



Mobilizing Awareness Towards Change:

PROLOGUE & EPILOGUE

Translation from The Book:

“Menggalang Perubahan: Perlunya Perspektif Gender dalam Otonomi Daerah”

Published by
Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan
in cooperation with The World Bank

Jakarta, September 2004

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PROLOGUE:

MOBILIZING AWARENESS TOWARDS CHANGE

In a refugee tent, Ms. Nani (not her real name) was disappointed to find out that among the items supplied by humanitarian donor, she could not find any sanitary napkin which she needed. She was at her second day of period. For the last three months since her arrival at the tent, she had been tortured every time her period came. She was not only suffering from severe stomachache but was also in difficulty to get sanitary napkins. Then what items were provided by the humanitarian aids? It turned out that the items included instant noodles, cigarettes, mineral water, coffee and some cookies. According to a refugee who was the coordinator for all incoming assistance, the supply was agreed upon by representatives of refugee families who occupied the tents. According to this coordinator, it was decided in the discussion that the priority was food so it was recommended accordingly. As for the cigarettes, it was regarded as men's habits and because many men were involved in the discussion.

The story of Ms. Nani was told by Nia, a woman activist who volunteered in camps for refugees from Ambon. She got the story from a housewife who had been living in a tent for three months. According to Ms. Nani, they were experiencing many things, especially in relation to women's needs, from sanitary napkins, baby food, MCK and dressing ward, which seemed to have been overlooked. The story of sanitary napkins illustrated above will probably be considered a small thing for some people and thus is not too important. For women in periods, however, this item is their basic need. According to Nia, during the three months period, she had to ask it from the woman volunteer or bought it in the nearby village while in addition to her limited cash, the village was two kilometer away from the camp.

According to Nia, the experience of Nani was one of the consequences of not involving women in preparation of recommendation for refugee needs. "Out of 15 refugee representatives, only three women were present. These women were only making notes and the rest of the time they only listened without given any chance to speak," said Nia. According to her, the limited number of women involved was caused by the fact that in a conflict situation, it was men who were playing roles and this extended to issues of assistance, it was men's job. "I knew nothing and suddenly there was supply coming in. As a refugee, I was certainly happy to see but among the items received I could not find any sanitary napkin which I badly needed. Many other housewives were also in difficulty to get baby food they needed," said Nani as quoted by Nia.



In a more macro scale, the case experienced by women in refugee camps may also happen in community development policies in general. The situation will emerge if the process of policy making ignores gender dimension as one of considerations. A policy that considers gender dimension is a policy which recognizes the ongoing different roles played by men and women in the society. If there is a perception so far that public domain is men's world and domestic domain is women's world and therefore development priority should be left up to men, this view is not really appropriate.

The experience of Nani, for instance, is proof that setting of priorities for community needs cannot be delegated to men only. Women's needs which should have been prioritized turned out to be excluded. It is therefore clear that the differences between men and women in relation to different priorities are relevant to their respective needs. Based on this condition, the issue of priority setting should no more be delegated to one side only, either to men or women alone. Setting of priorities for community needs must be carried out together as roles and responsibilities of men and women are different, hence their needs are also different.

In addition to accommodating men's and women's needs, a policy established together by considering gender dimension will better ensure the fulfillments of the needs of women and men will equally minimize losses each side have to bear. This means that development policies established will be beneficial for the entire community, both men and women, with their respective roles.

Then, what about development policies since the enactment of regional autonomy 2001? Has it considered gender dimension? These questions are reasonable as the important thing in regional autonomy implementation is wider opportunities for community participation towards public policies in the regions. This includes the opportunity for considering gender dimension in public policies.

