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The Politics of Gender and Decentralization in Indonesia

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Introduction

Based on Law 22/1999 on local government and decentralization, greater autonomy in deciding and conducting the development process should be granted to local governments in Indonesia. This new law is intended to increase the capacity of civil society and community participation by strengthening the position of the people's representation in asking for accountability of the executive. However, the stress on strengthening local government and people representation which is stipulated in the new law is inadequate in strengthening and increasing community participation, let alone in being sensitive to women's needs and interests and empowering for women. Whilst focusing heavily on devolving power to local authorities and representatives, this law does not elaborate on the devolution of power to the community which is an important issue if local government is to be accountable to the community. Moreover, the revival of local patriarchal values along with institutional constraints poses great challenges to women.

This paper looks at gender issues of the implementation of the Law 22/1999 on local government and decentralization in Indonesia. It examines the opportunities and threats that decentralization brings about in enhancing women's involvement in implementing and benefiting from decentralization. Theoretical overview of women and local government provides insight to the complex relation between women and local government. The discussion then move to the elaboration on how the New Order^[1] regime extended and politicized gender by intensively reproducing the images of 'good women' merely as mothers and wives in its development policies and strategies so as to use this gender ideology to serve the regime interests which is crucial in understanding the persistent complexity of problems facing women in participating in local governance and benefiting from services provided by local government. Discussion on the impact of reformation on women reveals both the legacy of the New Order gender ideology as well as women's responses in challenging this ideology. Then it explores problems facing the national mechanism for women and gender mainstreaming in Indonesia and highlights the urgency for national mechanism for women to re-formulate its strategies in dealing with women and agencies at the local level due to the changes created by decentralization in Indonesia.

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This paper argues that decentralization does not work in a gender neutral framework. Process and structures of governance have always been gendered. Assuming that decentralization work in a gender neutral framework is dangerous for the realization of gender equity in Indonesia. Thus, in order for decentralization in Indonesia to realize gender equity needs the enforcement of rules that against gender discrimination along with the transformation of the agencies and structures. Without active involvement and cautious monitoring by civil society and women's groups/NGOs to equalize gender relationship at the initial phase of decentralization, women will continuously marginalized through decentralization.

Theoretical Overview of Women and Local Government

Feminist politics frequently points out that decentralization will bring politics closer to home while at the same time may help shift the balance between women and men by providing enough power and opportunity conducive for conducting transformation at the local level (Philips 1996; Halford et al 1997; Mauclay 1998; Pringle & Watson 1998; Beal 1997). The assumption of this argument suggests that considering the relevance of local government's functions with women's roles and needs, women are more likely to engage in politics at the local level, or more likely to concern themselves with the kinds of decision that are made in their local environment. Through their understanding and knowledge on daily neighbourhood affairs, women become effective agents of change in proposing relevant and useful ideas in solving problems at the local level (Beal 1997). On the other hand, the locality and part time characteristic of local government elected offices contribute to the accessibility of these offices to women (Betham 1996). Philips (1996) more specifically describes the affinity of women and local government as

1. Division of function between central and local government in which the functions delegated to the locality have come to overlap quite remarkably with traditional areas of female concern.
2. Additional correlation between women and community action which suggests that local politics is more open to women as activists as well as to women as elected representatives.

Decentralisation as the transfer of power from the central government to local government may provides more space and opportunities for women to represent their needs and interests than central government. 'The local arena is a hybrid one, poised between community and the state, private and public, the household and the town hall, and thus offers a cross-over space for women just as the process of decentralization is throwing up hybrid agencies and social actors, blurring boundaries between private and public sector, elected and non-elected bodies' (Mauclay 1998:105). Local government elected offices are more accessible to women because of their locality and part time characteristic (Betham 1996).

The degree of the achievement of decentralization in empowering women, however, is influenced by the political environment of the country and the interaction among various actors at the local level. The experiences from several countries in Latin America reveal that the increasing participation of civil society and the deepening of democracy are crucial components in altering the power and political terrain to be more accessible to women in participating as well as determining local government agenda. In Brazil, the Worker's Party (PT) through direct and indirect strategies provides new spaces for women as political subjects. It responded to women practical and strategic needs by decentralizing municipal services, a gender alert approach to city planning or commitment to desegregate the city (Mauclay 1998). Whereas political parties are committed to gender equality and initiatives from local communities, and collaborate with NGOs, the church and well-organized feminist groupings, as the case in Brazil, then local government will provide a breaking point for women's empowerment.

On the other hand, the threat of locality towards women life cannot be ignored in discussing the affinity between women and Local Government. The local communities are not always democratic in which they frequently resist changes. Local structures are less amenable to change than are higher levels of political organization (Teune 1995; Philips 1996; Haddenias & Uglia 1996). Local communities frequently resist or subvert changes brought about by national governments and international especially when they consider the changes as threatening to the traditional norms and structures that have served their interest. At this point, the locality of Local Government may obstruct the attempt in reversing pattern of women subordination at the local level. Along with the increasing competition over power and resources, the devolution of power to local authorities may marginalize women through the domination of the stronger groups over local power and resources (Byrne & Laier 1996).

Participation as the major promise of Local Government is another vexedly debated area of the magnitude of Local Government in improving women's condition. Feminist perspective rejects the concept of women's participation in Local Government as deriving from the similarity of Local Government's function with women traditional areas. As Philips (1996:112) argues '...greater accessibility for women participation may also taken as homeliness or subordination of women'. Women's political activities which evolved around consumption issues devalue women's role in local government since it strengthen the dichotomy of public and private. Moreover, as feminists who opposed gender-specific statutes also noted, various protections and representation of women through one set of isolated weak structures which focus only on women's issues made women more expensive, and often protected them out of any jobs desirable to male competitors, thus, creates incentives for covert discrimination (Rhode 1998; Mills & Tancred 1992).

The exploration towards the organizational forms, culture and social relations of Local Government is crucial in examining the performance of Local Government in equalizing gender relations at the local level. The postmodern approach views organization as the locus where the differences between masculinities and femininities generate feminine subordination (Crompton & Feuvre 1992; Ramsay & Parker 1992]. Through the gendered nature of organizations, women experience a double oppression in which as subordinates they are subject to bureaucratic regulation of their behavior, and as women they are excluded as equal organizational participants by patriarchal structures and processes. Criticizing the inadequacy of representation in explaining women's reality and struggle at the local level, Grant & Tancred (1992) argued for the 'dual unequal representation' as more capable in explaining the persistent gender subordination in organization. Dual unequal representation views gender inequality in state's bureaucracy is ensured both through the relatively powerless position of the units that allegedly represent women's issues and through the relatively positions of women who serve in other branches and departments of state. Thus special measures are needed in favor of the groups that suffer discriminatory treatment. Without them, women will persistently marginalized de facto because they will lack of autonomy and voice (Weekes-Vagliani 1995).

