

# Women's Empowerment in National Politics in Indonesia

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**Purpose of the study:** Women, as part of the community component, are inseparable from political life in Indonesia. Although it is mandated by Constitution, in fact, the level of political participation in Indonesia has not reached 30%. The low level of women's participation in the political field has become a challenge for all stakeholders in the political sector. This study tried to find out the factors that led to the low participation of women in politics. **Methodology:** This study uses a normative juridical method with a method of taking legal material in the form of library studies. **Main Findings:** The results showed that there is still a need to strengthen empowerment for women in the political field. The regulations generally have prepared to accommodate women to be able to carry out their functions and roles in the political field. However, at the level of implementation, all these regulations have not been implemented effectively and efficiently so that empowerment of women is still needed. **Applications of this study:** The findings can be a directive for women politicians, activists and facilitators of women's empowerment in making policy guidelines related to women's political participation. **Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study has originality in using political data and theories of women's empowerment in the field of practical politics, and frames them in the perspective of women's involvement and participation rate in electoral agencies and policy-making bodies from national to regional levels.

**Key words:** *women's empowerment, politics, participation, Indonesia.*

## Introduction

Basically, women nowadays have equal rights with men to be able to get involved and process in politics in most countries in the world. In Indonesia, this right was explicitly stated. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 28 H states that every person has the right to receive facilities and special treatment to obtain equal opportunities and benefits in order to achieve equality and justice. This explains that basically there is no gender difference regarding the level of women's empowerment in political matters. Furthermore, more specifically, this matter has been regulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General



Elections in Article 173 numbers (2) mandating that there is a minimum of 30% (thirty percent) level of representation of women at the central government level.

In general, based on what has been carried out by the Republic of Indonesia Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2017, the ratio of the number of comparisons between men and women in productive age is around 51:49, which means that for every 101 male population there is around 100 population of women. In total, the male population in Indonesia is 134 million, while the female population is 131 million. Based on this ratio, it showed that basically women have almost as much opportunity as men to be able to be empowered in the political field. This was then stated in the concept of affirmative action in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which guarantees the equality of men and women, especially in the fields of government and law, which have existed since the enactment of the 1945 Constitution, 17 August 1945. Article 27 paragraph (1), states that all citizens are at the same time in law and government and are obliged to uphold the law and the government with no exception.

It is very important to raise awareness of women to be able to participate more actively in politics. It is necessary to have a strong form of education so that the stigma that women do not deserve to go directly into politics is understood to be a false assumption. The low level of women's participation in the political field has become a challenge for all stakeholders in the political sector, given that women also have the same right to enter politics. This study tried to find out the factors that led to the low participation of women in politics. After finding out what factors have caused women's low participation in politics, this study can then provide related recommendations to increase women's political participation rates. This study uses a normative juridical method with a method of taking legal material in the form of library studies and interviews with informants who have been selected by researchers. The legal material will then be processed by the researcher to be used as the output of the research results in the form of scientific publication article

### **Women's Participation in Political Chains**

The problem of women's representation in politics in Indonesia is an important discourse in efforts to increase women's political participation. Talks about women's political representation cannot be separated from women's political participation in general. Indonesia has ratified two conventions relating to women's political participation. Before ratifying the CEDAW Convention, Indonesia had ratified the Convention on Political Rights of Women on December 12, 1958 (Artina, 2016; Bastuevna, et.al 2018). In fact, women's superiority in terms of leadership does not need to be doubted. Many women are more able to lead than men. For example, women have the advantage to think and reason far ahead. Women also lead with hearts because it cannot be denied that intuition (heart movement) is more sensitive and more reliable than men so that the results are more optimal. Women also have the endurance to feel suffering higher than men. Women also have strong courage. Behind the big names of male leaders, there are actually women who play a role (Manurung, 2009). Politics has always been

synonymous with male masculinity, something that is full of negative things, which women do not deserve to enter. From the point of view of femininity, the political world is something strange because politics is related to power, arbitrariness, mobilization of the masses and competitions that are not inherent in women who prioritize tenderness (Mikail, 2015).

In fact, based on research conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2017 at the ASEAN level itself, the level of representation of women can still be said to be low and has not reached the target of 30%. Women's representation in Indonesia itself is still just touching the figure of 19.8%, still far below the Philippines with the amount of 29.50% and Laos with the amount of 27.50% (Gerintya, 2017). Overall, based on research conducted by the University of Indonesia's Center for Political Studies (PUSKAPOL), the involvement of women in political institutions during 2014-2016 is as follows (Wardani, 2016):

**Table 1:** Women as Member in General Election Agencies

No.	Institution	Women member	Total Members	Percentage
1.	National General Elections Commission (2012-2017)	1	7	14
2.	National Election Supervisory Board (2012-2017)	1	5	20
3.	Provincial General Elections Commission (2018-2023)	34	172	20
4.	Provincial Election Supervisory Board (2018-2023)	19	102	19