It is this very question that prompted the publication of this book which was based on the results of field studies in eight regions in Indonesia, i.e. Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, Padang (West Sumatra), Tasikmalaya, Cianjur (West Java), Wonosobo (Central Java), Jember (East Java) and Poso (Central Sulawesi). The study was carried out for five months between March and July 2003. The eight areas were selected because in the regional autonomy era, these regions have been dealing with special phenomena related to gender dimension in public policies and they may be classified into three categories:

1. *Gender dimension within public policies which prioritize Syariat Islam and morality.*

These phenomena were found in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, Padang (West Sumatra), Tasikmalaya, Cianjur and Ciamis (West Java) and Jember (East Java). In these regions, gender dimension has not been accommodated well and on the contrary, it tends to be ignored when it is related to social problems such as prostitution and immoral conducts. The solution still uses morality aspect and religious issue such as Syariah Islam without giving consideration to other aspects which are also the core of the problems. As a consequence of such perception, women in these regions suffer direct impacts. In Padang, West Sumatra, for instance, due to a wide-spread immoral conducts and



prostitution, gambling and alcoholic drinks, the provincial government drafted a provincial regulation against social diseases. Unfortunately, one of its articles included a clause that prohibits women to be outside their homes between 22.00 and 05.00 hours. This clause clearly harms women as they are positioned as the source of immoral conducts and deterioration of morality so that their activities must be limited. It was fortunate that this clause was opposed by the society at large, particularly from women, and was eventually deleted from the draft regulation.

2. ***Gender dimension and growing women participation within the process of public policies.*** The phenomenon was found in Wonosobo Regency (Central Java) and was pioneered by the Section for Women Empowerment of the Regency Government. This Section initiated participatory pattern in the process of public policy making which would enable women and men to be actively involved so that women could express their opinions and determine their priorities. The initiative of this empowerment section proved that women participation will grow if the policy does consider gender dimension.
3. ***Gender dimension within public policy in conflict area.*** This phenomenon was found in Poso (Central Sulawesi), although the conflict had ended. The end of the conflict did not mean that all problems created by the conflict, including women's problems, also diminished. There are still a lot of women issues that need to be handled, from economic problem, health and education issues. Meanwhile, the regency government of Poso has not yet carried out actions that would help the women who are victims of the conflict, neither financing nor empowerment program.





EPILOGUE:

DEVELOPING WOMEN'S QUALITY OF LIFE: AN EPILOGUE FOR CHANGE

"Decision to select one's spouse is too important to be left to others",

Siti Romelah, a woman from Wonosobo¹

The sentence was uttered by a woman named Siti Romelah from Larangan Lor village, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java. The community of the village entrusted Romelah as the head of the village and to lead the community. The trust granted by the community is the result of her independence and good leadership.

In the context of developing the quality of women's lives, independence and empowerment are the main issues that had been attracting the attention of the government and non-governmental organizations or NGOs. Empowerment and independence are the fundamental issues that have, until now, not been promising. In Indonesia, encouraging independence and empowerment of women are tantamount to dismantling the social culture which has been developed over a long time. Meanwhile, empowerment and independence, on the other hand, is the key to begin the improvement of the quality of women's lives.

It would be nice to see if all Indonesian women are like Romelah, but a number of issues surrounding the structure and culture are still significant to become the fundamental obstacles in Indonesia. Would it be possible for Indonesian women to become independent and empowered in the middle of structural and cultural weight prevailing in the country?

GENDER ANALYSIS IN DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

Basically, development is a process to bring all components of a society towards improved quality of life. In this context, development is often understood to bring positive impacts

¹ Quoted from an article entitled "Women and Regional Autonomy in Wonosobo". Further story about Siti Romelah is available in the article.

that would be benefiting all classes in the society. On the other hand, development should also provide similar impacts to all members of the society, both men and women. In this situation, the interest of the society is assumed to be adequately represented by one society group only. Experience indicates differently. Disparities in income and gender inequality in various sectors of lives are the reality that must be encountered in the society and proves that development cannot be represented.

"The Revolution of Gender Equality" a report from HDR in 1995 was really surprising. The report has, at least, opened our eyes that gender issue has not been accommodated in the democracy domain until 1990. Qualitatively, Mahbub ul-Haq estimated women's contribution to world productivity, something which had never been calculated as it was regarded as non-market factor. US\$ 16 trillion of the total US\$23 trillion world revenues turned out to have come from unpaid women labor. The non-market labors carried out by women, therefore, are basically more than just the question about justice.

