

## Gender Trends Perspective: Representation of Women in the Political Sphere

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**Abstract:** The introduction to this problem is the issue of women's representation in regional legislatures and political parties, whose attainment is still not as desired. It is no longer possible for women to represent 30% of women's representation by simply relying on the commitment of political parties and government policies. This research aims to describe the quality of gender equality in politics and women's situation in politics. The theory used is Gender Trends. This research method is descriptive qualitative with sustainable analysis and literature studies. The research results revealed women's opportunities in pushing women's political expectations. There is still a minimal number of women in the regional legislature, which impacts the ability to voice women's interests to be limited. With quality playing a major role in gender equality in the political realm, it is not only about the fulfillment of the number of women involved in political activities but also a statutory provision that must be fulfilled by every political party to provide opportunities for women's representation in their activities in the political realm.

**Keywords:** Women, Politics, Gender Trends, Representation.

### 1. Introduction

The process of generating critical awareness, both the awareness of those engaged in politics and as part of society members in general, about women and men is to understand and dismantle the various elements of oppression, including those hidden in the symbolic order (Lan, 2002: 35). The complexity of issues concerning women in the public sphere is always interesting to study, especially in the field of politics. Other side, women are often victimized by super-structural hegemony (Karim, 2015). Likewise, in Indonesia's political world, it is always inherent in the world of men. In this case, it is because politics is considered an activity that is identical to a negative power, abuse, violence, mass mobilization, and competition, where these conditions are not inherent in women who prioritize peace (Daulay, 2007: 34).

The use of a gender perspective as a manifestation of critical awareness needs to be carried out by both women and men, because it is incorrect to assume that in women, there is always a desire to fight for their interests. Therefore, gender awareness is not related to the type of individual sexuality. Women's subjective experiences have become quite influential on gender sensitivity or even vice versa (Suryandaru, 2002: 35). Meanwhile, the issue of gender is an issue that has existed for a long time, both in Indonesia and other countries. In essence, gender issues are issues that demand equal rights between men and women. It is actually the right of every citizen because both men and women are the same as citizens and are protected by the state constitution (Malik, 2016).

In *Jurnal Harkat Media Komunikasi dan Gender* [Journal of Dignity of Communication Media and Gender], Azmy (2018) said gender equality in politics could be realized through general elections. In the implementation of this general election, of course, it must ensure that every citizen, both male and female, can participate as voters and those elected by the community. The opportunity for women to be free to participate in politics has also been wide open and has received attention from the Indonesian government, in the term of government assumption (Kardiyati & Karim, 2020), with the existence of laws and regulations that stipulate a 30% quota consisting of women.

However, women are still a marginal group in decision-making circles. It can be seen, among other things, from the percentage of women who sit in certain positions in the executive, legislative, and judiciary institutions (Dadang in Habibah, 2015). Gender equality and justice, both in political rights and political roles and the existence in political institutions, have yet to materialize and are still far behind (Habibah, 2015). Syariati (2017: 99) explains that the debate about the portion of women's participation in decision-making seems endless. Meanwhile, according to Judith (1999), women have long and broadly been left behind from various political activities and are prevented from defining their activities as an inseparable part of politics.

The low number of women's representation also greatly influences the decision-making process, both political decisions and public policy decisions (Karim, 2019). The representation of women who have not met the 30% quota means that democracy is still stuck or not optimal (Rasyidin, 2016).

Apart from low representation, another factor is the absence of a platform that concretely defends women's interests. In this case, political parties based on the political system and Indonesian general elections are very influential in determining party policy. In determining legislative candidates, the political party finalizes the order of the candidate names and whether the candidates are passed at an early stage. Male-dominated political parties' tendency in decision-making positions has implications for how and where women are appointed as candidates (Rasyidin, 2016).

From the results of direct interviews between Rasyidin, Firdhia Aruni, and Chusnul Ma'iyah regarding the history of parliament in the world and the results of research conducted, it was revealed that the increasing number of parliamentary representatives, such as 20, 30, or even 40% (percent) of the total members, has an impact on the success or failure of an issue to be fought for (Rasyidin, 2016).

For some reasons mentioned above, the quantity share is essential in the world of politics, not only in terms of qualified quality. It is a hope for women to get a minimum in accordance with the applicable provisions in Indonesia, namely 30% participation in every public and political activity. It is inseparable from the support of several factors from multiple perspectives.

## 2. Methodology

This research applied a descriptive analysis approach and literature study, with several studies relating to women legislative members in the Gerindra and the Demokrat Factions, Regional People's Representative Council, Cirebon Regency for the Period 2019-2024. Furthermore, the author used a qualitative descriptive method. The identification of the problem in this research is the representation of women in the political realm in the female legislative members of the Gerindra and the Demokrat Factions, Regional People's Representative Council, Cirebon Regency for the Period of 2019 – 2024.

From the perspective of gender trends, research reveals how to increase women's participation in political activities, both in political parties and those elected as legislature members. It is a systematic and straightforward tool that will help understand, enter, and enlarge the market share in the world's largest segment (Barletta, 2004).

