

**Women's Participation in Politics as Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality: A Case Study in KUPANG CITY, Indonesia****Anjulin Yonathan Kamlasi**Yogyakarta State University
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Indonesia**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to describe women's participation in the political process so that it can represent gender equality and justice. This research uses descriptive qualitative research. Sources of data in this study are primary data, namely data from interviews with informants involved in this research, and secondary data, namely data from studies of articles, books, results of previous research, and various relevant sources. The data collection techniques used were interviews and documentation. The data analysis used was interactive analysis in the form of data analysis, data presentation, data reduction, concluding, and testing the validity of the data through source triangulation. The results of this research show that women's participation in the political process can be done through the efforts of the government and political parties by providing political education, development of pro-women government programs by both the central and local governments to increase women's involvement in the political process as a form and a form of women's concern for society, nation, and state.

Keywords: Woman's participation, Politics, Gender**1. Introduction**

Women as an inseparable part of people's lives are always associated with various problems that occur in their life's journey, especially regarding gender. Women are often marginalized in various fields of life, especially in the division of roles, education, politics, and so on. In the world of politics, marginalization as a form of injustice towards women makes it very difficult for them to get involved and be directly involved in the political learning process even though as humans, both men and women have the same position to be involved in any field (Muslimat, 2017; Wijriyati, 2016).

Article 6 Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, states that the system of general elections, parties, the election of members of the legislative body, and the system of appointments in the executive and judicial fields must make women's representation by specified requirements. This is by Sihite (2007) opinion that the affirmation of women's political rights is proven by the ratification of the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (*Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women*) through Law No. 7 of 1984 concerning the Ratification of the United Nations Convention on Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which is abbreviated as the Convention on Women.

Women have an equal footing with men to participate in various aspects of life and seek the matters related to the welfare of living together, especially in the political learning

process that will take care of the celebration many people including women. If women participate in the political learning process, whether it is a member of a political party or a legislator, then this will become a representation for women in fighting for their degree.

However, the reality is that many groups have legitimized the participation or learning process of women's politics so that until now, women and the political process are two things that are not easily linked. This is very relevant to the existing condition that women's participation in the political learning process is still very low, even almost non-existent compared to men. In a patriarchal cultural system, men are considered more suitable to enter politics. The role of men as head of household, policymaker, and breadwinner is by the political arena which is full of roles in policymaking and issues of power. On average, men are chosen because they are men who have been carrying out political empowerment efforts (Wijaya, 2001: 20).

According to research conducted by Boro and Kale (2020) on Women's Representation in the Local Realm: A Case Study in Boawae District, East Nusa Tenggara in the 2014 Legislative Election, that one of the obstacles to women's representation in the political realm is cultural barriers. The existence of women is seen as second class because women follow their husbands (the tradition of beliefs) who only work in the kitchen, take care of their husbands and children, and if they violate them, they are considered as women who disobey culture and traditions. This ultimately deprives women of the opportunity to participate in politics.



The research was also conducted by Singh (2019) on the political participation of Indian women that the level of women's participation in India in politics is very low due to socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. This results in weak women's participation in structural politics in India which poses a major threat to the sustainability of democracy in India. Especially in parliament and the political developments of the 21st century, women must have a role in the political process.

The low participation of women in political activities is inseparable from various factors, including the community environment, culture, and an understanding of dirty politics (Mulia & Farida, 2005). The problems of women and politics in Indonesia are influenced by at least four things; (1) low representation of women, (2) political parties have not committed to providing access for women, (3) constraints on gender-biased cultural values, (4) women's interest in political activities is low (Hasyim, 2010). Then other obstacles such as economic conditions, limited access to education, weak financial resources, and choices for women. These various things then become triggers in society, causing various unbalanced thoughts towards women (Hoboddin & Rahman, 2013).

Based on the results of research conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Indonesia in 2014, the representation of women in parliament in Indonesia has never exceeded 20%. Of course, this is far from the expectation of a 30% quota. Another problem is that the lack of political education for women will prolong discrimination for women in participating in political activities. A strategic step to support women is to emphasize political parties in providing political education for women in a structured, sustainable, and seriously programmed manner (Susiana & Cahyaningrum, 2010).