The exclusion of gender concept in development process is certainly an issue of its own as development does not belong to men alone. Mansour Fakih in his book entitled "Gender Analysis and Social Transformation"² have at least reminded us that development process would produce social inequality which would specifically be suffered by women if development concept does not understand gender differences. There are men and women in a society and development usually sides with men as it is commonly believed that it is men who own the public domain like working, while women's places are in domestic domain. This type of society is regarded as unfair from the gender perspective. In fact, development should accommodate the needs of both men and women.

Various efforts to incorporate women in development aspect have been carried out. One of the approaches that has been the mainstream is "Women in Development" or WID. This concept is an international consensus reached during the first Indonesian Women Conference in Mexico City in 1975. The basic premise of this approach was that many women had been left behind, meaning that they were facing a lot of problems; involving them in development would also mean utilizing their potentials to make development more efficient and effective. In Indonesia itself, WID implementation is directed towards several specific programs for women like Family Planning, Family Income Improvement, PKK, Mother and Child Health Care and so on.

Nevertheless, WID approach seems to have been unable to change women issues in a more fundamental way, an issue that has been the root of gender inequality. WID has only solved women problems at physical level and has not touched the basic human rights issue. The fact was expressed by Siti Hidayati Amal, a sociologist from the Indonesian University. She says that WID implementation towards women has yielded some successes, such as the increasing number of women who use contraceptives and fertility rate has been decreasing, family welfare has been improving for women who joined the Family Income Improvement program

² Mansour Fakih, "Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial", Pustaka Pelajar Yogyakarta, 1996



and the decreasing rate of infant mortality rate³. At the same time, unfortunately, the success of WID approach was not eventually enjoyed by women. The fact that there were more women who used contraceptives compared to men meant that more women bear more risks of the side effect than men⁴.

A gender analyst, Moser.C (1993) believes that the weakness of WID approach has been caused by the absence of gender analysis during its design, especially on women. WID only serves practical needs related to inadequate living condition such as lack of clean water, lack of health services, lack of employment opportunities, lack of adequate education and high rate of illiteracy. Fulfillments of practical needs for women are also related to their roles as mothers or wives who take care of household works and the children. In this context, WID is a development approach model which tends to regard women as passive recipients of development rather than active participants in development and in changing social, economic, political and cultural realities they have been confronting so far⁵.

When WID approach has failed to increase women's roles and to free them from discrimination and inequality within development context, a new awareness emerged which was then transformed into Gender and Development Approach or GAD, an approach which emphasizes more on the integrity of gender concept in development. This GAD approach is more attached to gender analysis as analysis instrument which is focused to structural inequality caused by gender belief which is rooted and hidden in various places such as tradition, religious beliefs and development planning. As Mansour Fakhri stated, as the result of hidden gender biases in implementation of development projects, millions of women have inadvertently been victimized or made victims by development projects⁶. In this context, the aspects of gender differences in development are no more overlooked and, on the contrary, high level of awareness on women issues may develop. One important thing is to change the perception that it is not women who need development but it is development that requires their involvement.

REGIONAL AUTONOMY: HAS IT CONSIDERED GENDER DIMENSION?

The essence of regional autonomy is actually directed towards improvement of more innovative, participatory and transparent governance based on democratization of citizens⁷. This fundamental governance is called Good Governance. It is a mechanism, practice and

³ Siti Hidayati Amal, criticism and alternative to WID, PSPK journal, 4th edition 2002, Center for Regional Development Study

⁴ Ibid, page 5

⁵ Amal, op.cit, page 5

⁶ Mansour Fakhri, Misinterpretation of development theories and globalization (insist and student Library, Yogyakarta, 2001)

⁷ Hetifah Sj Sumarto, Innovation, Participation and Good Governance; 20 Innovative and Participatory in Indonesia (Obor Foundation 2003)



procedures of governmental and public affairs in managing resources and in solving public issues. The quality of government is based on the quality of interaction between all components of governance, i.e. government, civil society and private sector. Good governance should certainly possess the elements of accountability, participation and transparency.