The gendered dynamics of Local Government structures and cultures contributed to the difficulties in implementing positive changes for women (Greed 1992; Halford 1992; Staudt 1998). In his study, Little (1994) finds local government's ignorance towards women's needs and also the existence of hostility towards women's initiatives. Based on organization culture approach, Halford (1992) points out two general processes of organizational resistance of local government to change:

1. Empire building which means competition between departments. It was widely cited as a major problem for the women's initiatives This may have multiple causes in the context of limited funding, competition arises for resources; career strategies of managers within particular departments. Building up the size and responsibilities of a department increases the opportunities for career development. Through empire building managers increase their power, control and status. Departments are resistant to intervention by the centrally located women's unit since where an empire is under construction demands from central government that it be built differently are not welcome. The weakening of women's unit through the empire building process is strengthened by the nature of the non-professional status of women's officers.
2. Bureaucratic inertia in which organization noted for their security and stability of work functions. Whilst mechanistic personalities may be one explanation for bureaucratic inertia, the widespread gendered attitudes and values in Local Government institutions reinforce organizational inertia.

Women working within bureaucracy use many strategies in their struggle to survive in this gendered environment. They frequently have to choose between the strategy of quitting from bureaucracy, assimilating the caricature, or performing her peers to build legitimacy and gradual acceptance (Staudt 1998). Hester Eisenstein (1989, 1991) identify 3 categories of feminist intervention in bureaucracy:

1. 'bureaucratic-individual' intervention where women enter the bureaucracy of state or national government at a policy-making level as self-identified feminist.
2. 'bureaucratic-structural' intervention where women create new structures within government or university administrations specifically design to benefit women (such as women's policy units, women's studies programmes, or ministries for women affairs).
3. other form of feminist political intervention are 'legal reform' through legislative change, 'political participation in a leadership role', but in non-feminist political parties or trade unions as a self-proclaimed feminist, and 'alternative structures' where feminists create independent organization outside of existing political and administrative structures .

Despite the above pictures of women's improvement through Local Government's institutions, other cases in developed and developing countries provide the argument for the existence of feminist case in Local Government (Sun-Uk 1995; Crawley 1996; Rai 1999; Blair 2000). Although in developing countries female representation in local government is still marginal (15 %), yet it is higher than in national politics (2 – 12 %) (Luckham et al 2000). Blair (2000) in his study on six developing countries finds that women's participation in Local Government has contributed in enhancing women's representation at the local level. However, this study also contends that this participation does not automatically empowered women nor equalized distribution of benefits. He further on argues that his women's representation in Local Government is crucial for the betterment of women in the ways that it demonstrates that women can also occupy important political positions and can aspire to public service; increasing representation among women as a marginal group in its attendant leadership experience.

Achieving gender inequality in representatives has always been a complex and painful process. The high cost involved in attending election and cultural issues obstruct women performance in competing in the election. In Sri Lanka, for example, during the period of 1991-1997, the already marginal representation of women fell down because of the intertwined factors such as: women's reluctance to compete with men of different political parties, expensive nature of the present system of proportional representation, cultural background where women are reluctant to be involved in conflicting political situations (UNESCAP 2000).

Based on their study on several developing countries Byrne and Laier (1996) point a number of factors which explain the marginalisation of women in local government:

1. Isolation and lack of support for women in entering local government. Women are not treated on an equal footing with men, thus, women experience discrimination when entering local government.
2. By entering local government women experience conflict between their domestic obligation and public duties.

3. This conflict contributes to the transformation of women into 'sociological males' through divorce, childlessness and other factors which separate them from experiencing gender divisions of labor, and thus women's practical needs, in the same way as the majority of women they represent.
4. These women are frequently reluctant to raise gender issue because they have to adapt themselves to dominant behavior and priorities.
5. Women who are involved in local government usually come from the middle-class. The rigid political hierarchies require certain skills which poorer women are lack of, thus limit these women's access to local government. Women in local government protect their interest which resembles the interest of middle-class rather than the interest of poorer women.
6. Lack of experience, equal recognition and support from their male colleagues may constraints the effectiveness of women involved in local government in promoting gender equity.

Therefore the presence of various affirmative actions for women is crucial in increasing women's participation at the local level. Affirmative action such as the implementation of quota system which aims at increasing women's representation ratio to a certain level has positively encouraged and increased women's political participation in Korea (Sun-Uk 1995). The implementation of the National Perspective Plan for Women in India since 1988 which recommend a 30 per cent quota for women not only in the panchayats but also in panchayat leadership, contributes to the greater women's political participation while at the same time most provides space for women to struggle for their needs (Rai 1999).

Despite critics towards the achievement of Local Government women's committee, their existence in the midst of the frequent gendered bureaucracy at the local level as mentioned above, may benefit women. The existence of women in public office have both symbolic and practical values ranging from legitimizing women's voices to becoming role models in inspiring women to engage in local government. Considering the struggle womens' committee face , Page (1996) more specifically points out that by providing support for women's demand within the political system, women's committee has contributed in making women more visible and audible and sometimes even enhances women's capability in changing decisions. Through this committee, women learnt their way around the system and so are empowered to use the benefit themselves and their groups. By cooperating with women working within local government, women's advocacy organizations may find access to policy making arenas, thus help to advance women's political agenda. The ways this cooperation work to pursue women's interest can be done by directly recruiting organizations leaders into policy network or by forging alliances with relatively powerful and well-organized society wide actors. Women working within local government may also indirectly help to advance women's interest by providing opportunities and resources to groups and individuals outside of the state to allow them to participate in policy formulation and implementation, and by providing state fund to organizations involved with policies that advances women's status or by inviting women's experts, activists, and / or representative from feminist

associations into state arenas of policy making' (Stetson & Mazur 1995:276). Local Government Women's Committee in developed European countries, which is defined by their policy and action rather than their form, benefit women by promoting equality, by trying to change policy and by endeavouring to shift public resources (Edwards 1996).

Emphasizing on the role of political parties as key interlocutors between civil society and the state Macaulay (1998) argues for the potentials of local government in empowering women. 'The local arena is a hybrid one, poised between community and state, private and public, the household and the town hall, and thus offers a cross-over space for women just as the process of decentralization is throwing up hybrid agencies and social actors, blurring boundaries between private and public sector, elected and non-elected bodies' (Macaulay 1998:92). Thus, local arena provides a breaking point for women empowerment.

Decentralization may be conducive for participation as a general condition for participation, yet it is not enough. Decentralization trend in Philippine, for example, has increased popular participation (the strengthening of civil society) but has been less encouraging to the achievement of women in which the local elective positions consists of only 10%. Women are more actively involved in advocacy groups focusing on equalizing women as stated by law (Rosario 1997:83-86). Decentralization must be accompanied by conditions that are characteristics of participatory approaches, such as the building up of confidence among the various actors through dialogue and responsiveness, and readiness to share power and to combine local resources with administrative resources and procedures (Schneider & Libercier 1995:12).