In East Nusa Tenggara, the obstacles for women often come from within themselves, such as lack of self-confidence, inexperience, not having a strong desire to compete with men,

3. Results and Discussion

Women's Participation in Politics

Women have the same role as men in politics. Women should have an extra role because many things must be taken care of by women which are the product of various political policies. Women's participation in the political process is necessary, women have an important contribution in the world of politics, all policies should be oriented on issues of women's strategic. This will be done by women even though the impact of social problems will affect the condition of women. So that if women are involved or participate in the political process, women will contribute ideas, ideas, and solutions that are solution for development and the welfare of the general public.

Women in general, who we often encounter in public spaces, tend to have difficulty increasing their role and participation in various fields. Seen based on a series of forms

having dual responsibilities, namely as housewives and career women. This makes women do not have a strong belief to participate in politics (Boro & Kale, 2020). Various problems that occur, of course, expect a policy solution policy that can provide easy access for women. This study aims to describe women's participation in the political process as an effort to achieve gender-just politics.

This condition is the participation of women that is needed to integrate women's needs and gender equality in various public policies and give birth to various legal instruments and paradigm changes that not only accommodate women's interests in the biological sense but also accommodate women in the sense of femininity, so that gender roles are balanced. In this research, what is called women's participation is the participation of women as part of society to play a role in practical political activities as well as in community development activities or political implementation in a broad sense.

2. Research Methods

This research uses descriptive qualitative research. The location of this research is Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The data sources in this study are. *First*, primary data is data based on the results of interviews between researchers and female figures who have an important role or are actively involved in the political world, be it as members of the legislature, members of political parties, women activists, and so on. *Second*, secondary data, namely data obtained based on a study of documents in the form of books, articles, and various reports of relevant case descriptions in accordance with the subject matter at hand. Data collection techniques in this study were interviews and documentation. Data analysis in this study was carried out using interactive analysis through the stages of data review, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data validity test was done by triangulating the source.

of exploitation and discrimination that are felt to the various factors that encourage and cause women's apathy tendencies to make them unable to do much.

Many women are competent enough and have the ability to participate in the political process. With the presence of women who are smart and critical and have capable capacities, it will improve the quality of politics. So that women who are aware of and have a calling to participate in fighting for the nation and state will have an impact on the development and welfare of society, as said Sokarno that women are the pillars of the state, if women are advanced, the country will develop and develop.

In the process of women's participation in politics, of course, various indicators are considered as a competency to support women in carrying out their duties as political actors, for example being given basic political knowledge and skills, providing the widest possible space for women to be creative



in developing their competencies, cadre women as an effort creating superior future generations, providing knowledge on strategic issues about women. Such things will be carried out well and become extraordinary provisions for women if they are given through a structured and systematic process, namely the process of political education.

Political education is an activity to build community political knowledge, build community or citizen character, such as being critical, open, honest and rational, and building community skills. Through political education, people are introduced to their rights and obligations in life. As stated by Kharisma (2015) that political education is a very important factor in improving the quality of public political participation, as well as increasing knowledge about political dynamics that are currently developing. Therefore, to increase women's participation in the political process, it is important to implement political education.

Political education is provided to hone and improve cadres' skills to actively participate in political activities both in the activities of political parties and other institutions as a form of responsibility towards society. According to Predescu & Darjan (2010) that political activity requires political knowledge so that the activities carried out are not artificial, but have quality and influence in the decision-making process. Therefore, political education must be given to all citizens including women to increase political knowledge.

Women's political participation in the research area shows that this participation is intended as a form and form of concern for the nation and state that women are citizens who have the same duties and responsibilities as men to build the nation, both direct and indirect participation. The important thing is how to build smart citizens and how to build a nation and state based on equality and justice through partnerships between men and women, through gender-based development, as a functional structure towards a balance based on welfare.

There is a lot of stigma that is built up that women have to take care of domestic work rather than public work, especially politics, this is something wrong, which has been built up so far in the general public and this is one of the challenges for women. Various stigmas like this have developed in the wider community, and this is a challenge for women to be more enthusiastic about proving themselves that they can participate in various sectors including politics.

In addition, women do not only play a role in the political learning process, but more than that, women must also become political actors who participate in strategic positions in public policy. The role of women as pioneers, initiators and breakers of tradition which always justifies that women are always backward, so that women can also become political leaders who can translate the conditions of society to provide policies that can solve every problem of society, nation and state. This is in line with research conducted by Prihatini (2019) that Islamic ideology has always shown its role in

finding solutions in achieving the percentage quota of women's nominations in politics, so that women always participate as pioneers.