Regional autonomy also provides better opportunities for opening gender dimensions in development process. If gender dimensions have so far been difficult to be incorporated into development framework, such opportunities are now available in every region. Regional Autonomy which is based on the needs of local society will also open up opportunities to develop women as citizens with roles in determining every aspects of policy, and in its turn in governing themselves.

Nevertheless, though the opportunity to incorporate gender dimension into development is available, it is not adequately utilized by the local governments in considering gender dimension in their policies. In several cases, the government inadvertently issues public policies which actually discriminate the society, in this case women.

Studies conducted in the eight regions have not generally been able to indicate any considerations on gender dimension in the implementation of regional autonomy. In general, women problems and all aspects related to the issue of gender dimension in the eight areas under study may be illustrated as follows:

1. *Public policies which prioritize moral and religious aspects for resolving numerous social problems.* This phenomena is found in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD), Padang (West Sumatra), Tasikmalaya, Ciamis and Cianjur (West Java) and Jember in East Java. In overcoming various social and economic issues, local governments used morality and religious approaches. As the result of these approaches, directly or indirectly, women are often considered as the causes of social problems, such as prostitution.

In NAD, the enactment of Syariah Islam is not basically equipped with any information as to how far the local community needs it. The application of Syariah Islam in NAD eventually is directed towards fulfillments of Islamic symbols such as the obligation to wear headscarves for women, use of unmarked Arabic script and placements of banners to promote Syariah Islam. Related to the use of the symbols, the groups that clearly suffer the most are women. The phenomenon in NADS is that women are the indicators whether or not Syariah Islam has been implemented correctly or not by observing whether the women have worn headscarves or not.

As a consequence, the enactment of the Syariah Islam has caused certain inconvenience, particularly among women. A lot of women in Aceh, for instance, feel uncomfortable wearing headscarves when they go out of their homes. The problem is not really in whether one agrees or not on wearing headscarves but more on women's awareness on their freedom to choose between whether to wear or not to wear headscarves. As this policy is "compelling" in nature, it psychologically burdens women in general. Furthermore, wearing headscarves has become a factual parameter for the



implementation of Syariah Islam. This means, a woman who does not wear headscarf will automatically be regarded as a non-Moslem and if she happens to be a Moslem, she would be considered as a bad Moslem. Headscarf has become a measurement for morality and obedience.

The enactment of this policy, however, seems to be unfair when we look towards men. There is no clear regulation for men related to the enactment of this Syariah Islam. Men can do whatever they want; they can go out at night and so on. The condition is worse when a sticker reads: *“women, you must not lure men’s eyes by not covering up your private parts”*⁸. The sticker which was attached to a glass window of a government office has directly or indirectly, built the perception that the enactment of Syariah Islam is actually directed towards setting up limitations towards women. Women have no right to express their disagreements as something which based on religious legitimacy is treated as if it is the one and only truth.

In addition to NAD, though Syariah Islam has not been legally enforced in Tasikmalaya, Cianjur and Ciamis, certain condition within the communities that reflect Islamic values by symbols have been developing such as in the use of unmarked Arabic scripts for street names, wearing headscarves and raids on prostitutes, all which are only based on morality and Syariah Islam. Enforcement of Syariah Islam in this region has created various problems, especially among women. In Tasikmalaya, for instance, the efforts to enforce Syariah Islam on justification to prevent immorality, prostitution and gambling have worried women as there are frequent raids to clean the places for gambling, alcoholic drinks and prostitutes. For female sex workers, the action is threatening because they are subject to violent acts and their hair may be cut, without any proper legal proceedings and self defense. Women who do have to go out at night for one or more reasons are worried about being the targets of sweepings. Again, on behalf of Syariah Islam, such sweepings do not consider what these women do. The main thing is that when they see a woman at night, she would be regarded as prostitute and must be arrested.