Therefore, 3 elements should exist for political politics to be empowering to women individually and collectively:

1. The mediating role played by the political parties, and encompasses their history, organizational culture, ideological orientation, relationships with grassroots membership and activists, social composition of membership and elite, relationship to the central government and attitude to local/municipal government.
2. The availability of constitutional and legal instruments such as municipal constitution, or master plan, which can define the powers and status of consultative groups in civil society. Institutional arrangements may be limiting, for example electoral regimes, or empowering, for example a federal system.
3. The socio-political context, including formal relations between the tiers of government, and between members of the political class at each level. This extends to a consideration of degrees of centralism, or regionalism, and national political cultures, such as corporatism (Macaulay 1998:105).

Thus, there is a feminist case for Local Government. Post-structural approach towards state and power will enable us in viewing Local Government as a locus of struggle for women at the local level in redefining political agendas of development. At this point, a consciously political approach which views local government as a site of political actions with the state at the local level rather than technocratic, bureaucratic, managerial or

welfarist approach which strategically placed conduits of welfare policy aimed at family and community is more beneficial in approaching local government (Mauclay 1998:105). As Philips (1996:128) succinctly argues 'for any politics that seeks to subverts existing agendas will get its first breaks at the local level'. The above discussion also suggests that the increase of women's participation in terms of their contribution to community development does not automatically lead to the empowerment of women. Gendered structures, institutions and processes at the state, government, community and household level are important factors that influence women's capability in determining local agenda through their involvement in development planning.

Women in Indonesia's Development Trajectory

Pembangunan or development became a powerful rethoric during the New Order regime in Indonesia. Growth, equity and stability as stated in the *Trilogi pembangunan* was the development ideology during the New Order. UNDP (2001) notes Indonesia's achievement in human development by pointing out the reduction of infant mortality from 159 to 45 per thousand live births, and the drop in adult illiteracy rate from 61% to 12% during the 1960 to 1999. Indonesian economic growth has also contributed to the progress in gender related issues and gender disparity in Indonesia.

However, based on a recent study by BAPPENAS/UNICEF, the UNDP (2001) also pointed out the existence of paternalistic culture, which considers men as the primary decision makers, both in the society and within government institutions, thus contributing to the continuing lack of political will to implement gender sensitive issues.

The rights of women in Indonesia have been expressively stipulated in the 1945 constitution (article 27) which states that 'all citizens have equal status before the law'. Indonesia has also ratified some international documents on women such as the ILO Remuneration Convention No. 100 (1951/Law No.80/57) pledging equal pay for equal work, UN Convention on Political Rights of Women (Law No.68/1968), CEDAW (Law No.7/1984), UN Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (in 1990).

Indonesian development policy has also incorporated and recognized the role of women in development. Since the 1970s the GBHN (Broad Outline of State's Policy) as the basic reference point in conducting planning and development in Indonesia has recognized the importance of women's role in development as wives and mothers by focusing on women's reproductive and income earning role in the family. The regime also officially described women's role through the Panca Dharma (by Ministry of Interior 1978) as (1) supporting her husband's career and duties;(2) procreating for the nation; (3)caring for and rearing the children; (4) being a good housekeeper; (5) being a guardian of the community (Sunindyo 1996).

Kodrat and martabat (natural talents and proclivities), *peran ganda* (women's dual role), *mitra sejajar* (harmonious gender partnership) were buzzwords in the New Order's development policies in its claim that women and men had had equal opportunities in development in Indonesia. Still related to primacy of family's welfare context, the GBHN 1988 extended women's role in all aspects of development (equal to men) in relation to women's role in the family. *Kodrat* and *martabat* was first formulated. The state idealized women's multiple role in national development as wives and mothers as the consequent of their *kodrat* in nurturing and servicing the family. This role was propagandized as the most significant contribution of women to development considering women's role as agent in preserving the societal norms and values which is crucial to the success of national development program and nation building.

Despite the changing Indonesian policy development statements, women's participation in development was persistently based on their traditional and biological role as wives and mothers. Women's dedication as wives and mothers was glorified as an ideal picture of a 'good woman'. Study by JICA (1999) on the situation and position of women in Indonesia contends that housewives are still the only important role of women, with men regarded as the household heads. Despite their responsibility in the management of household finances, women's contribution in creating the welfare and livelihood of the family is yet to be given rightful recognition.

All these development guidelines increase women's responsibilities while neglecting the facilities women's need to be able to participate as well as to benefit from development process equally with men. Women's increasing role to include family, community and national development (triple roles) without adequate supportive facilities means that women's choice becomes more limited while their burden increases. In these development guidelines, women's role in development was always situated under the term of community and in their relation with the interest of the community. Through these policies, government has both reduced its obligation and cost in servicing individual women while at the same time created women's subordination since women has to depend on the community (Blackburn 1999).

State Corporatism on Women: Politicizing Gender in the New Order Era

Based on this ideology of *Ibuism* women's primary role as mothers is to look after her family, a group, a class, a company or the state, without demanding power or prestige in return (Nieuwenhuis 1987). This ideology implies a clear division of roles based on sex in which "Bapak has the authority and prestige, whereas the Ibu acts" (Nieuwenhuis 1987:44). Suryakusuma (1996:101) calls the New Order's gender ideology 'State Ibuism' in which women were defined as 'appendages and companions to their husbands, as procreators of the nation, as mothers and educators of children, as housekeepers, and as members of Indonesian society'.

The New Order regime also used PKK to mobilize rural women as instrument in implementing development programs. The success of the population policy (Family Planning Program) in Indonesia which has received much international praise was inexorable from the achievement of PKK. It was PKK that held responsible to implement this policy. The implementation of PKK programs was frequently made possible at the expense of the women (Wolf 1992; Primariantari 1998; Putri 1998; Kompas 1999; Sullivan 1994). Rural women have to contribute their time, material and energy in implementing PKK programs which frequently reflect more of the civil servants' and their wives' needs and interests rather than those of local women's needs. For example, when a government official visits a location to inspect development programs in an area, the members of the PKK will be asked to provide facilities or to create a situation that will please the official and will give a positive evaluation of the achievement of development programs in that area.

Up to now the middle class character of PKK has obstructed its capability to reach out for villages women as their targets. The officials of PKK who are mostly middle class women find difficulty in communicating their programmes to women at the grassroots.

Q: What is the problem facing PKK in empowering women?

A: PKK is aimed at welfare...Family Welfare Empowerment..new paradigm after the national meeting. It is aimed to empower women to enhance potentials in themselves, family and environment. We find problem in human resources since we have to start from the very basic, from families in villages, not in cities where they already have good intellectuality. We have to use simple language. Also the people have yet to receive us. Maybe it is our own fault...because they do not feel the benefit of our activities, especially now everybody have been busy to fulfill their basic needs although they should know that we try to improve their economy. They did not understand yet.

Q: What do you think the causes of this misunderstanding?

