

Women and the Challenges of Strengthening Democracy in Villages (Banjar Municipal Case Study)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine women and the challenges of strengthening democracy in the Village. Through the implementation of Law No. 6 of 2014 where the Village is given independence in implementing democratic governance, one of which is the freedom for women to be involved in various aspects of life in the Village. The democratization process in the Village still faces quite big challenges, especially for the representation of women in the Village, currently based on data from the Ministry of Village PDDT in 2021 out of 74,164 Villages the number of Female Head of Village is only 3,976 or equivalent to 5%. This also happens in Banjar City, as one of the youngest Cities in East Priangan out of 16 Head of Village only 2 Female Head of Village around 3 percent of the total Head of Village in Banjar City. This is a portrait of women and the challenges of strengthening democracy in the Village. This study uses gender and political theory and Village government politics with Qualitative Research Methods with in-depth interview data collection methods. The results of the study show that opportunities for women to be involved in political activities at the village level are open, but women face challenges, one of which is the very strong patriarchal culture in Banjar City, making opportunities for women to be involved rare, one of which is because of resistance from women themselves for women to be involved in political activities at the village level. Even women who are involved in political activities are usually only a formality to fulfill the mandate of the Village Law, but in substance the democratic space at the village level in Banjar City has not fully supported women.

Keywords: Women, Democracy and Villages

INTRODUCTION

Villages in Law No. 6 of 2014 are Villages and Traditional Villages or by other name is called legal community units that have territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage government affairs, local community interests based on community initiatives, original rights, and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the government system of the Republic of Indonesia. As the smallest territorial unit regulated by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) of the Republic of Indonesia, Villages have a strategic role in building democracy. There are three areas that are highlighted in this new Village Law. First, allocating financial support to the village government. Second, related to the authority of the village in regulating matters related to life in the Village. Third, emphasizing the need for political participation of village residents in village government (Kushandajani & Alfirdaus, 2019).

The village as a more autonomous region is explained by Law No. 6 of 2014 which orders the Head of Village and BPD to run a more democratic and gender-equitable Village life, one of which is by specifically ordering women to be actively involved in existing village institutions, this is mandated in Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, chapter 54 explains that women's groups become stakeholders and are involved in Village Deliberations (MusDes) and Village Development Planning Deliberations (MUSRENBANG Des) and also Chapter 58 paragraph (1), namely:

(1) The number of members of the Village Consultative Institution is determined with an odd number, at least 5 (five) people and a maximum of nine (9) people, taking into account the region, women, population, and financial capacity of the Village.

In addition, the involvement of Village women is also clearly stated in Government Regulations No. 43 of 2014 concerning the implementation of the Village Law in chapter 72 stating that the filling of BPD membership is carried out democratically and guarantees women's representation in the BPD institutional body. In the law, space for women's participation is already open, and women are required to be involved in every village policy-making process, one of the aims of which to achieve the ideals of village democracy.

The emergence of space for village women to participate in village government institutions so that village women can be involved from planning to decision-making for village development, so that decision-making is expected to be in favor of women themselves. In Banjar City itself, there has been Regional Regulation No. 9 of 2019 concerning BPD, this regulation is a derivative of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages in Chapter 5 paragraph (1) which explains that:

(1) BPD members are representatives of the village population based on regional representation and female representation, the filling of which is carried out democratically through a direct election process or representative deliberation.

In this regulation it is clear that women's representation must be considered in the election of BPD members in Banjar City.

However, although the regulation has specifically mandated the importance of involving and providing space for women in the Village to participate in order to achieve a more democratic life, in reality the involvement of village women in participating in development in the Village faces various challenges, and becomes a challenge for the presence of a more democratic life in the Village. One of the root problems of women and village democracy is the issue of patriarchal culture that is firmly held by the majority of people in Banjar City, both men and women, even based on a previous study entitled Resistance of Female Voters to Legislative Candidates in Banjar City in the 2014-2019 Legislative Election which resulted in that most female voters who came to the TPS only 6% really intended to vote and this was also planned to vote for female and male candidates. No one really wanted to vote for female candidates. In addition with what happened at the Village level. This raises the question of how can village women overcome the challenges of democracy at the Village level?