In maximizing women's involvement to always participate in political learning, what has an important role is through political education as the vanguard in educating women so that they can appear actively in the political world. This mainly opens up wider access by distributing women in strategic positions. This can also minimize the notion that women are forever not worthy of being in political learning or the world of politics. In political participation, gender inequality remains the most important part of an unresolved democratic dilemma of less equal participation for many of these reasons which should be used to evaluate gender tolerance in political participation.

The representation of women in politics in Kupang City in particular has not been maximal according to the quota regulated in the law because of the strong view of the patriarchal culture that women do not need to do politics because political activities belong to men (Boro & Kale, 2020). This problem causes women's political contestation to be considered incompetent, limited, and not as capable as men, then because of the strong culture of representation of women, it doesn't work well.

Quota policies are sometimes based on the consideration that women's involvement in politics is considered important because women have special needs that can only be understood by women themselves. These needs include reproductive health, family welfare issues, child health and education issues, elderly human needs and issues of sexual violence (Lovenduski, 2008). Participation in political decision-makers can also prevent discrimination against women that has occurred in society (Fatmariza, 2005).

The challenge for women in the political process is the assumption that women cannot do anything because of culture, then some say that politics is the work of men, which makes it difficult for us to approach to get the sympathy of many parties. But we must fight this and prove it by providing concrete evidence to the public. Through various ways, women must increase their capacity so that they are not seen as people without abilities so that they can also be involved in various activities including politics.

The world of politics is always associated with the public sphere which is relatively close to men, considering that social life cannot be separated from its cultural roots where the majority of people in the world are still thick with patriarchal ideology. So that women have to prove themselves, then encourage public awareness to be more objective and get to know the *track record* of potential political leaders from among women so that we are not less competitive with men.

It can be done to support and shape women's self-awareness with political education itself or it can be called *political Forming* or *Politische Bildung*. It is called



"Forming" because it contains an intention to form a political person who is aware of his political status / position in society and is referred to as "*Bildung*" (formation or self-education). After all, this term involves activities: forming oneself, with full awareness and self-responsibility. to become a political person (Kartini Kartono, 2009: 63).

In the concept *republican*, citizens and politics are one link in the chain mutually exist. Politics can only be supported by the concept of citizen and on the other hand, citizens can exist through their participatory works within the framework political. Freedom for the republican is an act, not a concept freedom in liberalism which has a metaphysical and abstract tendency, freedom in the *republican* is an effort that is shown in the form real or concrete. That is why politics in the *republican* is seen from those who are act directly as predicted by Hannah Arendt that the *ratio d'etre* politics is freedom, and the field of experience is action (Robert & Tobi, 2017: 23).

In the world of politics, women are always looked down upon and do not have any position. Women are always restricted from being involved in various political activities, both as members of political parties, involved as members of the legislature, involved in the world of government and so on. This makes women do not have the freedom to express their aspirations and are unable to participate in making various policies. Such conditions will only cause injustice or inequality for women.

The main obstacle to women's weak political participation includes the socio-cultural environment that does not support the development of women's potential. Apart from that, it can also come from inadequate political development policies and the lack of functioning of political parties. Efforts can be made to increase women's political participation, among others, through political education that can create women's abilities and awareness of their rights and obligations in the political field. In this case, it is inseparable from the existence of men who broadly dominate the political arena, men are very dominant in formulating the rules of political games and men who often define standards for evaluation.

Generally, the wider community, including women, really need political education so that they can be given knowledge and understanding of the importance of political activities in their daily life. Development of political education in society as part of political education in society to increase and strengthen political and state awareness to preserve Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the basis for the nation's political culture. The concept of political education is a process of political life that is being carried out today to create a democratic political system that is stable, effective, and efficient.

The politics of Indonesian education must be based on the archipelago's earth and culture, which refers to the Pancasila Ideology, the 1945 Constitution, the Unity and Unity

of the Republic of Indonesia, Unity in Diversity, Wealth characteristics, and the needs of Indonesia. Education in Indonesia in the 21st century faces a strategic environment that is very complex, turbulent, unstable, and very difficult to predict, namely the regulation of economic progress, especially political dynamics (Slamet, 2014). Thus, to respond to these developments, women must also be obliged to participate in it to strive for the advancement of society, nation and state.