Table 1 and Table 2 show that in fact there are at least 30% aspirations for women's representation in political institutions still only to the extent that they cannot be realized. The involvement of women in politics will offer a new approach that can change the political paradigm, from the beginning. This will move from a way to master toward a way to empower or serve the people (Soetjipto, 2010). In general, the reasons for the lack of accommodation of women's political rights are the following (Mikail, 2015):

- a. Political parties are always dominated by men, so political parties that are actually used as political vehicles in political activities are not able to accommodate women's political rights, because there are not many women who are included in political party membership.
- b. Bureaucracies are still dominated by men

c. The stigma that women are only a complement, whose routine is only at home, to this day is still strong in the world of Islam.

**Table 2: Women's Political Participation Rate in Political Institutions**

No.	Institution	Women member	Total members	Percentage
1.	National People's Representative Council (2014-2019)	97 (2014) 103 (2016)	560	17 18
2.	National Regional Representative Council (2014-2019)	34 (2014) 32 (2016)	132	36 24
3.	Provincial People's Representative Council	350	2131	16.4
4.	Regency/Municipal People's Representative Council	2232	16492	13.5

### Women's Political Empowerment in Indonesia

Election quota has become a popular policy to attract women in politics. Quotas are a way to ensure that voters, such as women, are involved at a certain minimum level in representative institutions, whether in terms of the number of delegates, candidates or elected officials. Some 50 countries have adopted provisions regarding nomination quota, which ensures that the proportion of candidates for certain elected officials is women. Hundreds of political parties in 30 countries have voluntarily adopted their own quota for women. However, the nominating quota will only succeed if women are placed in positions with great opportunities to win on the list of party candidates, and if the quota includes sanctions if they are not fulfilled (UNDP, 2011).

In the context of affirmative action against women's representation, various literatures on gender quotas are known for various types and variants that can be classified generally by Mona Lena Krook into three. The first type is a quota party that gives political parties access to nominate women in a certain percentage in the list of candidates. The second type is legislative quota, which is somewhat similar to the quota party, which gives access to a certain percentage of nominations for women. It needs to be mandated for all political parties that are contested through binding regulations. While the third type of reserved seats, which is somewhat different from the two mentioned earlier, is a form of guarantee of obtaining seats in parliament in a certain amount or percentage for women through election regulations. The first type of gender quotas intervene in the process of choosing because they are in the realm of the voting process, by providing 'more' representative choices, while the latter intervenes



more on the results so that the parliament is guaranteed to have a representative of 'more' representative (Ardiansa, 2016).

Analysis of the final results of the percentage of women's representation in the 2009 and 2014 elections can be explored through three stages, namely the nomination stage of 33% and 37%, the vote acquisition stage reached 22% and 23%, and the stage of seat acquisition was 18% and 17%. If we look at these three components, we see a pattern that decreases at each stage. Therefore, the formulation of a strategy to maximize the potential of women's choice is important; simply by minimizing the distance between the three stages above. In addition, when looking at changes in the percentage increase in the nomination of women from 2009 to 2014, it is also important to increase the percentage of female candidates' votes (regardless of the profile factor of female candidates). However, what is interesting is that the increase in nomination rates and the number of votes does not necessarily increase the rate of women's seats.

Based on research conducted by Saptandari, there are five levels of empowerment which can then generally be aimed at increasing the level of women's participation in the political sector, including (Saptandari, 1999):

#### ***Equitable level of welfare***

If at the beginning, this group wants to be empowered but does not have assets to the economy, it does not have the opportunity to improve its capabilities in the economy, not prosper, then certainly the process of empowering women in the political sector will not be carried out to the maximum.

#### ***Equitable access***

Improve their ability to enter the sectors to get information, get the opportunity to work, get good educational opportunities that are equal in position to men. If this access has been obtained, then the next step is how to increase awareness for women.

#### ***Equitable awareness of women's political empowerment***

When that awareness arises, it is expected that women can improve on themselves what the needs of women are. After awareness is obtained, the next step is to increase or equalize active participation.



### ***Equal distribution of women's active participation***

Women are no longer considered as targets or objects of development, but are involved in planning, participating in and participating in evaluating the programs that are inflicted on them.

### ***Equitable Mastery***

Women's participation at this level of decision will certainly have an impact on empowerment and if this participation is used then their access to economic resources will become more effective and ensure equal distribution of access to resources and distribution of benefits. Women's control or mastery of decision making often experiences obstacles not because of problems related to women's inability to make decisions, but cultural hegemony often places women not as decision makers.

The representation of women in the legislature will provide a balance in coloring the formulation of policies and legislation, budgeting, and supervision which will be more in favor of the interests of women's and children's welfare. The leaders of political parties who are participants of the 2019 Election are expected to meet 30% of women's representation in the legislature. This is in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning elections, which instructs political parties to nominate at least 30% of women candidates (the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2018).