In Addition to Syariah Islam, a number of local regulations or policies have only been based on shaping morality in order to prevent immoral conducts. This reason has, again, made women as targets. What happened in Padang, West Sumatra, for instance, was that due to the widespread prostitution and illicit places, a local regulation to prevent immoral conducts would be promulgated and the target was clearly the prostitutes. Unfortunately, the cause of prostitution directed to women did not consider the aspects of social, economy, education as the roots of the problem. Local council looked at prostitution as the deterioration of moral values. In addition to moral campaigns, one of the steps to be taken by the local council was to forbid women to be out of their homes between 22.00 and 05.00 hours as a step to prevent immoral conducts and prostitution. Women who went out during such hours would be raided as they would motivate

⁸ See chapter in this book entitled “Prioritizing Islam Syariah in Aceh, Where is Women Issue?”



immoral conducts. It was clear that this draft regulation was only targeted at women and it did not regulate the men⁹.

Almost similar case also took place in Jember as the government wished to make Jember as a religious city with indicators of so many religious boarding schools ("*pesantren*") in the city. In order to achieve this, the local government has drafted an anti-prostitution regulation as prostitution was considered to have been spreading widely in Jember and was considered to damage the image of Jember as a religious city. Unfortunately, the follow up to this local regulation was by limiting women to go out at night. If a woman was outside her house at night, the local government police would arrest her immediately as she would be suspected as a commercial sex worker. This reality clearly hurts women as not all women who were outside their homes were sex workers.

On the other hand, there were a lot of cases of violent acts against women (ie: rape), and some of these cases were even perpetrated by community leaders, were not responded by the local government at all. The issues of violence against women were finally taken over by morality issues. A blatant example was when a number of women activists demanded a local regulation for violence against women; it was not responded with a reason there was no legal umbrella, but it was not the same with the local regulation on prostitution issued by the government of Jember regency. On behalf of morality, the local regulation on prostitution was approved in order to keep the good reputation of Religious Jember and on behalf of religion also that women are targets of *sweeping* when they were outside their homes.¹⁰

Out of the issues discussed above, gender perspective development is still absent. The roles and positions of women in regional autonomy are limited and regarded as the sources of the deterioration of the community's moral values. Moral standards are measured from how far women adhere to local regulations established by the local government which, purposely or inadvertently, are discriminative towards women. If this situation continues, it will affect the development of community living standards, especially those of women. Women will continue to be regarded as the sources of various problems, particularly morality in our country and the society will never realize that such views are very harmful to women.

- 2. Inadequate women participation in decision making process.** The participation of women in the process of decision making was still inadequate in the areas studied. There were two issues in these regions that made such inadequacy of women's participation. **Firstly**, there has been no public mechanism that would allow women the opportunity to express their opinion and recommendation properly in the process of public policy making. Although a mechanism for each region exists, it is more

⁹ See chapter in this book entitled "Public Policy in West Sumatra: Is it already women oriented?"

¹⁰ See chapter in this book entitled "Jember Women: Seeking Justice in Regional Autonomy Era"



presented to certain groups close to the government. In Padang, West Sumatra, for instance, not all groups are allowed to join the process of decision making. Only certain groups like Bundo Kanduang, Adat Group and so on but representation from other groups such as women are not allowed. As a consequence, the draft regulation in existence is not sensitive to women needs and it even considers women as the source of immoral conducts in West Sumatra. The process of public policy which is at dissemination stage was naturally confronted with refusal as it was considered to be discriminative by several society elements in Padang.

The exclusion of women groups in the policy making process also took place in Jember where they were almost without any facilitation. All local regulations were entrusted to religious groups that were gender-biased in their opinions. Similar process is happening in Aceh. Public policy on Syariah Islam does not automatically provide the opportunities to women groups in Aceh to express their opinions on the obligation to wear headscarves, for instance. All these problems are caused by the absence of clear mechanism on women's involvement in the decision making process.

Secondly, the problem in the low participation of women in decision making is the unavailability of strategic positions in governmental institutions with mandates to promote women and human resources equality in the structure of local government institutions. The position of this institution is not only strategic, but should also be tactical in mobilizing ideas or programs for women empowerment at regional level. The issue of the position of women empowerment institution is important because whether the issue is included or not in local government regulation will depend on how far the recommendation from the women empowerment institution is channeled to decision makers.

