

# Empowering Women in Politics through Women's Political Organization

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**Abstract**—This paper examines the role of women in the political sphere through The Indonesian Political Women's Caucus or KPPI as a woman's organization of political activists who want to ensure that the democratic process in Indonesia will fulfill, protect and guarantee women's rights, including in the political sphere. This study revealed existence of West Java KPPI and political struggle them. The data collection techniques were carried out with in-depth interview and literature study. The result show that the aim of KPPI is to create a democratic and just Indonesia, by strengthening women's political position and role, through the struggle for the fulfillment of women's rights, especially in the political field. KPPI was trying to fight for the rights and aspirations of women through called on the government to pay attention and facilitate the implementation of the policy of 30% representation of women in politics and also encourages political parties to build "political will" and alignments with the affirmative movement. The activities of KPPI's programs are carried out through independent programs and collaborative programs with partners. Therefore, KPPI was carried out in providing awareness and preparing female human resources who until now were marginalized, especially in political sphere.

**Keywords**—political women; women empowerment; women's political organization

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society which is plural and thick with patriarchal culture, is very susceptible to gender inequality problems that affect various aspects. The development approach has not even fairly considered the benefits of development for women and men, so that it will contribute to the emergence of injustice and gender inequality.

The State Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in 2016 was stated that the gender development index (IDG) in West Java reached 55.77 points and was still below the national IDG value of 62.3. It's means, gender disparities still occur in West Java, so there is still a need to improve the quality of human life, including women's participation in politics and decision making [1].

In Indonesia the mandate of the Election Law and the Political Party Law opens wide the political door for women to enter. Law Number 12 of 2003 quantitatively encourages an increase in the number of women in the political sphere.

Women's political representation globally reached the highest renewal rate on record in 2008, when women took 20.6% of the 12,879 seats up for renewal in 54 countries. It is still very difficult for women to achieve elected office and to effect change within parliamentary institutions. Women politicians are constrained by a number of social and political factors that may supersede their commitment to advancing a gender equality agenda. In addition, women's multiple identities mediate the setting of priorities and can create tension between loyalty to her party and to advocating for women's rights policies [2].

Women in politics as a study has been carried out by many researchers. Some studies that have been conducted including: (1) study of women's political representations at the local level indicate that high women's representation levels at the national level trickle down to the local level [3]; (2) study of participation of women in politics who is the representation of women in the parliament is weak [4]; (3) the women representation in power related positions to point out the differences for men and women in exploiting the opportunities and securing the positions of power [5]; (4) issues and challenges faces by women in political participation where is society needs to deconstruct the stereotype of women and overall political parties' environment too is not women friendly, so that they have to struggle hard and face multi-dimensional issues to create space for them in the party [6]; (5) examines the factors that have led to the positive changes in women's political participation. Despite the fact that women have made significant trends in political participation, worldwide a colossal gap is still in existence [7].

There are no studies that specifically examine the existence of women's organizations. Therefore, this study focuses on how The Indonesian Women's Political Caucus or KPPI as a political women's activist organization in carrying out its political role. Women, become KPPI's concern by focusing on preparing reliable women political resources and character to fill the public space in the legislature or executive. Therefore, the study revealed how the historical background of the establishment of West Java KPPI, political struggle, and program activities carried out in providing awareness and preparing female human resources who have strong character and personality to engage in politics and fight for women's rights.

## II. METHOD

This study uses qualitative methods with a case study approach, and examine the things that are in the natural environment of the Female Caucus in West Java.

Data collection techniques that will be used, namely: (1) In-depth interviews that will be carried out with several female caucus activists to get a comprehensive picture of the phenomena that continue and the meaning and experience of the actors in the phenomenon. This will produce analysis units as a theme description; and (2) Literature Study will be carried out through the collection of supporting data from various sources of written information, in the form of books, journals, and articles in the media including the internet.

