

The Upgrading of Woman Capabilities in Rural Areas to Implement Social Justice

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Abstract

Gender inequality is closely related to poverty. When poverty combined with gender inequality resulting a failure in the main human capabilities. Custom can be as barrier to maximalize the woman performance outside the home. Traditional cultural practices that suppress women such as: early marriage and domestic violence comes from the view of the particular culture. Cultural particularism presupposes that a culture has its own system moral. In consequence, We can not use universal standard in assessing the culture because this claim. If we want to maintain a universal norms of human functions that include women as equal participants, we should be able to answer the claims that there is a universal value of humanity that we can use as a benchmark in community. With the use of a universal standard measure, the government expected can address the gender inequality that became one of the main problems in rural areas. This paper itself is based on the society engagement programme in X village, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. This village has a strong cultural traditions that pose obstacles for woman to be flourishing. Therefore by empowering women through educate woman to get an alternative incomes actually can empower the community as a whole. Emotion intelligent and personality elements are closely associated with perception and decision making. Emotions allow for a thorough ethical vision. Vision of ethical life comes from human experience in a variety of cultures that appear in the question of how the good human life can be. Natural state of emotion that had been considered irrelevant in the decision turns out to be useful in performing social functions performed by women. By education, there's advantage for woman to get her capabilities right and find herself value in society. We believe that good government also can facilitate the formation of good capabilities and provide means for their use. Right to get education and material support can makes woman fully capable in the major human functions.

Keywords: *woman, culture, capability, ethics, community engagement*

1. Introduction

Women in rural areas are still fighting to have a better life. Many rural women still face systematic pressure either state or cultural barriers who prevent them to get their human rights. They are marginalized from national and local policies, laws and economic and education developments. Meanwhile, their rights and needs have been noted in the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and continue in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The

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government has policies and special measures to address these rights and needs but there have been only little implementations.

Women in rural area are experiencing poverty and exclusion. They have little access to land and natural resources. In Indonesia, the amount of poor people who live in the rural area are 17,92 million from total poor people 28,55 million people (Indonesia Central Bureau Statistics, 2013). The poverty line by total income per month are below Rp. 275,799/capita (US\$ 22,9/capita/month). This poor people are concentrated in the village than in the city who works as a farmer or labour farmer. Women and children are the ones mostly affected.

In the family, their position is unequal to men, making them prone to domestic violence, forced marriage and unfair distribution of inheritance. In public arena, rural women do not have the opportunity to participate in the leadership and decision making positions at all levels. The patriarchal system has been construct man as a breadwinner and women as a housewife. This made women as breadwinner are below 68% compare to man which are 95,2% (Indonesia Central Bureau Statistics, 2012). In fact working outside the home is closely related to the health and nutrition that in turns created political opportunities for women. In Indonesia, the women health conditions in rural area is lower than man. This is caused by poverty and low access for health services (Romli, 2014:5).

When discussed of rural women in Indonesia, one must one must identify clearly the place, the geographic and environmental conditions, the ethnic groups, the culture of the communities and the religions. This paper focussed on rural women in X Village in Tasikmalaya, West Java Province, Indonesia. They are typically Sundanese and most of them are moslem. Their village is in the highland and they used to be tea pickers, but some of them now making life through small grocery stores.

The above situations need to be addressed. Rural women play a crucial role in their communities. They can maintain or improve the livelihoods of the rural people and can strengthen the communities. Their roles can extend beyond domestic arena. Even though they may be lacking of education and skill, rural women have proven that they are determine to go beyond the limitations. They have been recognized in their contributions to agriculture, rural development, food and nutrition, education, economic activities and poverty reduction. Therefore, it is important to empower rural women. Women have the capabilities to change their society if the government give them opportunities to do so. This can be done through education, there's advantage for woman to get her capabilities right and find herself value in

society. Good government also can facilitate the formation of good capabilities and provide means for their use. Right to get education and material support can makes woman fully capable in the major human functions.

What is capabilities approach? The capabilities approach insists that the political goal for all human beings in a nation ought to be the same; all should get above a certain threshold level of combined capability, in the sense not of coerced functioning but of substantial freedom to choose and act (Nussbaum. 2011: 24). Capability is functioning. A functioning is an active realization of one or more capabilities. Functionings are beings and doings that are the outgrowths or realizations of capabilities (Nussbaum. 2011: 25).

This paper is aimed at explaining the gender-based violence and discrimination faced by the rural women in X village in Tasikmalaya and also their capacity in empowering themselves to have a better life in economic and intra-household aspects. The highlight is that gender-based barriers are limiting women in fulfilling their rights and needs, especially when they have to be independent after a separation from a husband. By realizing the capabilities that the women had, they can have freedom and choice to be fully functioning in the society.