Post-reformation in Indonesia, the Village as one of the smallest entities began to shift. Especially after the enactment of Law No. 22 of 1999, the village has the authority to regulate and manage the interests of the local community based on the origin and local customs recognized by the National government system and is in the Regency Area. The democratic process at the Village level has also changed, especially in the political participation of village residents in village government. The Village Law mandates women to directly participate in village government activities. Theoretically, village governance reforms should provide new opportunities and prospects for women to gain access as well as to strengthen policies and be actively involved in political activities in villages (Kabeer, 2008). However, until now the involvement of women in village government is still very minimal, it becomes a challenge in strengthening democracy at the village level, especially in Banjar City.

There are several principal changes in this latest Village Law, including first, the existence of a fixed income received by the Head of Village and staff from the APBN balancing fund, Second, Village funds are 100% APBD balancing funds, Third, the Head of Village's authority is broader and has the freedom to manage the budget, Fourth, the term of office of the Head of Village and BPD is 6 years and can be re-elected 2 times, so that in total they can serve for 3 terms. Then finally, the function of the BPD is strengthened, the BPD has the authority to supervise the performance of the Head of Village and the BPD can discuss and agree on draft Village Regulations. These changes state that currently the Village is more autonomous, but in fact the Village is not yet fully autonomous because it is still bound by accountability to the Regent or Mayor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Gender

The term gender is still relatively new in the tradition of social, political, legal and especially religious dictionaries in Indonesia. On the other hand, the theme of gender still tends to be understood pejoratively. Many

people are still very antipathetic and apriori towards the term gender. For many people, the word gender has a nuance of the spirit of rebellion of women adopted from immoral and irreligious Western values. Far from what many people have accused of regarding gender issues so far, in fact gender discourse questions primarily, social, cultural, legal and political relations between men and women. Therefore, one thing that must be emphasized is that ideas on gender, in essence, only wants to comprehend, emplacement and acknowledge to the relations between men and women more proportionally and more fairly in the relations between the two as servants of God. As in terms of participating in Politics where according to Law No. 10 of 2008 concerning Legislative Elections and Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties (Parpol), the quota for women's involvement in politics is 30%, especially to sit in parliament. Even in Chapter 8 Point d of Law No. 10 of 2008, it is stated that the inclusion of at least 30% representation of women in the management of political parties at the central level is one of the requirements for political parties to then be able to become election participants. And Chapter 53 of the Law states that the list of prospective election participants must also contain at least 30% representation of women.

According to Mansour Faqih, gender is influenced and framed by many things, and its determinative components are very varied, such as cultural values, religious traditions, social and political systems. Gender is constructed both intentionally and unintentionally, first socialized through family institutions, social environments and schools, then sought for ideological support to strengthen these types of differences. In this regard, religious texts and doctrines are often used as a place of refuge and the main reference for formulating discursive thinking about gender.(Fakih, 2013).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that gender is not merely a question of differences and differentiation of roles between men and women; more importantly, it concerns dominance both in the context of relations and the distribution of power. This condition, whether realized or not, often gives birth to and institutionalizes various gender injustices.

Conceptually, gender-based injustice is a reflexive form of defining and standardizing different roles (which are often discriminatory) for men and women towards something that is based on the division of labor according to gender categories and the assumption of patriarchal ideology. As a result of the strong patriarchal gender ideology that has developed in this society, men and women do not have the freedom to determine their choice of social and political roles because in fact gender injustice has been manifested in various forms of social, cultural, economic, political and religious reality.