R: Communication, may be it's the language. Previously we have been top down, so they did not understand. If the programs have been conducted..completed...we do not concern anymore. We now try to be more bottom up (Interview with North Sumatra PKK official)

Through PKK government attempted to increase women's productivity as housewives as reflected in its programs which focused more on housewifery such as: cake decorating, sewing, flower arranging, and make up rather than on women as producers. PKK was also considered as creating consumerism among women by selling cosmetics, and cooking utensils to women (Primariantari 1998). Because of these activities, there is a wide spread cynical accusation to PKK as the abbreviation of *Perempuan Kurang Kerjaan* (women who have no work) (Personal communication). Hence, the structure and programs of PKK reflect both the hegemonic and patriarchal system, obstructing local women's initiatives while mobilizing rural woman for development projects which frequently do not in accordance with women's needs. This top down approach, as Wolf (1992:71) has succinctly argued, 'discourages any active political involvement as well as activities that might evolve in participation of poor women or the creation of self-help group'. A study (Kompas 1999) points out that women who are involved actively in PKK have lower consciousness of the state's domination and exploitation of women than those outside the PKK.

In 1990s women organizations increasingly challenge the construction of femininity by the New order regime. For example, in 1995 a group of women demonstrate in the Kartini grave demanding the abolition of PKK and Dharma Wanita. They were arrested on charges of acting against the national ideology of Pancasila (Dzuhayatin 2001:262). Obligation put by Dharma Wanita are resented by working women who are its members as increases their burden, thus they start rejecting their bosses's wives instructions (Sen 1998:43). In the field, I also found not only resentment to PKK and Dharma Wanita among women, but also among male local government officials as illustrated below:

Q: What do you think about the PKK?

A: Unhealthy system...because she is the wife of head of local government, she should become the head of PKK, while she does not know how to deliver speech...I disagree with the structure. Because she is a wife of head of local government, my wife has to become the head of both PKK and Dharma Wanita. When will we meet? I have been busy, and so does she. Sometimes I have to travel, she was yet to come from the field. I know for sure, that she is not the best among the other women in the region. Why should she is the one who become the leader? This is all because of the system. I have asked her, why should you...she answered that it is the regulation. There was also a case where a wife of head of village had to organize a celebration of KB (family planning program), while she already has been very busy with her 7 daughters and 9 boys.

Q: Do you mind if your wife does not have important position in PKK and Dharma Wanita?

A: I will be very happy. I know for sure. My wife told me herself that she was forced to that position. For example, my wife is the head of Cancer Society in Sumut. Why don't they look for a doctor or from financial aspect a businesswoman?. This is because they perceived my wife as a wife of head of local government, so they choose my wife. In fact this provide an opportunity for KKN (corruption, cronyism, nepotism). I know for sure that my wife is used in the case when they need to raise fund so that they will gain fund. It's a KKN isn't it? My wife go to the kadis (head of local government agencies), and because she is my wife the kadis will give her some money while in fact the kadis have also to look for the money. It's wrong again. Forcing the wives of government's officials to occupy certain structural position is not a way to empower women.

Q: Do you think the other officials have similar opinion? Or maybe it is only your personal opinion?

A: Oh no...I frequently speak personally to other officials and they support me. In formal meetings we'll say that PKK and Dharma Wanita are good for us, but deep in our hearts it is not. In a meeting of Bupati (heads of districts), kepala desa (heads of villages) and their wives...I have asked the governor how the PKK and Dharma Wanita may become more professional rather than rely merely on the wives of government officials...Can you imagine if we never have the time to take care of our children? They will become becak drivers because nobody take good care of them. The governor said that he agrees with me, but it is the system (Interview with a male local government official).

During my interview with other local government officials I found the similar shared rejection to the structure of PKK. Through the PKK and Dharma Wanita the state extended its intervention into the family life, controlling both men and women. In

serving the interest of the regime, women's role as mothers has to be subsumed under their roles

as wives, as their husbands' appendages. The patriarchal structure of PKK was not only subordinated and exploited women but also open way to corruption and nepotism in Indonesia.

Whilst the target of PKK is village women, Dharma Wanita was aimed at civil servants' wives. The structure of this organisation mirrors the women's husbands' ranks in government bureaucracy so that the wives of the bosses of the civil servant units are the heads of Dharma Wanita. Sen (1998:42) contends that 'discourses and practices of New Order policy constructed women as biologically specified reproductive workers. Given the structures of DharmaWanita and PKK, women's only legitimate access to state power was as wives of powerful male functionaries of the state'. Thus, the new order perceived men as first class citizen and women as the second who have to depend on men (Anderson 1996:50-51). Women were considered as the appendages of men in fulfilling their citizenship, thus, they were not full citizens of Indonesia. Due to the lack of political will and ability to allocate resources to deal with the consequences of treating women as equal individuals, the regime was also always related women's citizenship to their membership in the community. Blackburn (1999:191) argues that 'By treating women in collective rather than on individual basis, the state transferred the protection of women (such as widows, divorced and elderly women) was left to the community, which contributed to the subordination of women'. Hence, contradict with the officially stated 'separate but equal' character of gender ideology in Indonesia, the New Order gender ideology has been evidently 'separate and unequal' (Sullivan 1994:174-175).

PKK and Dharma Wanita are said not to be politically affiliated, yet, they have been frequently used to gain political support for the regime. The New Order has changed autonomous women's organisations and activities into development programmes which is a part of New Order politics in mobilising women for the interests of the regime (Putri 1998; Wieringa 1999). Through the PKK and Dharma Wanita the state extended its intervention into the family life, controlling both men and women. In serving the interest of the regime, women's role as mothers has to be subsumed under their roles as wives, as their husbands' appendages. The patriarchal structure of PKK was not only subordinated and exploited women but also open way to corruption and nepotism in Indonesia. As the result, Indonesian women are alienated from the political process and lack political participation. A study by BAPPENAS (Kompas 1999) reveals the limited involvement of Indonesian women in policy making in legislative, executive and judicative institutions. Although 58% of 1999 voters in Indonesia are women, only 9.2% of the members of the People's Consultative Assembly are women. This study also found that decision makers have not been gender sensitive, because they have failed to take into consideration differences between women and men's needs and experiences in formulating development programs. By emphasising the concept of *kodrat dan martabat*, the New Order has continuously produced and institutionalized an ideal image of Indonesian woman, whose role is centered around the family. This gender ideology combined with a repressive capitalist regime during the New Order controlled and suppressed women (Suryakusuma 1996; Pakpahan 1996; Sunindyo 1998; Wieringa 1999).

Reformation Era

Indonesian economic growth which has been praised by the World Bank as one of the Asian economic miracle began to shatter in 1997. Combination of dependency on foreign loan, macro economic mismanagement, corruption and cronyism and inappropriate IMF policy lead to the severe economic crisis in Indonesia (Harvie 2000; Hill 2000). Since August 1997, Indonesia has experienced severe economic collapse which was followed by the downward spiraling of the *rupiah* which lost 70% of its value relative to US dollar. Economic growth rate in 1997 was 4.9%, and in 1998 it was minus 13.2%. For the year of 1998, annual inflation was 77.63%, and at the end of 1999 it has decreased drastically to 2.01%, while GNP per capita was US\$436 in 1998. Unemployment rate is more than double from around 5% in 1996, to at least 11% in 1998. Consequently, the poverty line fell from 14% of the population (1997) to 40% (1998) (JICA 1999; UNDP2001). This economic crisis immediately escalated into political crisis and led to the overthrow of the 32 years of Soeharto authoritarianism rule by the popular power on May 21, 1998.

