**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WOMEN’S STRUGGLE**

**FOR THE POSITION AS LEGISLATORS IN BALI PROVINCE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Since the reformation era competition for the position as legislators has been getting open to women. Different Acts have been issued to increase the women’s representation in the legislature. Although the women’s representation in the legislature in Bali Province has not achieved the 30% target, the attempts made by women to be legislators should be appreciated. The reason is that such attempts can accelerate the gender equality in politics. This present study is intended to understand and describe the factors contributing to the women’s struggle for the position as legislators. The study used the critical theory and the descriptive qualitative theory. The data were obtained through observation and in-depth interview.

The result of the study shows that women had competed for the position as legislators; however, the legislature was still dominated by men. This cannot be separated from the women’s collective habitus which has been formed through their interaction with the Balinese society’s objective structure as can be seen from the social, political, cultural,socio-economic and globalization realities.

Keywords: Balinese women, reformation era, collective habitus, globalization

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the measurements which are frequently used to measure the participation of women and men in formulating public policies is their involvement in the legislature. Although there has not been any publication presenting the quantitative data on their participation in the selection and candidacy of legislators in Bali Province, the result of such a political process can be identified from the proportion of the membership of the Regional People’s Representative Assembly at the provincial, regency and municipal levels. The women’s representation in the Regional People’s Representative Assembly as the outcome of the three General Elections conducted during the reformation era (1999, 2004, and 2009) in Bali Province showed that men dominated the legislature. In 1999, in Bali, as whole, among 359 legislators, only 6 were women. Furthermore, in Jembrana, Tabanan, Denpasar, Gianyar and Bangli, no legislators were women; none legislators in the Regional People’s Representative Assembly at the provincial level were women either.

In the General Election which was conducted in 2004 the number of women who became legislators rose; however, inequality in gender could be sharply seen. Among 385 legislators at the provincial, regency, and municipal levels, only 19 were women. The outcome of the General Election conducted in 2009 also showed an increase in regard to the number of women who were in the legislature, but the 30% target had not been achieved. Among 400 chairs in Bali, as a whole, only 28 were occupied by women (Bali dalamAngka, 2003: KPU Provinsi Bali, 2004, 2009). Based on the background described above, the present study was intended to explain the factors contributing to the women’s struggle for the position as legislators.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

Methodologically, this present study was designed to be a descriptive qualitative study using the approach of cultural studies. It is a tradition which is developed in the socio-cultural sciences which are fundamentally dependent on what man observes in his environment (Neliong, 2003: 3). The data were collected through observation, interview and documentation. The observation was made at the office of the Bali Provincial People’s Representative Assembly and Denpasar Municipal People’s Representative Assembly. Those who were interviewed were the female legislators, the political leaders and female figures.

The data were also collected from the related documents such as books, newspapers and journals. In the qualitative study, the most important sampling procedure is how to determine the key informant. The key informant is chosen using the purposive sampling technique. When the information needed is found not to vary any longer, no new information is needed, meaning that the data collection ends. In this present study, the snowball sampling technique was used to choose the sample (BurhanBungin, 2008: 53-54).

In this present study, the main instrument was the researcher. He was completed with a tape recorder and other note taking equipment. Such a model of analysis is proposed by Huberman and Miles (1984: 15-21), and is referred to as the interactive model, and includes three processes; they are (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and conclusion drawing through description and verification.

**DISCUSSION**

The question raised by AniWidyaniSoetjipto (2005:22), namely, what role is played by women in the Indonesian political sphere is the question which frequently appears when the women’s participation in politics is discussed. In general, the Indonesian women’s participation in politics is still low in general and in the decision-making levels in particular. In other words, not many women occupy the executive, legislative, judicative positions. In addition, not many women are involved in the governmental bureaucracy, political parties, and other public life. Quantitatively, the women’s representation in politics is still low. As well, the quality of the women who have participated in the political sphere needs to be questioned. There is an assumption that the role played by women in the legislature is insignificant. The State policy does not side with women; therefore, they are always marginalized and the participation played by women, especially those who understand the problems which the Indonesian women face, is highly needed.