Meanwhile, according to Masdar. F. Mas'udi, injustice and discrimination against women in society are caused by many factors. Initially, it was caused by stereotypes that tend to degrade the position of women, such as that women are weak, more emotional than rational, fractious, unresilient, don't deserve to live outside the home, and so on. According to Masdar. F. Mas'udi, there are four issues that cause stereotypes against women (Nelli, 2015):

1. Through subordination, women must submit to men. Leaders (imam) are only fit to be held by men, while women may only be led (ma'mum). Women may become leaders only limited to their own people, who function as supporters of the main activities of men, for example in Dharma Wanita, Muslimat, Aisyiah, Fatayat and so forth.
2. Women tend to be marginalized, that is, positioned on the sidelines. In community activities, women are at most only in the consumption section or receiving guests. In households, women are the assistant in the kitchen.
3. Women are in a weak position, therefore women are often the target of violence by men. In society, the forms of violence range from being teased, harassed, beaten, divorced to being raped.
4. As a result of gender inequality, women have to accept a heavier and longer workload than men. In working, the most active men work an average of 10 hours/day, while women work 18 hours/day. In general, this burden is considered trivial by men, because it is considered economically insignificant.

Consequently, the manifestations of gender injustice could be formulated in the life sector that include:

1. Cultural Sector, women are confined by stereotypes placed on them to not get out of their domestic roles. This stereotype will have implications on its taboo to be able to get higher education.

2. Domestic and public sectors, women will always be victims of violence
3. Economic sector, women experience marginalization and are forced to have a dual roles
4. Political sector, women become subordinate to male power.

Observing the phenomenon above, according to Mansoer Faqih's analysis, it is caused by many factors, including:

1. the arrogance of men who do not give women the opportunity to develop optimally.
2. the assumption that men are considered the main providers.
3. the culture that always wins men that has taken root in society.
4. discriminative legal norms and political policies.
5. women are very vulnerable to rape or sexual harassment and if this happens it will damage the image and norms of the women both in the family and society, so women must be restrained by special rules that imprison women in domestic tasks only.

Nevertheless, it can be understood that the formation of gender differences that result in the emergence of gender injustice is due to many things, including being formed, socialized, strengthened and even constructed socially, culturally, through religious teachings and even by the state. Through this long process, it is considered to be God's provision as if its biological and cannot be changed anymore.

The Politics in Village Government

Mashuri Maschab on his book *Politik Pemerintahan Desa di Indonesia* (2013) stated that conveying to discuss about Villages in Indonesia, will give rise to three interpretations or understandings, such as:

1. Sociological definition, which describes a form of community unity or a community of residents who live and settle in an environment, where they know each other well and their lifestyle tends to be homogeneous, and also depends heavily on the goodness of nature. In this sense, the Village is associated as a society that lives simply, modestly and lives from the agricultural sector.
2. Economic definition, a village is defined as a community environment that tries to fulfill its daily needs from what is provided by the surrounding nature. In this second understanding, a village is an economic environment, where its residents try to fulfill their life's integrity from the natural resources they have in the form of agricultural land, forests, lakes and seas to fulfill their life needs in order to survive.
3. Political definition, by this definition, the village as a government organization or power organization that politically has certain authority because it is part of a country. In this third definition, the village is written with the capital letter 'Village'. The village is formulated as "a legal community unit that has the power to organize its own government". The village has the authority within its territory to regulate and decide something according to the interests of the legal community concerned. Consequently, the government in Law No. 6 of 2014 states that:

“ A village is divided by village and traditional village or what is called by another name, furthermore what considered to as a Village, is a legal community unit that has territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and manage government affairs, the interests of the local community based on community initiatives, original rights and/or traditional rights that are recognized and respected in the government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. ”

Viewed from the perspective of the national government before Law No. 6 of 2014 was enacted, the village government was considered the lowest government unit that occupies part of the country's territory. In this context, the national government is a network of village government systems and various other government structures above it. It can also be interpreted that the village government plays a role as a subsystem whose life and death depend on the will of the supra system above it. However, after the latest Village Law was enacted, the village government became a more autonomous entity. One of them is to improve the quality of democracy in the village. The village government consists of the Village Head who is assisted by the village apparatus and

the BPD. The Village Deliberation is a deliberation between the village deliberative body, the Village Government, and community elements organized by the BPD to agree on strategic matters.