This crisis has great impact on the deterioration of the quality of women's life. The gender gap in the nine-year basic education program, which had been almost eliminated in 1997, has widened again since 1998 (JICA 1999). UNDP (2001) reports that between 1997 and 1998, the number of women having wages less than the poverty line doubled from 11% to 22%, and across Indonesia in 1998, women's real wages were a third lower than men's. Thus, women have to work longer hours and doing extra work in order to fulfill household basic needs (UNDP 2001). The 1997 crisis in Indonesia has contributed to the decline of women's nutritional and reproductive health as shown by the increase of maternal malnutrition from 15% to 17.5%. The report continues to show that 18.4% of the women suffered from chronic under-nutrition.

Indonesian women were the first in responding to the impact of the crisis. Initiated by the concern of the soaring prices, and the wide spread social unrest and violence in society, a group of middle class women consist of university lecturers, activists, intellectuals and housewives who called themselves the Suara Ibu Peduli (SIP/Voice of Concerned Mothers) on February 23, 1998, organised a demonstration at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout (*Bundaran HI*) in central Jakarta, demanding for economic and political reforms. Despite of their peaceful demonstration through praying, singing and reading poets, the government perceived them as both violating public safety and contradicting the procedures, and therefore these women were taken away by the police and brought to court.

SIP also actively involved in the movement towards reformation by distributing and providing meals and medical assistance that they collected from the community to students who demonstrated. Although receiving sympathy from the public, the significance of SIP (Suara Ibu Peduli/ Voice of Concerned Mothers) has been reduced by the media and community to merely women concerned to

domestic issues such as prices of milk, rice, and other domestic necessities and regarded as a moral movement rather than a politically motivated movement (Arivia 1998; Suryakusuma 1999).

However, this women's movement should be considered as a significant contributor in Indonesian struggle towards reformation. By conducting demonstration in strategic public place such as *Bundaran HI* despite of the government's week-long ban on demonstration and other political activities, which was then followed by demonstrations by other groups of professionals, civil servants, and then students (Suryakusuma 1999), the SIP has broken the long silence and fear of the society towards the authoritarian regime. Moreover, through their activities the SIP also challenged and transformed the established New Order gender ideology which posited women as merely passive agents in Indonesian political system as well as recipients and implementer of government's policies. Departing from 'domestic' issues such as prices of milk, children welfare, security and nutrition, SIP challenges government public policy on education, economy, social and health. In the midst of severe impact of the economic and political crisis on the whole of the Indonesian society, the issues of prices of milk, children welfare, nutrition and security, are also politically and strategically central issues in Indonesia. Thus, as Stephen (cited in Seligmann 2001:12) succinctly argues:

'Public and private spheres are wholly interconnected and that power is exercised by women whose practical and strategic gender interests necessarily merge... to assume that women would enter the "public" political arena, driven by concerns that involved "private" mothering misses the fact that mothering has always been both public and private. While hegemonic interpretations of women's proper behavior may confine mothering to the domestic realm, there is no guarantee that women themselves see mothering as a solely private activity'.

Women in reformation

Since its independence Indonesia has experienced the transition of regimes twice that was in 1965 (from the Old Order to the New Order) and 1998 (from the New Order to reformation). There is a striking resemblance of pattern between the 1965 and 1998 regime transition in the way that these transitions have victimized women. While in 1965 women in Gerwani (under the communist Party) were accused as sexually harassing and killing the General in Indonesia prior to the anti-communist massacre, therefore put to prison (Wieringa 1999), in the May 1998, Chinese women in Jakarta have been targeted and raped along with the anti Chinese propaganda. These rapes also occurred in Medan, Palembang and Surabaya (Wandita 1998). The subordinate position of women disseminated during the New Order regime contributed to the violence on women. Chinese women were attacked as the representation of hatred towards Chinese in Indonesia. Women were left unprotected and powerless. Although still disputed, some people perceived that the military has taken part in the violence at least to a degree that they did nothing to avoid or control the riots (Sulistiyo 2001:300).

The adoption of CEDAW in Law No.7/1984 on Elimination of any form of violence against women seems to provide no guarantee for the protection to women in Indonesia. The issue of women as victims of the May's riot has never become priority concern of the government and the society, despite critics from women activists. Reports on these severe occurrences of rapes were denied by the government and media through the insensitivity of the media which required names of the victims if the reports about the rapes need to be considered as factual (Wandita 1998). However, the grotesque acts of violence and rape towards Chinese women in Jakarta (13-15 May 1998) has united women and has been protested by women regardless of their differences (cross ethnic and religion). It was only after increasing pressure from both women organisations in Indonesia and international influence that the Habibie regime condemned the rapes and by a Presidential Decree established A National Commission for the Elimination of Violence against Women which consists of women activists, NGOs, intellectuals and public figures in October 1998 (Wandita 1998; Suryakusuma 1999). Along with this, a National Plan of Action permeated by a Zero Tolerance Policy is being developed through a close collaboration among relevant government departments, concerned NGOs and social groups. Regarding to Women's Human Right, the Five Year National Human Rights Plan (1998-2003) and the National Human Right Act adopted in 1999 both included sections on women's rights. Other national action program such as *Kata Bunga* (abbreviated from *buka mata-buka telinga* or open eyes, open ears) has been included as one of the strategies in protecting women against violence (JICA 1999).

Despite women's contribution and participation in reformation, male domination in Indonesian political system remains intact. Although in this first free election in Indonesia since 1955 the Megawati's PDI-P gain the majority vote of 35%, she was only became the Vice-President with Abdurahman Wahid as the President. Based on religious argument, the sexuality of Megawati has been used as political issue to withheld and obstruct the election of Megawati as president of Indonesia. Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Muslim Scholars) issued a religious edict (*fatwa*) in which it declared that a woman cannot become a President and called on Muslims not to vote for parties headed by non-Muslims or by people unlikely to promote a Muslim agenda ((JICA 1999; Heffner 2000:212). Although this is in contradiction with Indonesian constitution 1945, especially chapter 27, which guarantees the equal right for all citizens and the ratification of UN convention on women's political rights (1956) and CEDAW (1984), this issue has been successfully used in discriminating woman to become the President in Indonesia, thus denying women as equal citizen of Indonesia.

Women are majority in Indonesia. In the 1999 election, 58% of voters were women. However, women's representation in all public offices remains marginal as can be seen in the table below:

Table 1: Percentage of representation in public life based on gender

Institution/Rank	Women (%)	Men (%)
First Echelons	4.5	95.5
Second Echelons	3.9	96.1
Third Echelons	8	92
Journalists	10.9	89.1
Heads of Villages	2.3	97.7
Heads of Districts	1.5	98.5
Governors	0	100
House of Reps	9	91
PCA	9.2	90.8
Supreme Court	14.8	85.2
Supreme Advisory Board	4.4	95.6

Source: BPS 2001, CETRO 2001

In DPR, women's representation continuously declining from 10.8% (1997-1999 session) to 9% (1999-2004), the lowest since the 1987 election (Sekretariat DPR 2001). This decline is obvious in the table below.