### ***Effectiveness of Women's Political Empowerment in Indonesia***

Currently in Indonesia, women are often found in the public sector both in the economic, political and social fields. Women have occupied legislative and executive institutions. The role of women in life should not be underestimated and should not be limited only because of the assumption that the physical condition of women is weaker than that of men. In this world, women are proven to have a very important and strategic role in various fields ranging from politics, literature, art, science, music, social reform, entertainment, adventure, environment, and sports. So, women are not only in the kitchen primitive-minded people think (Rosyidin & Aruni, 2016). The political activeness of women who have begun to emerge should also be supported by the performance of political parties in cadre of candidates. Political parties should have a very significant role in increasing women's representation. But in reality there is no role for political parties in increasing women's representation.

Political education embodies the political role of women in the life of society, nation, and state towards the realization of a democratic and just civil society order. For this reason, women's empowerment in various aspects of socio-cultural and social life is urgent to increase women's political role. Member of Bogor Women's Political Focus, Kartini Eriani, said that political education for women is important for balancing emotional and rational strength for women.



"Women need to be encouraged to be able to exercise the right to choose and be elected in their social and political life. they" (Soeharto, 2011). According to Daulay, it is important for women to actively participate in the political field because decisions concerning the lives of many people include women's problems carried out in the executive and legislative institutions whose careers are achieved through political processes (Daulay, 2007).

In a country, women are one of the important elements of a country included in community members. So it is not surprising if we often hear a saying "behind a great man, there must be a woman who is great behind him", then empowerment of women's politics is a serious solution so that women can function themselves in political life based on the goals to be achieved in the field he is capable of (Sa'idah & Khatimah, 2003). Meanwhile, according to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy women's political participation is interpreted as follows (Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 2001):

*Positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded. When those steps involve preferential selection on the basis of race, gender, or ethnicity affirmative action generates intense controversy*

In detail CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) has regulated efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. In Article 1 states that:

Discrimination against women means all distinctions, exclusion or restrictions made on the basis of sex that have an impact or purpose to reduce or eliminate the recognition, enjoyment or use of human rights and basic freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or other fields by women, regardless of their marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women.

For a woman, it is not easy to carry out political action, many factors become obstacles, such as: environment, political situation, economy, political culture related to the recruitment system, voting system, applicable laws, goodwill from the government and political parties (external factors) which must also be realized in real action. Furthermore this political action will be realized if followed by interest, awareness and political ability (internal factors) of the woman herself; how they interpret politics and how far it considers how important it is that women become leaders (Idris, 2010). According to the Siwi Utami Dance, even though there has been a maximum effort to empower women which shows the government's political will that is appreciative of the development of gender mainstreaming in the national political struggle (Handayani & Sugiharti, 2002). But in practice, the realization of gender equality has not been carried out optimally.



Women's political participation is related to an affirmative action policy focused on the form of involvement in formal decision-making processes in political institutions such as parliament, bureaucracy or political parties. In this connection, the main rationale for the importance of women's political participation in the political realm is particularly related to efforts to form a strong democratic society along with the enforcement of laws and democratic procedures that require a basic prerequisite for the balance of political participation and representation between women and men (Rahmatunnisa, 2016).

The challenge of upholding the constitutional rights of citizens by itself is also a challenge for the enforcement of women's constitutional rights. On the other hand, due to differences in society, the challenge of upholding constitutional rights for women is certainly more severe and requires special treatments. Enforcement of women's constitutional rights as guaranteed in the 1945 Constitution certainly must involve all components of the nation, both state and citizen institutions and officials, both women and men. These constitutional provisions are realized through a set of legal rules and policies that must be obeyed and implemented. Therefore, enforcement of constitutional rights must be carried out both in terms of rules, structure, and from the cultural side (Asshidique, 2007).

According to research conducted by Utami, the Law on political parties related to women's representation in political parties has not fully met the principle of justice. There are no sanctions for political parties that do not fulfill the conditions as stipulated in the formation/establishment of political parties, management, decision making, recruitment, and political education, so that the representation of women in political parties is not a legal obligation. Besides that, there are not many in the AD/ART of each party that applies 30% representation of women in the composition of its members. So that it is expected that in the future there will be no gender injustice. For temporary special measures or affirmative policies in the Law on Political Parties and Election Laws, they are still being maintained (Utami, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Women's representation in the political field is still far below the determined expectations of 30% of female representatives. There is still a need to strengthen empowerment for women in the political field. In general, the regulations that have been prepared have led to accommodating women to be able to carry out their functions and roles in the political field. However, at the level of implementation, all these regulations have not been implemented effectively and efficiently so that empowerment of women is still needed.



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