>3</sup> In general, women only positioned as the second person in the regional governmental leadership. This condition shows that men are still dominating regional election nomination process. Not only nominated in greater number, men are also considered more appropriate to be seated on political leaders' chairs rather than women.

Representation of women in regional election ought to be shifted from only "nomination opportunity" to "opportunity to win" in regional election. Basically, there is no policy in regional election which directly limits women's victory in regional election. Women and men have the same fair opportunity portion to win in the regional election. However, women's victory in the regional election should be measured to observe how far women can gain confidence and trust from the community to lead the region. The following table illustrates the position of victory of woman candidates' nomination as regional leaders or vice leaders in regional election.

The table shows how woman candidates in regional election gained their success. In general, all women who competed in regional election experienced defeat (i.e. 74.2% from all nominations in regional elections). Only in position of governor, women never lose in regional election, since there was only one woman candidate nominated. The similar event also experienced by woman candidate for vice governor who lost during the regional election. The position of vice mayor in district level or municipality

**Table**  
**The Position of woman candidates' nomination in regional election<sup>4</sup>**

Position	Nomination		Win		Lose	
	Total	Percentage %	Total	Percentage %	Total	Percentage %
<b>Regional Leader Position</b>						
Governor	1	5,3%	1	100%	0	0
Mayor in district/ municipality level	18	94,7%	5	27,8%	13	72,2%
Total	19	100%	6	31,6%	13	68,4%
<b>Regional Vice Leader Position</b>						
Vice Governor	1	0	0	0	1	100%
Vice Mayor in district/ municipality level	49	98%	10	20,4%	39	79,6%
Total	50	100%	10	20%	40	80%

<sup>2</sup> Lingkaran Survei Indonesia, *Perempuan dan Pilkada, Kajian Bulanlan* Edition 1, May 2007, page 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, page 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, page 2.

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Photo: wikiberita.net

level is usually targeted by woman candidates, and the similar position also experienced the most rout, i.e. 79.6%. Nonetheless, there were 27.8% of all woman candidates who were elected as mayor or vice mayor from regional election.

What is interesting to be observed furthermore is how serious a political party support women representation in regional election. Coalition of small parties was the most strong weapon in holding up woman candidates roles in regional election, i.e. 29%. Golongan Karya (Golkar) was the most popular party which gave the highest support to woman candidates' participation in regional election, i.e. 18%; this situation was followed by Partai Demokrasi In-

onesia Perjuangan (PDIP), i.e. 11%.<sup>5</sup> These numbers show that men were still dominating the parties' preference in nominating its candidates in regional election process. Although *independent* nomination pathway has been initiated and opened by the applied regulations, political parties still have massive influence in nominating candidates for regional election. The lack of interest of big parties in nominating woman candidates in regional elections surely brought significant impact for women, particularly due to the domination of big parties such as Golkar and PDIP are still dominated.<sup>6</sup>

### Nomination of women from incumbent political leader family phenomenon

Recently, interesting phenomenon often emerge in regional election contests in Indonesia. One of them is the nomination of wife and daughter of the past period regional leaders in the election. Elections in ten regions, i.e. Kediri, Indramayu, Kendal, Bantul, Kutai Kertanegara, Tabanan, Kepulauan Riau, Labuhan Batu, Sukoharjo, and Surabaya, engaged women of the past period regional leaders' family. From all of those regional elections which participated by women of the past period regional leaders' family, six of them won and the other four lose. The victo-

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Fajar, *Partai Golkar Masih Dominan, Persentase Kemenangan di Pemilu*, downloaded from www.scriptintermedia.com on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, on 14:20 WIB (GMT+07:00).



Photo: e-wonosobo.com