Table 1: Composition in House of Representatives since 1950 to 2004

Period	Women	Men
	9	236
1950 – 1955	(3.8%)	(96.2%)
	17	272
1955 – 1956	(6.3%)	(93.7%)
	25	488
1956 – 1959	(5.1%)	(94.9%)
1959 – 1971	-	-
	36	460
1971 – 1977	(7.8%)	(92.2%)
	29	460
1977 – 1982	(6.3%)	(93.7%)
	39	460
1982 – 1987	(8.5%)	(91.5%)
	65	500
1987 - 1992	(13%)	(87%)
	62	500
1992 - 1997	(12.5%)	(87.5%)
	54	500
1997 - 1999	(10.8%)	(89.2%)
	46	500
1999 - 2004	(9%)	(91%)

Source : CETRO 2002

The DPR remains segregated as women representatives mostly involved in VII Commission (on welfare and women empowerment) and VI Commission (religion, education and culture). From the 48 political parties eligible to participate in the 1998 election, only 4 political parties that succeeded to be eligible to compete in the election have women as their leaders: PDI-P (Megawati), Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Gotong Royong, PNI, PKNI.

In enhancing women involvement in formal politics the Indonesian Women Political Caucus and Parliament Women Caucus have demanded a 20-30% quota for women in parliament. While informally political parties such as PPP, Golkar, PDIP, PAN, PKB view that percentage as rational for representing women (Shanti 2001:29), yet when it comes to be formalized in the political party law (UU Partai Politik), government and political parties reject this idea of 30% quota for women in political party at all level, from national to village level, based on argument that it will create difficulty for political parties due to the lack of supply of women. This rejection while reveals the strong persistence of patriarchal system in the state and political parties, will also contribute to the marginality of women's representation in public decision making.

The neglect of women in the reformation also evident in the existence of various law that discriminate against women, such as employment, marriage, health, education and tax laws (Meneg PP 2000) which have been kept untouched. Up to now only 2 of all the proposed laws (*Rancangan Undang-Undang/ RUUs*) which have clause on women have been issued as Laws (*Undang-Undang/ UU*): Law No.25/2000 on gender budgeting and gender perspective development and Law No.2/2000 on special protection for women as victims of violence (CETRO 2002).

One of the prominent impacts of reformation on women was the issuance of the GBHN 1999-2004 which provides an encouraging development policy aimed to empower women by emphasizing the significance of enhancing the quality and independence of women organisations. It also recognises the urgent need to implement national policy and establishing relevant institutions which will struggle for gender equity. These policies cannot respond to the diversity of women's needs and interests as socially distinct groups in society. This is evident in the decline of Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) respectively from 58.9 (1996) to 55.9 (1999) and from 58.8 (1996) to 49.5 (1999), the lowest rank in ASEAN countries (UNDP 2001).

Through the implementation of the Love the Mother Movement (*Gerakan Sayang Ibu/GSI*) the government attempted to decrease the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) to 225 by the year 2000. This approach has been the first national movement in involving men, the society, NGOs and government sectoral institutions to be responsible to reduce maternal mortality rate. However, Indonesia MMR remains unchanged at 390 per 100,000 live births since 1994 (UNDP 1999) which was exceptionally high among the ASEAN countries.

Gender Mainstreaming in Indonesia

In line with the GBHN 1999 and Law No. 25/2000 on National Development Program (Propenas 2000-2004), gender mainstreaming is one of the strategies in realizing gender equity in Indonesia. Developing people's welfare and cultural resilience, empowering women through policy strategy in the form of gender mainstreaming in all aspects of development which involve government's institutions and community organizations' is one of development vision of the Propenas.

Concept of Gender Mainstreaming has been included in Propenas by establishing institution for gender mainstreaming. As part of gender mainstreaming in Indonesia, Women's Empowerment Bureaus have been formed in all provinces, 89 Women Studies Centre (PSW), National Commission on Women (KOMNAS Perempuan) and National Commission on Children (Komnas Anak). With MNPP as the coordinator, government institutions at all level are instructed to conduct gender mainstreaming in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programs (Inpres No.9/2000). In its strategic planning the MNPP objectives of women's empowerment programmes includes the improvement of government's policy, program and activities to be gender responsive. In 2004 it is hoped to achieve the facilitation of the integration of 50% of gender responsive policies, programs and regulating laws. In 2004 the operation of gender mainstreaming focal units in all provinces and minimally 50% in districts and cities (MNPP 2000).

However, the achievement of gender mainstreaming in Indonesia and the capability of the MNPP is yet to face several problems. The intertwined complexity of institutional and financial constraints will continue as the impediments to the achievement of the MNPP. The seriousness of the central and local government to conduct gender mainstreaming is to be questioned considering the limited budget provided for gender mainstreaming programs. In APBN 2001, there was special budget for gender mainstreaming institutionalization, but only available in 4 departments: department of health, department of employment, department of education, department of religion and MNPP. This totally consists of only 1.15% of the total 2001 national budget (APBN 2001). Up to 2000 there was no budget specially aimed at enhancing gender inequity in all regional budget (APBD), except for Nusa Tenggara Timur.

Beside the above difficulties MNPP face as the national government institution, this problem becomes more intense regarding the implementation of the Law 22/1999 on regional autonomy in Indonesia. MNPP (2000) in its strategic planning listed the transition to regional autonomy as one of the threats to gender mainstreaming in Indonesia, along with interpretation to religion and cultural values that are still gender bias, the existence of many of the regulating laws (Perpu) which are gender bias and neglected children and unawareness among government officials and weak mechanisms in controlling and monitoring the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

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At the local level much harsh critic points stated by both women activists and local government officials were addressed to the MNPP performance. Although with different interpretation, both local government officials and women activists/NGOs considered MNPP has been ineffective in fulfilling its mandate. In an FGD with women activists, NGOs and CBOs on the management capacity of MNPP, the participants perceived the MNPP as being out of their reach. The relation of MNPP with women at the local level, at this point NGOs and PSW/Women Studies Centre, mainly was limited to providing research fund and attending seminars (NGOs and PSWs). Information and publication from the MNPP did not reach the women at the local level. The participants agreed that the role and benefit of the MNPP is yet to be accrued by local women (*belum terasa*). Considering gender unawareness of local government, participants expect MNPP to increase its direct involvement and influence on local government. In pointing out the powerlessness of MNPP in dealing with local government as the source of ineffectiveness of MNPP in empowering women at the local level, one of the participants argues:

'MNPP has no influence over the local government. Like a cat with no claws..useless. MNPP is a state minister, not technical..the local government ignores MNPP...So MNPP should have its teeth (power) over local government in order to be able to empower women...Should MNPP intend to reach women at the grassroots then it needs to coordinate with women's empowerment bureau. MNPP should avoid intermediaries but directly engaged through direct coordination' (FGD Medan).