When we look at women's empowerment institutions in several regions, it seems that local governments have not really provide sufficient space for gender equality efforts. In Jember, Poso, Cianjur, Ciamis and Tasikmalaya, the women's empowerment unit is not strategic structurally as it is not a separate independent institution but is placed under the *Bagian* (Section) of Community Empowerment with roles that are difficult to influence local government policies in a significant way. This is because the position of *Sub-bagian* (Sub-section) for women's empowerment is confronted by long bureaucratic ramifications so that ideas for women's empowerment often failed to be expressed adequately as they have to go through bureaucratic procedures.

In Jember, for instance, as the position of women's empowerment unit is only a *Sub-bagian* within the *Bagian* for Community Empowerment, recommendations from the unit would only be sent up to the level of Section Head. This section has many sub-sections and this eventually would result in the recommendation from the sub-section of women's empowerment becoming a low priority. It is in this aspect that when the women's empowerment unit is put under the coordination of the *Sekda* (Secretary of regional government), then recommendations on women's empowerment would have greater access to the *Bupati*. Structurally, coordination between the *Sekda* and the *Bupati* would be easier.



The pattern of placing the position of women's empowerment unit in a more strategic role as indicated above is found in the district of Wonosobo. The *Bagian* for Women's Empowerment in Wonosobo Regency is under direct control of the *Sekda* who has a clear structural line to the *Bupati*. As a *Bagian* within the regional secretariat, its coordinating function can be implemented, its internal capacity is sufficient, and its influence on sectoral *dinas* or institutions are very strong as it is sitting in the "heart" of the district's secretariat. This position has enabled the Women's Empowerment unit to mainstreaming gender and developing gender perspective for the *dinas* or other sectors. With this strategic position, the *Bupati* issued a decree to support the network of gender focal points within every *dinas*. Through this network of gender focal points, every *dinas* is expected to be able to include gender dimension in its program planning.

Unfortunately, not all of this strategic position brings good implication. Several regions have not been maximal in using their positions to influence public policies, for example Aceh and West Sumatra. Although their positions are strategic, namely as Bureau for Women Empowerment under the coordination of the provincial *Sekda* and with accesses to the Governors, their roles have been insignificant because their programs have no clear relations to gender mainstreaming efforts. The existence of this Bureau also fails to influence Governor's policies towards supporting women empowerment campaigns in a more comprehensive way. In this context, the combination of women empowerment institution in local government structure with a better and more concretely formulated gender mainstream program is important to actually channel women's voices towards gender equality.

- 3. Budget allocation for women's empowerment¹¹.** One of the indicators to measure whether a local government is concerned or not with women affairs is by looking at the special budget for women empowerment. The factor of this budget is not only to be considered from the amount allocated, but also how effective would this budget in supporting women empowerment programs.

In Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD), the Bureau for Women Empowerment has allocated Rp 13 billion in 2002 or approximately 9 percent of the total provincial budget. It was obvious that the amount was substantial enough but it would become small in the context of the conflict situation in the province which required a large budget. Compared to Poso Regency, however, the allocation for women empowerment in NAD was much higher. In Poso, the allocation was Rp 228 million or approximately 0.02 percent of the total regency budget while what was happening in NAD and Poso was similar, i.e. both were conflict areas. This amount was certainly too small for women empowerment programs which so far have been spent for post conflict recovery programs.

¹¹ Budget for Women Empowerment is a budget allocated to improve women's capacity in accessing and control of economic, political, social and cultural resources to enable women to take care of themselves and to improve their confidence in playing roles and actively participate in overcoming development issues and to enable them to develop themselves.



In Jember, the allocation received by women empowerment program for 2002 was Rp 430 million or around seven percent of the total 2002 budget. This amount was certainly not a large amount for handling complicated women issues. The allocation was used by women empowerment section for Family Welfare Education (PKK) program, from development of infrastructure and facilities up to increasing active roles of women in PKK activities.