Based on this, a conclusion can be drawn that women as citizens should be given the same opportunity as men to enter the world of politics so that they can take part in efforts to fight for aspirations, especially aspirations that are pro towards women themselves. The various stigmas that have been built up in society so far need to be countered in a way that women must show that they have the same abilities, namely by being treated in various fields including politics itself.

The more open access for women is in the world of politics, the more roles of women will be able to compete with men in the public political stage. Therefore, giving quotas to women on the public stage is of course so important. Even so, there are times now that women's political rights have been widely recognized. However, the existence of these rights doesn't always guarantee the existence of a democratic political system in which the principles of participation, representation and accountability are given real meaning.

Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality

Gender is a term that describes how the differences between women and men are innate as a creation of God Almighty and which are a form of a culture that must be studied and socialized to the wider community from an early age. For this reason, differences in gender roles are very important and help us to rethink the division of roles that have been inherent in humans between women and men to build a gender that is more dynamic and fits the realities in society, given that gender has given birth to different roles, functions and responsibilities in daily life.

Gender differences are no longer a reason for women to work in politics. The thinking and culture of society that ignore the existence of women must be renewed. Participation in politics for women can be started from small things that encourage government programs, for example PKK, Posyandu. Family planning and other activities that move mothers towards common interests. If a woman can organize a community, a woman can view higher services such as being a member of the legislature to the head of government. Female leader, a position that can be achieved if she can improve results that are better than before and have good work performance too, so that a leader woman will be recognized for their leadership by their subordinates and others. This leadership is seen from the form of maturity in dealing with various problems faced, especially by the field that they lead without leaving their female nature. Women leaders have



strength in the form of assertiveness, toughness and courage in the sense of being able to make the right decisions like what a man can do.

Gender functions as a socio-cultural construction where gender refers to the difference between women and men which is a function of biology and socio-culture in which we can distinguish between women and men as social beings. Thus it can be said that gender is a concept of differentiation between men and women, or a view of society on the differences in roles and responsibilities carried out by men and women (Machmud, 2018).

Women's political participation in Indonesia, especially their involvement in formal political institutions, what happens is the low representation of women in them. It is very unfair to violate human rights, if women are still marginalized from participating in formal political institutions. Women need to be given the opportunity and space to express themselves in developing their potential, including the world of politics. Elizabeth (2017) states that the struggle to achieve justice and gender equality is a humanitarian effort because it is related to human rights.

In the political learning process, the concept of gender equality needs to be considered both in the world of politics, both national and international, gender equality is very important, but there are still many problems that often become obstacles in the process. Many female cadres in political parties (parpol) cannot fully participate. Moreover, the woman is nominated as a legislative candidate or as a regional head candidate in the regional head elections. The political dynamics in many countries, including Indonesia, have gender issues. So far, what has happened is political discrimination against women in democratic life or the political world. Therefore, awareness or efforts to build justice must begin with a transformation as according to Hasyim (2017) states that to build justice for marginalized groups, a transformation is required that requires change and education to the community.

Although during this politics and political behavior is seen as masculine (male) activities, which in this field require courage, independence of free speech, and aggressive actions, it does not mean that we (women) are unable to contribute to their political life. Women understand better and can apply. What is impossible, women get, many advantages that we can afford, only ability but do not have the desire. Many of our women have good competence to be maximal, but they cannot (Musdah & Farida, 2005: 1).

It is undeniable that in the context of Indonesia, the issue of women's representation in parliament still faces some challenges, both internal and external. In fact, as citizens, all rights of women are guaranteed by the constitution, including the right to participate in politics. Internal constraints include the still weak quality of human resources for most of the women, the limited number of women who have qualified and

qualified in the political field, and a lack of confidence to compete with men. Meanwhile, external constraints include the patriarchal culture of Indonesian society, the absence of political will of party elites to open up wide spaces for women's involvement, and the attitudes of some men who underestimate women's abilities in politics (Wahyudi, 2018).