The fact that not many women are interested in participating in the practical political sphere relatively results from the Balinese people’s collective habitus role, namely women are born to establish families, accompany their husbands and raise their children (Harker, 2008). The fact that men dominate women in practical politics is referred to as the symbolic or intangible coercion by Pierre Bourdieu. However, the women are the victims of such a symbolic coercion never see and feel it; they consider it a natural thing (Haryatmoko, 2003: 12).

The perspective of the patriarchal ideological culture is one of the factors which contributes to the women’s participation in practical politics. The patriarchal ideology highly dominantly differentiates men from women, causing them to be differently treated. The essence of the patriarchal ideology is that men are more important than women in every aspect of life (Mosse, 1996, Shiva and Mies, 2005. Atmadja, 2008). The practices showing that men are more important than women can be seen in every aspect of the Balinese community’s life. In a marriage, for example, there is a general requirement that the husband should be older than the wife; the former’s education should be higher than the latter’s. This means that men should be better than women in every aspect of life (Atmadja, 2008).

Apart from that, the ideology of gender and the ideology that women are born to bear children cause them to be marginalized. The ideology of gender emphasizes the role of gender, namely women are responsible for managing the domestic sectors and men are responsible for managing the public sectors. The ideology that women are born to produce offspring through birth can be seen from the fact that the word *wanita*‘women’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘swanita’, meaning ‘female egg’. The two ideologies do not only make women in the lower level of the social structure but also contribute to the distribution of power in household. That men have power over women/wives can be seen from the fact that men are family heads. Such a position is related to the attribute attached to men, namely they are active/creative, rational and cultural beings. On the other hand, women are passive, emotional, and natural beings. The idea that women are weak and emotional are reflected from the fact that they are labeled ‘luh’, ‘belengih’, ‘cengeng’ or emotional. Therefore, they cannot be referred to as leaders. Men are active, creative, and rational; therefore, it is feasible that they are referred to as leaders (Atmadja, 2008).

Based on the information obtained by interviewing the candidates who were elected and not elected as legislators, it was identified that they had spent hundreds of million rupiahs on billboards, T-shirts, stickers, transportation, the costs needed to introduce themselves and their programs to voters ‘mesimakrama/madharmaswaka’, and on the contribution to their political parties for their candidacy. It is this which has obstructed the Balinese women from being involved in the sphere of practical politics. They are aware that being involved in the practical politics needs economic independence. However, the fact shows that the married Balinese women are economically dependent on their husbands, and the single ones are economically dependent on their parents. As a result, the Balinese women cannot freely participate in the political sphere; they should obtain approval from their parents (Atmadja, 2009).

Globalization with its different impacts such as the impacts of sciences and technologies in general and the impacts of the body management technology and domestic technology in particular contributes to the women’s economic condition in Bali. Such technologies strongly affect the women’s life. The use of different types of beauty technological products is intended to improve the women’s value of self-performance and image so that they will look elegant both in the domestic and public arenas. Such a fact causes women to be treated as the object of the men’s libido and power. This also means that the desire of looking beautiful does not only reflect that women do not onlyobjectivize but also reduce themselves, meaning that they are only beings of need (Atmadja, 2008: 14).

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The limited women’s representation in the Regional People’s Representative Assembly at the provincial, regency and municipal levels in Bali results from different factors. The factors were identified in the Balinese women’s collective habitus established through their interaction with the Balinese society’s objective structure which can be seen from the socio-political, cultural, socio-economic and globalization realities. From such realities it can be concluded that the Balinese women’s collective habitus is one of the things which obstructs the Balinese women from struggling for the position as legislators. To this end, it is suggested to the political parties that political education should be gradually provided to society in general and women in particular. Opportunities for being involved in the political party leadership should also be made to be more open to women.

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