RESEACH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method that aims to explain and reveal various situations, conditions, and phenomena of social reality that are the objects of the study. Qualitative research methods are used to collect facts that occur in the field in depth so that data findings are obtained that are relevant to the predetermined research objectives. This research method is used because it can systematically describe women and the challenges of democracy at the village level in Banjar City. This research was conducted in Banjar City, research data collection was obtained from primary data sources and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with research informants through semi-structured interview techniques, which means that even though the interview has been directed with several questions, it does not rule out the possibility of raising new questions in an effort to extract information that is in accordance with research needs. While secondary data is obtained through literature and archival documents related to the research theme.

The main subject of this study uses a purposive sampling technique for taking informants, where researchers tend to choose key informants who are considered to know the problem being studied in depth. And can be trusted to be a reliable source of data. In this case, it is more selective, where researchers use considerations based on the theoretical concepts used, personal curiosity, empirical characteristics, and so on. The main subjects in this study were female village heads in Banjar City, the regional secretariat of the legal section of Banjar City, female BPD members, and female villagers in Banjar City. However, considering that the number of informants can grow so that the information needed is obtained by researchers, in this case the researcher will also conduct research using the snowball sampling technique. (Moleong, 2005: 165)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women in villages currently still face various patriarchal cultural challenges, especially in the rural area. The opportunity for women to get involved in political activities is open, this opportunity is also strengthened through Village Law no. 6 of 2014. The position of Village Head can be filled by anyone as long as they meet the requirements through the election of the Village Head, this shows that in fact the opportunity for women to participate in the village head election is very large, but in reality it is like what happened in Banjar City even though currently Banjar City is led by a woman, namely Ade UU Sukaesih, but this cannot guarantee strengthening women's involvement in a smaller realm, namely the Village. This is evidenced by the small percentage of women who serve as village heads, of 16 villages only 2 villages are led by women. Currently, Banjar City has 4 sub-districts, 9 sub-districts and 16 villages as shown in the table below:

Table 1. List of Districts, Urban Villages, and Villages in Banjar City

Kecamatan	Jumlah Kelurahan	Jumlah Desa	Status	Daftar Desa/Kelurahan
Banjar	3	4	Desa	Balokang · Cibeureum · Neglasari
			Kelurahan	Banjar · Jajawar · Mekarsari · Situbatu
Langensari	2	4	Desa	Kujangsari · Langensari · Rejasari · Waringinsari
			Kelurahan	Bojongkantong · Muktisari
Pataruman	2	6	Desa	Batulawang · Binangun · Karyamukti · Mulyasari · Sinar Tanjung · Sukamukti
			Kelurahan	Hegarsari · Pataruman
Purwarharja	2	2	Desa	Mekarharja · Raharja
			Kelurahan	Karangpanimbal · Purwarharja
TOTAL	9	16		

Source: KotaBanjar.go.id

The table above shows the number of villages in Banjar City, out of 16 villages in Banjar City, only two villages have female village heads, namely Kujangsari Village and Langensari Village.

The election of Village Heads in Banjar City was carried out at several times, including in 2019, the election of Village Heads was held simultaneously in 11 villages in Banjar City with the following results:

Tabel 2. Results of head of villages election

No	Village	Result
1	Neglasari Village	1. Enon Suherman: 500 2. Setiaman: 1.134 3. Asep Dedi Mulyana: 1.044
2	Cibeureum Village	1.Tatang Sutiawan: 78 2. Yayan Sukirlan: 832 3. Hasidin Tamsil: 509
3	Balokang Village	1.Jaojari: 345 Votes 2.Jaja Hanaedi: 1298 Votes 3.Obar Sobardian: 644 Votes 4. Idis A: 1398 Votes 5. Jaja Jafarsidik: 1012 Votes
4	Raharja Village	1.Mamat Abidin: 439 2. Yayat Ruhiyat: 773
5	Mekarharja Village	1.Drs. H. Saepuloh: 1.509 2. Hendi Sumantri, S.H.I: 1.35
6	Batulawang Village	1.Yosef E: 1.409 2.DR. Erick B: 622 3. Dadi H: 335
7	Karyamukti Village	1.Jamaludin Al: 308 2.Saefulloh: 976 3.Toto S: 231 4.Wawan S: 862 5. Bardiyatno: 346
8	Binangun Village	1.H. Karjono: 1.346 2.Udung: 969 3. Budi R: 292
9	Mulyasari Village	1.Redi S: 990 2.Tulus: 679 3. Wawan G :1.327
10	Langensari Village	1.Sudarto: 1.098 2.Arief: 102

		3. Yanti: 1.962 4. Eka: 1.027
11	Waringinsari Village	1. Kuswanti: 2.081 2. Nasanto: 2.027 3. Suryanto: 498

Source: Kotabanjara.co.id

Then in 2022, the PAW Village Head Election was held in Karyamukti Village which was won by Fikri Aditya and in Binangun Village which was won by Bubun Sahban Farid Mahmud. Of the 16 villages in Banjar City, only 2 villages have female village heads, namely Waringinsari Village led by Kuswanti and Langensari Village led by Yanti. This is only 3% of the 16 village heads in Banjar City. Seeing the very small percentage of female village heads in Banjar City, the potential for gender inequality in village development is quite high. In fact, having equal opportunities to obtain positions in government is one of the principles of a just democracy, one of which must be reflected in strategic village decision-making. In village life, in fact, the distinction between public roles and domestic roles based on gender is not recognized, especially in economic activities in the village which are carried out by each gender, both men and women. Unfortunately, this tradition in village society only occurs in economic activities. This tradition can actually be revitalized and packaged so that men and women in the village finally realize that in order to live a democratic life, the roles of men and women, especially in balancing the roles of men and women in decision-making in the village, can be implemented.

The presence of women in leadership in the village is considered capable of improving village development from a gender perspective. Apart from that, women's representation in village government is considered very important to provide democratic space for women in the village. The role and involvement of women in politics and decision-making processes in villages still seems to be a taboo subject. There is still a negative public perception attached to women, which is still an issue that needs attention, as conveyed by Yanti as Head of Langensari Village. Yanti also said that under her leadership as village head, women's political participation is currently increasing, one of which is through the invitation and presence of women's elements at the village planning meetings and conveying the problems they face.

The realization of a democratic climate in the village is the spirit of Village Law No. 6 of 2014. The village is no longer an empty geographical space that is far from the people who live in it, but the village is a territorial unit that is attached and bound to the lives of the people who live there with the traditions and customs that drive that life. Democracy in the village is implemented and developed in the spirit of recognizing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the village tradition. The important value of democracy in the village is based on two things, such as:

1. In the village arena, democracy is an effort to redefine the relationship between the village community and the elite or village government administrators (Head of Village with their staff and BPD).
2. State recognition of the origin of the village (the principle of recognition) and the determination of local-scale authority and local-scale decision-making for the benefit of the village community (the principle of subsidiarity). By holding these two principles, the village has very great authority to manage itself.