The socio-cultural condition which is thick with its patriarchal culture is one of the inhibiting factors for the actualization of women as the nation's policy makers. Various attempts were made to encourage women's representation in the legislature. Through Law Number 2 of 2008 concerning political parties and Law Number 10 of 2008 concerning general elections, women's representation is a mandatory requirement for political parties' participation in elections. Every political party is obliged to meet the 30% quota of women in politics. The active representation of women in the legislature is a concrete manifestation of the growing awareness of women's political power. The real involvement of women is not only based on participation in decision making, but also on their contribution to fighting for women's rights (Muslimat, 2017).

Women's political participation is expected not only to participate in voting but also to become members of the legislature, both at the central and regional levels. Today's society generally states that women can be chosen because they can fight for the aspirations and needs of the community, besides that because women can campaign and approach society well. It is hoped that the presence of women in politics can reduce the number of discrimination against women. Public thinking about women who are considered weak creatures must be completely cleared. In addition, a woman who sits in the leadership chair will inspire other women to add to the women's ranks.

In Indonesia since the reformation, women's political participation, especially women's representation in decision-making, has become an important agenda of the government and legislature. Various affirmative and strengthening policies are being pursued. In an inclusive democracy, society as one of the important pillars of democracy has a very important role in realizing women's political participation that is broader and meaningful. The participation of women in politics is very important. Because their existence can improve the welfare of women's groups by representing, overseeing and influencing the agenda and policy-making process, as well as participating in the development process.

The idea that politics is not a territory for women is an idea that has been echoed throughout the centuries and has proved very effective in limiting women from participating in politics. Public and private terminology that is closely related to the concept of gender and gender roles, and stereotypes, has created inequality and inequality between women and men. The most obvious result of such political situations is the marginalization and exclusion of women in formal political



life. This means that the presence of women in formal political life in many places is shown an unsatisfactory picture. The root of all these problems is a patriarchal culture which blocks all spaces for women in all fields, including politics.

According to Zamroni (2013), to find out whether there is inequality and inequality in the political field between women and men, it can be seen from the level of welfare, access, critical awareness, participation and control. Political communication that is played by women through various channels, either by actively conveying political messages in various political systems, such as political parties, legislatures, community organizations and others. As political communicators, not many women are involved in the organizational structure of political parties or even become members of the legislature. Furthermore, the typology of female political communicators can be classified into women as politicians, women as professional communicators, and women as activists.

Gender equality does not mean contradicting men and women, but is interpreted as an effort to build relationships and provide equal opportunities between men and women in their involvement in various fields of life. Politics is one of the elements in providing equal opportunities for men and women to learn so that what is expected is how we create a construction of thought that does not discriminate between men and women in living life.

Women's representation is to raise women's interests. At this point, many people, even women themselves, have changed that women's interests are better voiced by women themselves because they understand women's needs best. In a representative democracy framework, the views of different groups must be considered in formulating decisions and policies to be made. Taking women's interests into account and involving men and women in the policy-making process is the foundation of a democratic framework that promotes gender equality and justice.

Thus, the stigma that has so far existed in society that women are weak, incompetent and unworthy, as well as challenges in a patriarchal culture which considers that women are always behind and do not have the opportunity to do

politics can be resisted and broken if all efforts to increase participation women's politics can be carried out well. Moreover, in an era that is increasingly open and prioritizes skills, women have the opportunity to show their skills in various fields including politics. Women must be given the same space as men so that women can be independent and free to determine the direction of their struggle in actualizing themselves as people who play a role in building civilization, society, nation and state.

4. Conclusion

As part of community life, women have an essential role in developing themselves to participate in building a prosperous society. One of the essential parts that women can use as a means of expression is the political field. Therefore, various efforts must be made to provide women opportunities to be involved in the political field.

Efforts can be made through several severe and essential things to consider. First, the government must explicitly provide women with more opportunities to reach the 30% quota's political sector. Second, political parties should open up unique opportunities for women to participate in politics. Third, the government, political parties, or other institutions should provide political education for women, training women's capacity building to raise women's participation. Fourth, access to information for women because of the various information received and managed by women in their social environment will shape both female participants and voters, which will encourage them to determine the affirmation of their political choices. Fifth, the community should be provided with knowledge through socialization to eliminate the mindset that always marginalizes or subordinate's women. The aim is to awaken and develop a political conscience, political ethics, and political responsibility so that women can become praiseworthy political persons who also have critical insight into political relations. If these things are done effectively and efficiently, women's political participation will increase, and space for women to participate in policymaking related to women's strategic issues is carried out openly and freely.

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