After a variety of data collection techniques are carried out, then the next step is data analysis to be able to draw conclusions, the key to qualitative data analysis is how researchers arrive at conclusions by going to existing data. Qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and lasts continuously until complete with a cycle model in the form of interactive models from Miles and Huberman.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Historical Context for the establishment of KPPI

Indonesian Women's Political Caucus (KPPI) is a women's organization of political activists founded in 2000 with members of the board coming from all political parties participating in the election. KPPI was born from the womb of the reform movement that wanted a change in the life of democracy that was more advanced, fair, prosperous and dignified. The presence of KPPI was initiated by 9 women activists from 7 political parties who wanted to unite ideas, ideas, works and initiatives in order to provide a real contribution to the achievement of the Indonesian national goals.

KPPI was established with the intention of ensuring that the democratic process in Indonesia leads to efforts to fulfill, protect and guarantee the rights of women, including in the political field, as human rights that must be fulfilled by the state. In other words, KPPI wants to ensure changes in the social and political situation that improve the welfare of women.

KPPI's vision is the realization of women's political rights towards a democratic, just and prosperous society. Then it is revealed to the following mission: (1) Awareness, education and advocacy of women's political rights that are gender fair; (2) Encourage and safeguard 50:50 women's representation in 2030 in parliament; (3) Guard and supervise public policies to ensure the fulfillment of women's political rights; (4) Become a reference center for women's political movements in Indonesia; (5) Perform monitoring tasks on political policy in the context of accommodating women's rights and the realization of women's representation in decision making and policy making in political parties, government and other public institutions; and (6) Become a communication center, network and strategy of Indonesian women's political struggle.

The aim of KPPI is to create a democratic and just Indonesia, by strengthening women's political position and role, through the struggle for the fulfillment of women's rights, especially in the political field. KPPI aims to ensure that the democratic process in Indonesia is aiming at efforts to fulfill, protect and guarantee women's rights, including in the political field.

KPPI West Java, as a political women's caucus organization at the provincial level is an extension of the central KPPI. West Java KPPI is facilitated by Board for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and Family Planning (BP3AKB) and founded in 2009. The aim of its formation is to increase political participation by building participation, work ethic, solidarity and solidity of women politics in West Java to improve the quality of life of women and children.

In 2018, 15 political parties have joined as members of the West Java KPPI. In addition, KPPI regional administrators have been formed in 27 districts and cities in West Java.

### B. KPPI's Political Struggle

KPPI is fully aware that women's political struggle is very important, considering the basis of this struggle is the essence of the spirit of the proclamation as stated in the opening of the 1945 Constitution.

The existence of the Indonesian Political Women's Caucus (KPPI) is a means of formulating women who are involved in politics, so that they are well equipped, both to advance in the legislative or regional head elections. Bali KPPI Board Member, on February 2018 said that, "Indeed, in reality, this KPPI has the maximum role to galvanize or the term becomes *Candradimuka* crater for women who acting in politics. This KPPI is able to provide political education for women" [8].

Even though in the beginning for women the world of politics was a masculine realm, and had a strong impression, so very few women were interested in taking part in it. In fact, if women enter the political world, then there is an element of tenderness or affection so there is a balance. Women have a separate role if they are involved in politics, so that there are those who voice the interests of women, children and families to be better. Therefore, KPPI called on the government to pay attention and facilitate the implementation of the policy of 30% representation of women in politics, especially in the process of voting in the 2019 Election at every level.

KPPI was trying to fight for the rights and aspirations of women who until now were marginalized. Women have a significant voice in every election of representatives of the people and heads of regions, but the fate of women has not been paid much attention.

Until now, the reality of women's representation in the legislative is still considered minimal. The proportion of women legislators elected failed to achieve 30 percent affirmative action in the 2014 Election. Therefore, KPPI Chairperson, on February 2017 gives five inputs to the Special Committee (*Pansus*) of Election Organizers [9].

*First*, encouraging 30 percent of female candidates to rank number 1 in a minimum of 30 percent of the electoral district (*Dapil*). Regarding the determination of the legislative candidate's serial number to ensure that 30 percent of the representation of women who have entered the law can be fulfilled.