On the other hand the problem of the MNPP was considered to lie more on its weakness in strategies and capabilities than in its lack of authority. As a national government institution, the MNPP was considered as has been given enough authority. MNPP direct activities at the local level was perceived as a sign of mistrust to local government and community.

'There is no reason for MNPP to argue that it does not have authority since it has no department. MNPP is also the President's assistant. If MNPP can delegate responsibilities and duties to regional planning board (BAPPEDA), why can't they do the same to national planning board (BAPPENAS)? What for the echelon (rank) II MNPP come directly to the regions to conduct training and seminars? How much fund has been used to fund them? Do not the local government and PSW (Women Studies Centre) have the capacity? Have they ever evaluated the performance of government agencies in gender mainstreaming? Well, it is very important but they never did it. ...We have repeatedly sent the project proposal (DUP) for women empowerment to the national government and PSW, but they did not respond. I have been disappointed with the women empowerment programs' (Interview with local government official).

Decentralization

One of the prominent results of reformation in Indonesia is the issuance of Law No.22/1999 on Local Government which aims at devolving more power to local government over regional development (popular participation). This law constitutionally changed the relationship and position between central and local governments limiting central government power to the areas of the judiciary, security and defence, foreign policy, religious affairs and other activities specified by government regulations, while the regions have the authority over all other government activities. Central government devolved power to local government except in security and defense, foreign policy, monetary and fiscal matters, justice and religious affairs. Based on this law Indonesia comprised of autonomous provinces, districts (kabupaten) for rural areas and municipalities (kota) for urban areas. The emphasis of the devolution of power is on districts and municipalities which mean that head of districts and municipalities directly accountable to the local assembly (DPRD) rather than the Governor (head of province) as before the implementation of this law. Districts/municipalities have consultative rather than vertical/hierarchical relationship with the province. Provinces have dual status as autonomous regions with power to manage cross inter-districts/municipalities and other authorities that are yet to be implemented by districts/municipalities as well as the representatives of central government with administration tasks delegated by the central

This new law is intended to increase the capacity of civil society and community participation by strengthening the position of the people's representation in monitoring and asking for accountability of the executive. The emphasis of the devolution of power is on districts and municipalities which mean that head of districts and municipalities are directly accountable to the local assembly (DPRD) rather than to the Governor (head of province). With the increasing power of the local government which has to be accountable to people's representatives it is hoped that local governance in Indonesia will be more participatory and will enable local government to act in accordance with the community's needs and aspirations.

After decentralization local politics become more crucial in understanding politics in Indonesia. Since 2001, 30 provinces, 360 districts and 66,000 BPD (Village Consultative Assembly) have emerged as the result of the implementation of this law. Asia Foundation IRDA (2002) describes good practices in decentralization and increasing popular participation as evident in the emergence of more civic forums. This law reveals appreciation to local culture and characteristic of diverse regions in Indonesia. It is hoped that by allowing people to involve more in governance, decentralisation will increase the trust of local communities toward government.

Despite its intention to devolved power to the local governments (executive and DPRD), this law does not elaborate on devolving power to the community. It lacks of clear accountability mechanisms for the people to control DPRD and lack of clear implementing and supporting regulation which creates confusion in the implementation. No specific provision for people's participation and no clear accountability mechanism for members of the parliament. Based on a recent conference on local government in ANU, Australia, many critiques were forwarded to decentralization in Indonesia such as: the up-surfing of regional/ethnic sentiments, corruption, increasing excessive tax which does not followed by improvement in service delivery, primordialism and structural and financial problems. In Simalungun (in North Sumatra) misperception to the term of 'putra daerah' (son of the region/indigenous population) have resulted in the removal by force, the Javanese who have long been contributing in developing Simalungun, from the area.

Thus, the stress on strengthening local government and people representation which is stipulated in the new law may be inadequate in strengthening and increasing community participation, let alone in being sensitive to women's needs and interests and empowering for women. It focuses heavily on devolving power to local authorities and representatives, yet does not mention the devolution of power to the community. This is an important issue if local government is to be accountable to the community.

Moreover this law still lacks a gender perspective. None of the chapters in UU No.22/1999 recognises the importance of a gender perspective in local governance. The previous law on local government was heavily focused on economic growth as the measurement of achievement in implementing local governments' programmes. This emphasis on growth along with gender insensitivity of local government and its mechanisms has marginalised women and led to the invisibility of women in local governance in Indonesia. Without elaboration in law and programmes for women's empowerment at the local level, the devolution of power to local government women will continuously exclude women from determining local development agendas.

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Gender dimensions of decentralization in Indonesia:

It is interesting to examine that while women representation at the national level continuously declining, at the local level it is increasing although remains marginal. While there is no woman has been elected as governor yet, women elected as Bupati increased from 2 (1996), 5 (1999) to 7 (2001). The percentage of women elected as head of village also increase from 2.0% (1996) to 2.3% (1999) to 3.4% (2001). Women have greater chances to be elected as head of villages in urban areas (*lurah*) where they are appointed by government (4.2%) compare to that of 2.1% in rural areas where people directly elected the *kepala desa* (Surbakti 2002:211). However, women as representatives at DPRD I continuously decline from 7% (1996) to less 5.4% (1999) and to less than 2% (2001). Rapid appraisal on decentralisation in Indonesia finds that women's participation in public decision making is still low and limited (Abidin 2002).

Institutionally, decentralization brought about positive effect on women in which 30 provinces in Indonesia now have focal points for women empowerment. However, not all districts and municipalities have women's empowerment bureaus. These focal points face huge problems such as reluctance and/or rejection from regional house of representative and local government to the establishment of women's empowerment bureaus, limited authorities and fund, and competition with other sections in local government offices. The most frequent argument in rejecting the establishment of women's empowerment bureaus is that districts and municipalities do not have adequate budget to fund these bureaus. Considering the total amount of facilities for members of DPRD and heads of local government in the regional budget, women's activists on the other hand argue that the real obstruction to the establishment of focal points derives from the lack of local government's political will to promote gender equity programs rather than the limited budget (Focus Group Discussions, 2001).

Radical democracy conceptualised local civil society as 'a relatively autonomous site of material and symbolic resistance and empowerment' (Mohan &Stokke 2000:259). However, the threat of locality towards women life cannot be ignored in discussing the achievement of decentralisation. The local communities are not always democratic in which they frequently resist changes. Local structures are more difficult to change than are higher levels of political organisations (Teune 1995; Philips 1996; Haddenias & Ugla 1996). Should the changes threat traditional norms and structures that have served their interests for a long time, local communities will frequently resist or subvert changes brought about by national governments and international. At this point, the locality of local government may obstruct the attempt in reversing pattern of women's subordination at the local level. Along with the increasing competition over power and resources, the devolution of power to local authorities may marginalised women through the domination of the stronger groups over local power and resources (Byrne & Laier 1996).