What was targeted by women empowerment section in Jember was quite appropriate, i.e. women. But what the program carried out was not really in parallel with the gender mainstreaming agenda which had been socialized so far. The PKK program was, on the contrary, adhered to the principle that women's position was the supporting factor for men's existence in a family. In fact, women empowerment programs should open the opportunities for women and men to gain equal accesses to social, economic and political resources in the community.

When Jember regency still has problems with women empowerment, it is a different story in Wonosobo district in Central Java. Although the amount is not as big as in Jember, women's empowerment programs in Wonosobo are regarded to be very effective in developing gender awareness.

The women's empowerment unit in Wonosobo has been successful in developing women participation in a decision making process through a pilot project at a village level. In this village, women have equal opportunity to be involved in development planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation. This pattern of empowerment has indirectly succeeded in involving men and women equally and to indicate that men and women have the equal capacity to get involved in development. By doing so, budget for women empowerment is not only determined by the amount allocated. Well targeted programs based on gender mainstreaming principle are also a factor in determining how effective the women's empowerment budgets are.

4. ***The growth of NGOs as pressure groups for gender equality agenda.*** In the absence of gender commitment and perspective of the majority of decision making groups at the sub-national levels, groups of NGO grow as effective pressure groups towards the performance of local government bureaus, in particular in relation to gender equality issues. This is found in almost all regions. In Aceh, for instance, in the middle of social and political deteriorating conditions, many women activists provide ideas for change which are more conducive and oriented to women. They are, among others, Flower Aceh, MISPI, LBH APIK and so on. A number of NGOs are not voicing criticisms only with regards to political condition which is harmful to women, but also criticizing government policies, including the enactment of Syariah Islam which in many instances is not benefiting women.

The growth of women group awareness also takes place in West Sumatra. Women groups in West Sumatra have relatively been developing dynamically. They are responsive towards government policies. One of the events that may be regarded as interesting



was the combined effort of women groups in West Sumatra in opposing the provincial council from promulgating the draft provincial regulation on social diseases which, in one of its articles, forbids women to go out at night. Thanks to the pressure from FKWIS (Female Journalists Forum Suntiung Nagari), KPI, LBH APIK, LIMO, Fatayat, NU, HWK and so on, deliberation on the draft regulation finally dropped the discriminative clause.

In addition to Aceh and West Sumatra, women movements are strongly noticeable in Jember, East Java. Women movement here is motorized by Jember Awareness Movement (GPP), a consortium consisting of a number of women movement elements in Jember such as KPI, Sadar Perempuan, Yayasan Ibunda, Fatayat NU and so on. One of the moves made by women group movement was to demand a draft local regulation on violence against women. This proposal was made in view of the high rate of violent acts against women, especially rapes. Though there is no sign of response from the local government yet, their determination should be supported.

The growth of women movements in many regions may at least be understood as a form of public participation in expressing concerns in their respective regions. When public participation emerges, it is a favorable indication towards the emergence of citizens' awareness who realize their rights and strive for the rights of others.

- 5. *Problems faced by women in conflict areas have not been handled appropriately.*** Out of numerous women problems above, it would appear that women in conflict areas are suffering more multiple harms. The problems of women in Poso, for instance, their status have not to date been clear. This unclear situation specifically affects women and children, regardless of whether they live in refugee camps or outside. It was clear that women in Poso today are facing a number of realities where they are forced to lose the opportunities to fulfill their daily needs. The women in Poso would at least have to forget about their wish to get proper education for their children or adequate health services. In the context of regional development, this condition should be the responsibility of local government who is not only preoccupied with conflict resolution but must also takes care of women groups' demands.

In Poso regency, efforts carried out by the government to handle women problems seem to be far from maximal. In the middle of the growingly complex women's problems in the region, local government and local council are reducing their roles and assistance to women who are the victims of the conflict. The roles of the women's empowerment unit has been limited by reducing its position as a *sub-bagian* under the community empowerment section. In addition to the planned budget reduction, dissemination of women's empowerment programs are diminishing.

CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING THE QUALITY OF WOMEN'S LIVES

Developing the quality of women's lives is certainly not an easy task. The process requires a new way of thinking by changing the philosophy on the stereotypes of men and women and through respect towards every individual regardless of their gender. Therefore the human



development paradigms which place human as the focus of attention, must have gender perspectives. Every one of these efforts should cover at least three principles. *Firstly*, equal rights between men and women must be established as the fundamental principle. The aspects of laws, economy and politics which obstruct efforts towards gaining equal rights must be identified and eliminated through a comprehensive policy reform. *Secondly*, women must be recognized as the agent and heirs of change similar to men. This may be carried out in order to develop and empower women in making useful choices and is believed to be able to contribute to development as a whole. *Thirdly*, new development model with gender perspectives, although it is directed towards expansion of choices for men and women, should not regard cultural social differences as something natural. The most important thing is equal opportunity. It must be admitted, however that almost all cultures in the world position women as subordinates to men and there is no single country where women really enjoy equal opportunities as men.

Achieving the three principles above is not easy. Generally there are four minimum aspects to be fulfilled by every region to realize development with gender dimension. ***Firstly***, by forming a formal institution in a strategic position and with political power to implement women's empowerment agenda in regional development program by applying gender mainstreaming principle. In concrete term, this step is equal to putting the women's empowerment unit in a strategic position within the regional government structure. Without a strategic position, ideas on gender perspectives may never reach the targets.

Secondly, by issuing a number of specific policies to encourage women's empowerment or generally known as affirmative action policies. This type of policies include: local government may establish that 30% of office head positions be given to women. This policy would indirectly give women employees the opportunity to fill more strategic positions. Local governments can also establish a policy on gender focal point with gender mainstreaming concept, i.e. a process to integrate gender dimension consideration into the framework of development, especially in every local government institution.

Specific policies may also take the form of establishing legal drafting, for instance a *Perda* on domestic violence. Although it is within the level of local regulations, this type of regulation may be able to help the victims of violent acts at regional level. In addition, establishment of such law product would reflect concrete government commitment concerning problems that many women are faced with.

Other form of public policy which not less important is the existence of gender disaggregated data. This data would help in finding out social, economic and political issues from the perspectives of inequality between women and men. This would be useful in ensuring that development targets could be focused on the "underdeveloped". For instance, if data on education indicates that illiteracies are more prevalent among women, education programs need to be more targeted towards young girls. This selective gender data would therefore be useful for finding out gender inequality and in establishing policy in education sector.



Thirdly, by applying gender budgetting as this policy has significant impact. The budget needs to be specifically observed as the process towards justice and gender equality requires programs and supporting budgets. With special budgets, women's empowerment programs will be better focused. Nevertheless, the high budget for women's empowerment should also be followed by more appropriately focused targeting.

There are at least three important allocations to be considered in preparing gender responsive budgets, i.e.: (1) Budget allocation to be used for specific gender purposes. Such allocation may be used, for instance, for programs related to women's health or education programs for young girls; (2) Budget allocation to be used for gender equality programs. This type of programs may be directed towards affirmative action to achieve gender equality such as women representation, and (3) Budget allocation for gender mainstreaming. In legal matters, for instance, allocation should be used for legal drafting of local regulation related to women accesses; in economic field, such allocation may be used for economic empowerment and business opportunity expansion programs¹².

The fourth aspect which must be available is accommodating women's voices in the decision making process. Such accommodation is important as gender consideration in every policy making process. In addition, intensive empowerment is also required towards women as actors. The actor factor is important as motivator for other women to become active. In this context, perpetrators are not only required from those who are willing to be involved in empowerment process but also those who are capable of handling the discourse on women empowerment so that the process of dissemination and empowerment could be implemented in better and more effective way.

The events taking place in the areas under study have not really provided an exciting picture with regards to consideration of gender dimension in public policies. A number of phenomena continue to indicate that perception and views on the importance of gender dimension in development is not a simple task. It requires the roles, responsibility and awareness of the government and the society in promoting the importance of gender dimension in the framework of development that is just and equal between men and women.

¹² Sri Martuti and Rinusu: Gender Responsive Regional Budget (APBD) (Civic Education and Budget Transparency Advocation (CiBa), Jakarta, 2003)





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