*Second*, KPPI encourages the interaction, participation and contribution of candidates in political parties for at least three years.

*Third*, prioritizing female candidates if there are votes equal to male candidates. KPPI encourages the determination of elected candidates based on the distribution of votes by prioritizing female candidates.

*Fourth*, KPPI encourages financial support for female candidates from the government. This step is done so that female candidates can compete with male candidates. Because every time the election process, financial support is always a big obstacle for female candidates to be able to compete.

*Fifth*, KPPI encourages the availability of electoral complaints centers and special desks and hotline services for female candidates in Integrated Law Enforcement (*Gakkumdu*). This is done so that every vote problem for female candidates can be handled early.

KPPI hope these five points become a tool so that women's representation in the DPD, DPRD and DPR can have a positive impact on the nation. This is due to the reflection on the 2009 Election, the proportion of 30 percent representation of women in parliament in the 2014 election turned out to have decreased. In 2009 the representation of women in parliament reached 18.2 percent, while the 2014 Election was only 17.32 percent. In fact, female candidates who ran and entered the list of voters from political parties experienced an increase from 33.3 percent in the 2009 elections to 37 percent in 2014. In the 2014 elections, women's representation only received 97 seats.

KPPI also encourages political parties to build "political will" and alignments with the affirmative movement by placing female candidates in number 1, at least in 30 percent of the electoral districts, especially for potential female cadres. That it was relevant to encourage political party leaders to place women in small numbers, because from the results of the survey, 67 percent of the elected candidates were number one. Therefore, KPPI does not want female candidates if they only get number three, four and so on.

### *C. Activities of KPPI Programs*

The West Java Provincial Government through the Board for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and Family Planning from 2009 to 2015 has helped facilitate the existence of KPPI in West Java with various activities. Among them is the implementation of capacity building for 1,000 KPPI's members, capacity building for female legislative candidates in every region. Then the KPPI cadre gathering in East *Priangan*, the elected women's legislative strengthening after the 2014 general election of 400 people, capacity building and public communication as many as 500 people with two generations. Furthermore, cooperation participation with stakeholders in

handling trafficking victims in West Java and cooperation in women's economic empowerment.

For KPPI, the importance of synergizing and supporting the West Java women leaders to advance in the regional head elections (*Pilkada*) and 2019 Elections, so that they would support potential women who have a clear commitment to fighting for women and have a solution to women's problems in society, so that their presence is truly felt. "We encourage women to win 30% at every level, advocate for laws related to women and children, and be responsive and proactive towards economic, education, health and social issues" [10].

The KPPI members must continue to work together with the relevant stakeholders that deal with the issue of women's empowerment and child protection. "The plunge of women in the political world will strengthen women's capacities and it is hoped that they will produce policies that are responsive to women and children so that women and children will be more prosperous" [11]. When empowering women, we will also invest in children, because in the smallest scope the decision is usually in the hands of women.

The implementation of capacity building is a manifestation of increasing the ability of women's resources, especially KPPI members, in the face of increasingly complex changes and developments. In West Java, 12 political parties have joined KPPI and KPPI members have been formed in 27 districts/cities. Mapping has been carried out in 27 districts /cities to make West Javanese women become qualified board members, and capable intellectually carry out his duties later as a member of the board.

In its activities KPPI also often performs Salam 3 (Three) Ends from the Ministry of Women and Child Protection, namely ending violence against women and children, ending human trafficking, and ending inequality of economic access for women.

Overall, the KPPI's programs divided into two programs: independence and collaboration program in figure 1. Independence programs consist of capacity building, cadre of meeting, strengthening of program and legislative position of selected women, and increasing of political communication for KPPI's members. Capacity building for KPPI's members and women legislative candidate. Meanwhile, collaboration programs include handling of human trafficking and empowerment of women economy.