2. Research Methodology

This paper is based on community engagement that have been held in X Village in Tasikmalaya in 2016. Community engagement is a specific type of empirical research which doing in the field instead of desk research to collect the data. The research subject is woman who lived in the X village who repressed by patriarchy culture.

This community engagement is doing by participatory action research. Participatory action research is an alternative to the traditional scientific way of developing knowledge, based on values of empowerment, democracy, equity, liberation and life enhancement. Instead of the top-down research approach conceived and executed by experts far from the people studied and the actions and processes under investigation, it is more dialectic, interactive research approach. It refers to an approach to inquiry: that is rigorously empirical and reflective (or interpretative), engages people who have traditionally been called subjects as active participants in the research process, results in some practical outcome related to the lives and works of participants (Chevalier *et al.* 2008:9).

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Domestic Violence in X Village in Tasikmalaya

The concept of gender and gender-based violence is not familiar for women in X village. Gender is perceived as fate and as tradition that has been passed down for generation on how a woman must behave, act, and their obligation. Therefore women take this for granted. They never questioned let alone criticized the norms or traditions that they are imposed to. It was not until they were exposed to the knowledge of gender-biases, discrimination and gender-based violence that they realize that their life was full of discriminations and violence.

The most reported violence experienced by women in X Village is domestic violence, including polygamy marriage where the husband did not ask permission when marrying another woman. For women of X Village, marrying another woman without their permission is a form of violence. Many of the women whom the husband married another woman was neglected psychologically and financially. However, women who became the second wife also faced discrimination because their marriage usually is not registered. This leads to them being unrecognized because they cannot have a Family Card (Kartu Keluarga). Without a Family Card, they cannot access public and health services.

Rural society and conditions contribute to make domestic violence more difficult to escape. Physical and social isolation, the distance to and unavailability of services, and rural culture provide challenges to abused women access health care (Adler. 1996: 463-466) and justice. Health care and facilities in X Village are available with the presence of a primary health facility called Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat (Public Health Center) and a number of trained and certified mid-wives. But even though it is accessible, not many women who suffer injuries from a domestic violence would go to have their injuries mended (unless the injuries were severe and life-threatening) because they do not want public to know that their husband is beating them. They are still trying to “protect” their husband.

Justice institutions are far from the village. If women want to file a report to the police, they have to go at least 5 KM to a small police station. However, report of crimes against women and children must be filed to a Polres-Polisi Resort (District Police Station) which is located in the city of Tasikmalaya around 30 KM from the village. In fact, all of the justice institutions such as the Court are located in the city. This situation is hindering women to seek state justice remedy, but even informal settlement was not available. In several communities in Indonesia, informal settlements are available to domestic violence cases. The informal

settlements are provided by the village's apparatuses, religious leaders, adat leaders or an institution set up to address problems in the society. The mechanisms of the settlement vary in the use of what values and norms are used in settling the case.

Based on research Nafi et al (2014) in Waingapu, domestic violence case is brought to the Head of the Village. The settlements vary according to the case. One example of a settlement is that an agreement is made by the husband stating that he will not abuse his wife and/or children again. The consequence of a violation towards the agreement is also stated in the document, for example, the husband will be expelled from the village after their divorce or the husband must pay a certain amount of money or animals as a fine. This type of settlement is also available in several poor communities in Jakarta (Irianto and Cahyadi, 2009).

The women of X Village have very limited capability to access state justice. The most reasonable action for them to escape domestic violence is by separating from their husband. However, this process alone can be problematic. As stated by the Law, one who wishes to have a divorce must file a request to the district court (for non Moslem) and to the religious court (for Moslem) to have the divorce formalized. But as previously stated, the courts are located in the city. So once again women faced a barrier. What is common then in the village is that divorce are done only by religious way (*talak*), but not formalized by state. This poses a problem to the administrative aspect, especially on legal identity. If in the future women want to remarry, they cannot have their marriage registered because they will still be registered as married because the divorce was not registered. Unregistered marriage is discriminating women because they will not have legal identity as a pass to access public and health services and state justice.

Divorce however, is not the option of every women facing domestic violence in X Village. Many of them choose to stay together with the hope of a change in their husband behavior. For these women, they felt the need to have some kind of forum, whether within family or community to address their problems. In other places where an informal settlements are available, forums are also available to address women's problem. Therefore the way of women to relieve their grievances is by sharing it to their closest relatives or friends secretly.

3.2 Patriarchy as the Core Cause of Domestic Violence

The situation of women in X Village can best be described by the unequal power relation theory. Men and women have an unequal power relation that has been legitimized in daily life.

