

**GENDER JUSTICE FOR WOMEN,
THE EXPANSION OF PEACE AND
THE SAFETY OF THE STABILITY
:THE HISTORY OF INDONESIAN WOMEN'S STRUGGLE**

DR. ENDANG ROCHMIATUN.M. HUM

**GENDER STUDIES CENTER
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY RADEN FATAH
SOUTH SUMATERA, INDONESIA**

Gender equality is one of the human rights as a human being. The right to live respectable, free from fear and free choice of life is not only for men, but also for women. Unfortunately until now, women are often considered as a weak person and become a complementary figure. Moreover there is a pattern of thinking that the role of women is limited to work in the kitchen, wells, and to take care of family and children. Indeed, this becomes an unimportant task.

Historically, the struggle of Indonesian women is divided into six phases, namely the colonial periods, the period of Japanese occupation, the period of independence, the Old Order, the New Order, and the Reformation period.

The Colonial Period, In this period the struggle of Indonesian women was strong with the spirit of liberation and resistance to colonialism. Women's movement at this time are divided into three rounds, namely the round of arms, educational rounds, and the round of politics. In this period in various parts of Indonesia there are many outstanding female figures who appear to defend the country. Cut Nyak Dhien and Cut Nyak Meuthia are female warrior figures in Aceh. In Java, there was Raden Ayu Ageng Serang who took up arms, then Roro Gusik helped her husband, Untung Surapati, took up arms as well; in Maluku, Christina Martha Tiahahu helped Pattimura to fight against colonial; and in South Sulawesi, Emmy Saelan is active in Wolter Mongonsidi's fighting. They fought for sovereignty, even though it was limited for their region.

In 1901 , they give a chance for Indonesian to get education until the highest level. Then, these people have opportunity to sit in the colonial bureaucracy, although most of them place at a low level . At that time, women are not priority of the colonial politic, but this condition gave advantages to the women's movement especially for the elite women "priyayi". There are many women from the elite class who participated in the education, for instance Raden Ajeng Kartini in Central Java, Dewi Sartika in West Java, Rohana Kudus in Minangkabau, Maria Walanda Maramis in North Sulawesi, Nyi Hj.Ahmad Dahlan from Yogyakarta, and Hj.Rasuna Said from West Sumatra. These women then transferred their knowledge to other women for developing their county.

Poetri Mardika, the first women's nationalist organization, was founded in 1912. This organization was born in the period of awareness of a "national emancipation" that is being warmly awakened by the elites during this ethical political era. After that, there are many other women's organizations emerged, such as Poetri Sedjati, Wanita Oetama, Jong Java Meisjeskering, and other regional or purpose-based organizations.

Post-1920, women-based religious organizations were established, such as Aisyiyah, Muslimat NU, and Poesara Wanita Katholik, the initial Indonesian Catholic Women's Union. These organisations mostly focused on certain issues like adultery, prostitution, marriage of children, and trafficking of women and children. They used magazines that were published everywhere in order to expose these issues. These magazines exposed some articles related to adultery, and the harsh of child marriage .

During the Japanese occupation there was only one permissible women's organization, named Fujinkai. The Japanese colonial used this organisation to mobilise Indonesian people for participating in the “voluntary” work. This work was aimed for their victory of their “holy war”. Members of this organisation are mostly wife of the civil servants. The membership of this organisation are classified based on their husband’s position. Fujinkai programs include social activity and illiteracy eradication program.

In the early days of independence, women took part in formulating the foundations for the ideals of the nation's struggle. In the newly born 1945 Constitution, women's legal and political rights are included as men have. Women support the nation's struggle. In December 1945, The first Women's Congress was held in Klaten. In 1946 it was held the second congress in Solo Central Java. During this meeting the Indonesian Women's Congress was formed as a federation for all women's organizations that supported the independence of Indonesia. Women took part in various roles including carrying arms in the battlefield, forming a communal kitchen, and involving in the guerrilla unit. Women are continuously voice their rights; equal wages and entitlements to work, remedies to marriage law, education for women and others. During the comeback of Dutch colonial after the World War II, women participated in the warzone. They were involved in many women's paramilitary, such as Laskar Wanita Indonesia (Laswi), Laskar Puteri Indonesia in Surakarta, Centre for individual women force, and others.

After the war, despite the devastation and economic hardship, there were hope and passion for the new Indonesia that upholds the full emancipation for all oppressed peoples, women and men. But that hope are hardly to be reached. The polygyny problem as one of the central problems of women is unresolved. Besides, the division of labour by sex are unsolved.

In 1978, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was formed. Women's issues, such as the determination of status, role, to the settlement of cases of crime and violence against women, are taken by the State. The women's movement entered a very sluggish period. The New Order uniformed on many things on behalf of the country's stability. Political control on women was handed by KOWANI, which tends to diminish its critical power, and then continuously stopping its critiques. The remaining women organization activities range from domestic work, social service, social gathering, and "show etiquette". PKK (Family Welfare Development), an independent organization that has been established since 1957, has been submitted under the direction of the Minister of Home Affairs. Its ideology promotes "Panca Dharma Wanita", which is: women as the faithful companion of husband, mother who educate their children, household manager, as additional worker to support family income, and as useful member of society. All the obligations are acted in a way according to the "nature of women". Nevertheless, emancipation issues are warming up along with the growth demand of women roles in the development at the international level. This idea is in accord with the national program "repelita" during the New Order era which mentions the equality between men and women. However, this program caused negative effect on women in which they have double burden, both domestic and public task.

Between 1970s-1980s, the seeds of the contemporary women's movement began to blossom among the intellectual middle classes. It was known as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), these NGOs began to establish contacts and expand the scope of their movement to the international level. Some world concerned issues are emerged among them, including abortion, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. On their journey they found that their activities with those issues did not take root and did not address the real problems faced by Indonesian women.

In the New Order period, there were many cases involving women's issues, particularly at the lower levels. Some NGOs tried to handle it, but the movement was still weak and scattered. One of the pioneered contemporary women's organisations was Kalyanamitra (1985) which focused their work on communication and information methods besides conducting field activities. Solidaritas Perempuan (1984) handled many cases of women trafficking

In the Habibie period, one thing should be noted is the establishment of the Commission on the Protection of Women against violence, or better known as Komnas Perempuan. This institution was established in 1999 through this Presidential Instruction. This is the answer of the demands of a number of female leaders to President Habibie to address the tragedy of May 12-14, 1998 happened in Jakarta. Until now, Komnas Perempuan have played an active role in socializing the recognition of women's rights as part of human rights.

During the period of Abdurrahman's leadership, many women activists whose voices had long been inaudible began to resound. The Presidential Instruction no. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming Program signed by president. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment began to campaign on gender equality issues. Abdurrahman Wahid was demoted from the post of President during the 2001 Special Session of the People's Consultative Assembly. Megawati Soekarnoputri, the Vice President, succeeded him as President. The first woman became president in the Republic of Indonesia.

Attention to women's participation in the public sector and political-strategic positions become major concern. It triggered the demands of 30% of female candidates for legislative seats which was approved in the new Election Law in Article 65. In the 2004 Election, there was only 11% of women in the parliament.

In the local district the situation is not much different. The parties are struggling to achieve the target of 30 % women in the parliament. This is because they are difficult to find a high quality women candidate to be nominated as people's representatives.

In the same year, It was the first time that the President was directly elected by people. After two rounds of election, Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected as President and Jusuf Kalla was chosen as the Vice President of Republic Indonesia for period 2004-2009. Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) fulfilled his promise by appointing 4 women in his cabinet.

Thank You

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