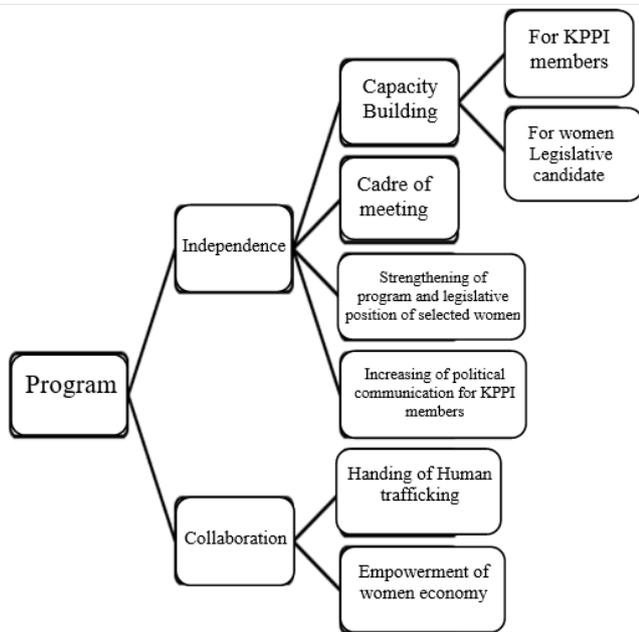


Fig. 1. Activities of West Java KPPI.

Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action. Empowerment is a process that is both individual and collective. Sometimes it involves people as groups that most often begin to develop their awareness and the ability to organize action and bring about change [12].

Women politicians as activists are certainly a challenge. Krook stated that a growing body of documentation is casting light on the diverse, creative, and nefarious obstacles to women's political participation that can be found around the world. This evidence suggests that female politicians, activists, and voters face difficulties that their male counterparts do not, instigated by male and female opponents of women's participation [13].

In the middle a patriarchal cultural system that is still so strong in the practice of sociocultural and political life in Indonesian society, the interpretation of values also influences and influences women's engagement in the political sphere.

Khalid stated that women are still viewed as the supportive group and unfit to lead society. Despite the National Policy for Women that was adopted to deconstruct such double standards for women, the struggles for women in politics are tremendous. Women are deferred from participating fully when the posts at both levels including appointment, tasks, administration, work hour, and etc. are insensitive to women's need. Women are persuasive to make gender a visible issue, but the change of paradigm requires men of integrity who are not afraid of equality [14].

The research results from Chen showed that there is an effect of female legislators on government expenditures of social welfare, where the increasing representation of female legislators resulted from a gender equality policy. In other words, gender quotas are very likely to influence policy

outcomes through its effect on the proportion of female legislators. Gender quotas have an important effect on the representation of women in politics, and consequently yield a significant influence of female legislators on government expenditures on social welfare [15].

Women's full participation in national and local politics, in the economy, in academia and the media is fundamental to democracy and essential to the achievement of sustainable development and peace in all contexts. If a political system neglects women's participation, if it evades accountability for women's rights, it fails half of its citizens. Indeed, true democracy is based on the realization of human rights and gender equality. Gender equality and women's empowerment are a matter of justice and human rights, but they are also essential for the achievement of all human rights for all, for the development of all societies and for our collective global future [16].

If women are to play an equal part in development, they must be empowered politically and economically, which includes being adequately represented at all levels of decision-making [17]. Equal access to and full participation in power structures and involvement in all development efforts are essential for gender equality and sustainable development.

Representation of women in politics, in line with the third goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely promoting gender equality and empowering women. Along with this, women's active participation, equality with men at various levels in decision making is an essential achievement. This equality of rights will create democracy, peace and sustainable development. The policy of adding quotas for women in politics can make changes in policy-making that is female-friendly, women's representation will create a new perspective in political policy making that has been constructed through men's perspectives.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The transformation of Indonesia's political system will provide a large space for women's work in the political sector. This gives the meaning of open access for women to actively participate in political activities. Therefore, political parties are a very strategic tool in voicing women's interests while increasing their representation of access in public decision making.

The involvement of more women in the political sphere must be based on the quality of development and women's political participation, so that can empower women in strategic policies, especially related to policies that are not gender biased and voice the interests of women, because women certainly understand better what their women need compared to men.

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