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Human (especially women) lost their ability to question their life. Bourdieu as cited by Irianto and Cahyadi (2008: 302-303) also sees that the masculine culture has been deeply rooted in the subconscious mind of human. The thought does not necessarily be obvious and explicit as a defends towards men, but it can also be seen in the dichotomy in society that exclude women's experiences, biased values toward women such as how law is seen as "neutral" and positivistic. The position of women in male masculine culture that is embedded to the human subconscious, increasingly shows that inequality and power relations between men have been conditioned and made to be conditioned and even be considered as a "true." Adding to that, Robeyns (2010:218) sees that the social institutions are also "gendered" in the sense that they tend to take gender differences as a justification for those inequalities. The educational system, the media, families, labor market, workplaces, and labor unions are all implicated.

MacKinnon (1987:60) also sees unequal power relation between men and women is the main cause for acts of violence against women. The aggression from the powerful (men) to the powerless (women) is one form of control manifestation of masculine domination towards the sexuality of women. In this discourse, Bourdieu's perspective is align with MacKinnon's. The biological difference between the sexes, i.e. between the male and female bodies, and, in particular, the anatomical difference between the sex organs, can thus appear as the natural justification of the socially constructed difference between the genders, and in particular of the social division of labour (Bourdieu. 2001:11).

The unequal power and position of men and women forces men and women to take a certain gender roles, which ultimately lead to violent behavior. In the context of socio-cultural life of the Indonesian people, we can take an example of how the majority of people believed that the husband is the leader of the family. The wife is considered as the possession of a husband and he is entitled to treat his wife according to his wills. The wife is often subjected to the control and supervision of the husband. The husband has the power to "educate" his wife and make a correction to the wife's wrongdoing. This has in turn often leads to acts of domestic violence (Indonesia Women Commission. 2008: 35).

The inferior position of women also results in limited access of women to decision making in the house-hold life. Economic power which is usually in the possession of the husband is putting the wife in a weak position and dependent to the husband. On the other hand, being proponent to the economic life of the main family does not necessarily make women feel more

empowered and have access to decision-making. Masculine domination that has been pervasive in the human subconscious has made inequality of power relations.

From the situation described above, there feel the need for a social intervention especially to women to introduce gender equality, although men are also supposed to be important to be involved. However changing a deep-rooted value system was not an easy matter. Women in X Village were stunned when the concept of gender equality was introduced to them. But they were happy because they got the encouragement and answers to their life experience that is full of discrimination and violence. As for the men, the introduction of the concept of gender equality makes them frenzied. They were trying to justify the discriminations and violence that they typically have done by citing religious arguments. But no doubt they began to reflect their perspective on discrimination and gender-based violence. Is it because it is permitted by religion or because it is how they want life to be.

3.3 Human Capabilities

In order to creating community that value social justice, it's important to focussed on human capabilities. The capabilities approach is defined as an approach to comparative quality of life assessment and to theorizing about basic social justice. It holds that the key question to ask "What is each person able to do and to be"? (Nussbaum. 2011:18). This is a substantial freedoms that is a set of opportunities to choose and to act. This ability is not only residing in the person but also the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social and economic environment (Nussbaum. 2011: 20).

Sometimes the appeal to women's emotional nature takes an apparently more positive form, women are in fact well equipped to perform certain valuable social functions: for example, raising children, caring for the needs of a husband. These functions are indeed important; and women's fitness for them gives them social importance. But they must be exercised in the home; and, properly exercised, they will confine women to the home for much of her life (Nussbaum. 1995: 364).

Emotion intelligent and personality elements are closely associated with perception and decision making (Nussbaum. 1995: 388). Emotions allow for a thorough ethical vision. Vision of ethical life comes from human experience in a variety of cultures that appear in the question of how the good human life can be. Natural state of emotion that had been considered irrelevant in the decision turns out to be useful in performing social functions performed by women.

The women empowerment program in X Village itself cannot be assessed immediately whether it is successful or not. But when women are aware of and then dared to speak that they experience gender inequality, this is already an improvement. The program is targeting the cognitive domains that cannot be assessed quantitatively. To see if this program succeeds requires monitoring for some time to come.

4. Conclusion

Rural society and conditions can contribute to make domestic violence more difficult to escape. Physical and social isolation, the distance to and unavailability of services, and rural culture provide challenges to abused women that are different from the obstacles seen in better-studied urban areas. Social action is necessary to change communities and to interrupt the cycle of violence. Through the women empowerment in the rural area, especially in the economic must practice in participatory way. It's important to involve women in development planning as part of their human rights. The concept of women empowerment in X Village is essential to overcome the problems that facing by the women. Through the capabilities approach, we hope that can build the new society which value the universal norms. The communities that value women that tied to the local culture as well as connected to the groups of women accross the world.

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