Law No.22/1999 which allow for the revitalization of local values and tradition has been followed by the tendency of the strengthening of local patriarchal values. Many of the proposed regional regulations (Ranperda) are aimed at monitoring and restricting women's movement. For example, UU (Law) Nanggroe Aceh Darusalam which was

legitimated on 20/7/2000 obligates women to wear *jilbab* (Moslem women's dress). Women activists in Aceh criticized this law by arguing that it increases women's burden in the way that women have to spend many times thinking of what to wear prior to their going out of the house because afraid of the punishment threat/punishment they might received (Kompas 3/9-2000). This fear is not without reason since there are some cases of violence towards women who do not obey this law.

Although based on Law 22/1999 Aceh is the only region in Indonesia that can implement the *Syariah*, recently other regions such as: South Sulawesi, Banten, Tasik Malaya, Pamekasan, Riau, Ternate and Gorontalo are discussing the possibility to issue Perda on *Syariah* which have been proposed to the Regional House of Representatives (Rahima 29/11/2002). These local governments avoid mentioning the word *Syariah* in obligating women to wear *jilbab* but based this obligation on morality and local tradition arguments.

Pressure from certain groups in the society, has discouraged women to go out without wearing the *jilbab*. In Tasikmalaya, a woman had her hair shaved by the community because she went out unaccompanied by her husband. In Yogya, youth from certain Islamic political parties sweeping women who go out at night. Public hearing and citizens forums are used to urge the implementation of the *Syariah*.

In many of the Ranperda women are seen as the source of the problems to the community and regional development that local government need to regulate women's activities and determine which sphere women may engage in. For example: Kabupaten Karimun (Riau Province) Ranperda on violation against immoral acts, which regulates women as sexual worker, while not considering the possibility that some women are forced to work as prostitutes. Interestingly, the revival of traditional values in regions that apply matrilineal system does not guarantee that women's needs and interest will be protected. Ranperda West Sumatra 9/2000 psl 10 (3) states: : 'Women are prohibited to be outside their homes from 22.00 P.M until 04.00 A.M except if they are with their husbands and/or doing activities that are protected by law' (Kompas 2001). Critics from women's organizations have successfully abolished this Ranperda. However, based on Perda (local government of Jakarta) No.5/2000 local government of Jakarta), the election of BPD (village community representatives) should be attended by at least two-third of the head of households who, based on Marriage Law 1/1974, are men. These Ranperda are gender insensitive and discriminate against women since they do not consider that some women have to work at night to support their families. While these Ranperda prohibit women to go outside and work at night, they do not describe how to compensate the lost of income that women have to support their family's survival livelihood.

Women are vulnerable to threats from both the society and local government. Despite of diversity among regions in North Sumatra, there is a striking similarity of pattern to impede women's participation in public decision making such as : women are not invited to BPD (Village Consultative Assembly) election, sometimes women are invited to elect but not to be elected in BPD, women who are actively involved in local affairs were threatened by accusing them as members of Gerwani (members of communist party), as *perempuan kurang kerjaan* (women who have no work), *perempuan usil* (women who meddle in other people's affairs), *perempuan nakal* (bad/ immoral women), threatening

these women that they will be caught and put to prison. This situation reveals the legacy of gender ideology produced by the New Order regime which continues to exist amidst reformation and decentralization in Indonesia.

Conclusion

The role of state in defining women's identity and interests is central in explaining the persistent differentiation between women's and men's role in pursuing economic growth and political interests in Indonesia. The New Order regime has skillfully controlled and mobilized women by redefining women's primary role in reproductive activities while men's role in productive activities. 'This ideal woman was the modern development oriented Indonesian housewives primarily defined in terms of her commitment to follow her husband's lead and limit her reproduction capacity to the ideal older son-younger daughter' (Sullivan 1994:133). With this gendered responsibility, women have been disadvantaged as second class citizen of Indonesia.

Through their public activities in demanding and responding for reformation, women in Indonesia have challenged the New Order gender ideology. Reformation provides opportunities for the emergence of various women's organizations in bringing up women's interests and related gender issues to the public fore. The election of Megawati as the first female president in Indonesia shows that in the case of national crisis the dire need to protect national unity and interests can take precedent over cultural and religious sanction of gendered ideology that prohibit woman to become national leader. This opens up other possible areas for equalizing gender relationship in Indonesia.

However, reformation does not guarantee gender equity. As has been described above, the percentage of female representatives at the national and local level house of representative is continuously declining. Lessons from the New Order era reveals that programs that focus merely on fulfilling women's practical interests while repressive towards women's strategic interests, as in the case of PKK and KB (family planning) programs, have been detrimental to women's empowerment by failing to address the unequal gender relation which is the root of women subordination. In future government policies and programs on gender empowerment should include both practical and strategic gender interests and needs as inseparable components in transforming the long established gendered ideology. To adjust to the implementation of Law 22/1999 on decentralization in Indonesia, national mechanism for gender mainstreaming such as the MNPP needs to reformulate its role by emphasizing more on gender advocacy and lobby at the national level and strengthening networking between gender empowerment agencies at regional and local level. MNPP needs to establish closer relation with women's empowerment bureaus and civil society at the local level in analyzing laws and local government regulation and proposing amendments to gender bias laws and regulations.

Many national documents and mechanisms on gender mainstreaming have been issued and established. The problems lie more on unawareness and the lack of political will of government's officials to implement these strategies and policies. It is the urgent task of diverse stakeholders in Indonesia, especially women's organizations and civil society organizations, to work together creatively and proactively in pushing for serious implementation of national gender equity programs in all aspects of development in Indonesia. Monitoring and evaluation to the performance of government agencies in implementing gender policy, as well as enforcing sanctions to its violation will be crucial in ensuring that reformation in Indonesia will also transform the unequal gender relation into gender equity in which both women and men are equal participants and recipients of development rather than being used merely as servants of development.

Decentralisation may in principle bring about some positive changes for women and open up room for maneuver for women in Indonesia, but the gendered local government structures and the emergence of patriarchal conflict of interest within the communities may obstruct the achievement of gender equity programs and activities. Considering the gendered structures and dynamics of local government, there is a need to simultaneously establish gender separate structure within municipalities and integrated gender sensitive policies/mechanisms in all sectors/programs.

Decentralisation has increased popular participation, as in the emergence of civic forums, but it has been less encouraging to women's participation and representation at the local level. While popular participation is considered as substantive component to the success of the implementation of decentralization in Indonesia, women's active participation as equal citizen of Indonesia is yet to be seen as 'normal' and integrated part of that component. Therefore, affirmative action which aims at increasing women's representativeness in formal political decision making such as reserved seats (quota 30% in BPD) and adoption of a gender quota in political parties' lists are urgent in the midst of the strong patriarchal system. At this point, women's organizations and civil society in Indonesia need to constructively engage in altering the gendered politics at the local level into a gender sensitive local governance by continuously monitoring the implementation of decentralization.

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