Villages are no longer a set of general values that are coercive, or become mechanisms and procedures that are separate from the experiences of village communities, but are related and bound to the lives of communities that practice democracy, the following are the principles of village democracy, First, The interests of village communities, the implementation of village government as a whole must begin and end in the interests of village communities. Second, Deliberation, every village decision prioritizes the process of deliberation and consensus by involving all elements of village society. Third, participation, the participation of village communities in every activity and strategic village decision-making. Fourth, Voluntary, personal awareness to participate in village activities and free from threats or intimidation in determining an attitude. Fifth, respecting differences of opinion and not being discriminatory. Sixth, humanists recognize the nobility of human dignity as God's

creatures. Seventh, gender justice, decision-making in the village must be gender justice, and Eighth, transparent and accountable, village communities have the right to know the political process that is being carried out in the village. Based on the principles of village democracy above, one of the challenges of democracy in Banjar City is the involvement of women in policy-making in the village, although the law mandates inclusive democracy and provides more space for women in the village to actively participate in village politics, but the influence of patriarchal culture is still very deep-rooted, so that the involvement of women in village politics is still very minimal as in Banjar City, only two female Village Heads out of 16 Village Heads, not even 30% of the total Village Heads. Even from the candidates for Village Head in the 2019 simultaneous Village Head Election, there were only 2 female Village Head candidates, and the two candidates received the most votes until they were finally inaugurated as Village Heads.

Kuswanti said that there were no special obstacles when the Village Head Election process was carried out, from the stages to the election, Kuswanti felt that her journey to become Village Head went smoothly, one of the reasons was the support from her family and those closest to her candidacy, besides that Kuswanti is also the daughter of a Waringinsari community figure and has been the Village Head in Waringinsari Village for 24 years. Then the second female candidate, Yanti, is the incumbent who has led Langensari Village since 2013. From the two informants, there are two similarities, namely that both have privileges that other women do not have, this is what then makes the two women have the desire to run for Village Head in the Banjar City Environment. Then based on the research results, there were interesting findings when researchers conducted research on the PAW Village Head nomination in Binangun Village and Karyamukti Village, there was only one female candidate who participated in the PAW Village Head Election, namely in Binangun Village. Solikhah as the only female Village Head candidate only received 31 votes out of 304 PAW Village Head Election voters who were determined based on the Village Head Deliberation. Based on the research results, in addition to the imbalance in gender composition in the PAW Village Head election in Binangun Village (217 men and 87 women), the destructive labeling attached to women was one of the factors in Solikhah's small vote acquisition in the PAW Village Head Election in Binangun Village. This is actually a factor in the small number of women who run for Village Head in Banjar City. Then the patriarchal cultural factor that gives rise to a double burden on women finally minimizes the role of women who are actively involved in government politics in the Village which then becomes a challenge to realizing democracy in the Village.

The lack of electability of women as village heads in Banjar City shows that the challenges for women in village democracy are still high. These challenges arise because firstly, gender inequality arises because of patriarchal culture which is internalized in cultural values that are still strong, so that women still experience discrimination and are not get the same rights as men so that women have limited opportunities and access to represent their views. Second, social and cultural pressure, a culture that always wins and gives men the stage in the public sphere, often makes women, especially in villages, reluctant to become actively involved in political activities in the village. Third, the lack of education for women is still a challenge for women in democracy at the village level, causing women to be unable to compete with men and finally, the lack of women's representation at the village level means that women's voices in strategic village institutions make women unable to advocate for their interests. Alone. These things are still challenges in village democracy for women.

CONCLUSION

The patriarchal culture that is still embedded in Banjar City is one of the challenges of democracy, especially for women. The wide-open space for women as stated in the Village Law has not been able to overcome the problem of patriarchal culture that causes women to be uninterested in participating in the political process in the Village. This is partly because the substance of the Village Law is only limited to mentioning the words women's representation in the BPD and involving stakeholders in the Village Deliberation. Then women's resistance to women's involvement in village government in Banjar City is the second factor in the challenges of village democracy in Banjar City, one of which is because of the labeling and double burden on women so that women are reluctant to vote for women too.

Then instead of the Village Law resolving structural inequality and gender equality in the village. Meanwhile, the Village Law is not gender affirmative, because it only involves women alone. In addition, it is also because of the difficulties in its implementation. This is what makes village democracy enter the hustle and bustle of

technical matters, and its nature is trivial. This has also led to the neglect of women's voices which has an impact on policy making at the Village level that is not gender equitable.

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