Regarding gender trends, in the book Trends in Gender Equality and Women's Advancement, Stotsky states that for political opportunities, the only indicator with fairly comprehensive data coverage is the proportion of seats held by women in regional or national parliaments. However, it is noted that this indicator alone does not necessarily provide a complete picture of women's political empowerment for several reasons. The presence of women in parliament is not always translated into an accurate measure of women's political empowerment, especially in countries where parliaments play a limited role. Besides, this measure only looks at women's participation in the lower house of parliament. In fact, women are also under-represented at ministerial and other governmental levels worldwide (Stotsky, 2016). The coverage of gender trends in politics can be seen in the following table.

**Table 2.1.** Indicators of Gender Selected

Indicators	Definition
Seats held by women in both regional and national parliaments	The seats held by women in parliament are the percentage of parliamentary seats in one house or lower held by women.

*Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database; and International Labor Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT (in Stotsky, Trends in Gender Equality and Women's Advancement. IMF, 2016)*

In this research, data collection methods in the field were observation, interview, documentation, and literature study. The research location was the Secretariat of the Regional People's Representative Council, Cirebon Regency. The informants in this study were women legislators from the Gerindra Faction, Regional People's Representative Council, Cirebon Regency: (1) Hj. Eryati (Electoral District of Cirebon 1), (2) Sofatilah, SH (Electoral District of Cirebon 2), (3) Nana Khargaawati, S.Pd (Electoral District of Cirebon 6) and the Demokrat Faction was (4) Tarseni (Electoral District of Cirebon 4). For this data collection technique, primary data and secondary data were utilized. With the type of data used, the data were obtained based on primary data

and secondary data. Furthermore, this research's data analysis technique was to describe women's representation in the political realm for female legislative members of the Gerindra and the Demokrat Factions, Regional People's Representative Council in Cirebon Regency, with research data obtained from open interviews.

Primary data collection was obtained from observation and interviews, while secondary data collection was obtained from documentation and literature study. To obtain valid and reliable data, the research techniques used were observation and interviews (Nawawi, 1987). The analysis carried out was based on the informants' views (*emik*) and the researchers' interpretations (*etic*) of the data in the field; the analysis was conducted by connecting and adjusting the conceptual studies used to conclude (Sugiyono, 2005).

After obtaining the data, the analysis then used descriptive analysis methods sustainably, including the following stages: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) data processing, 4) data presentation, and 5) conclusion drawing.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Seeing the high and low level of political awareness and trust in the government, the division in women's representation as political participation in the political realm can be divided into four types, as follows (Paige in Mukarom, 2008):

1. Active, if someone has high political awareness and trust in the government
2. Apathy (passive-depressed), if political awareness and trust in the government is low
3. Radical militants, if political awareness is high while trust in the government is very low
4. Passive, if political awareness is low, but trust in the government is very high

As women's representation in the political sphere is not easy, women legislators faced many obstacles in carrying out their main legislative tasks in the Regional People's Representative Council in Cirebon Regency, especially in the Gerindra and Demokrat Factions. According to Lycette (1994), there are several obstacles for women in their activities in the political field due to:

1. Women carry out two roles at once, namely reproductive roles and productive roles both inside and outside the home.
2. Women have relatively low education compared to men because of the different opportunities they get.
3. Cultural barriers related to the sexual division of labor and patterns of interaction between women and men limit women's movements.
4. There are legal barriers for women; one example is the prohibition of participating in education or family planning programs without their husbands' or fathers' consent.

Furthermore, the Regional People's Representative Council members in Cirebon Regency for the 2019-2024 period have a composition as in the following table.

**Table 3.1.** Composition of Legislative Members of the Regional People's Representative Council, Cirebon Regency for the Period 2019-2024

Factions	Female	Male	Total
<b>PKB</b>	2	8	10
<b>PDIP</b>	2	6	8
<b>GERINDRA</b>	3	4	7
<b>GOLKAR</b>	2	5	7
<b>NASDEM</b>	3	4	7
<b>PKS</b>	1	5	6
<b>DEMOKRAT</b>	1	3	4
<b>HANURA</b>	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>50</b>

Source: <http://dprd-cirebonkab.go.id/anggota-dprd-2009-2014>

Moreover, the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council has four commissions, as follows:

1. Commission 1 in charge of the government
2. Commission 2 in charge of the economy and finance
3. Commission 3 in charge of the development
4. Commission 4 in charge of people's welfare

**Table 3.2.** Each Commission of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council for the Period 2019-2024

N	Position	Name	Political Parties
<b>O.</b>			
1	Chairman of the Commission 1	Abdul Rohman	PDIP Faction
2	Chairman of the Commission 2	Mad Saleh	PKB Faction
3	Chairman of the Commission 3	Hermanto, S.H.	Nasdem Faction
4	Chairman of the Commission 4	Drs. H. Rasida Edy Priatna, M.M.	Golkar Faction

Source: [https://www.wikiwand.com/id/Dewan\\_Perwakilan\\_Rakyat\\_Daerah\\_Kabupaten\\_Cirebon](https://www.wikiwand.com/id/Dewan_Perwakilan_Rakyat_Daerah_Kabupaten_Cirebon)

Legislative members of the Gerindra Faction of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council for the 2019-2024 period are as follows:

**Table 3.3.** Legislative Members of the Gerindra Faction of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council for the Period 2019-2024

Electoral District of Cirebon	Name	Gender
<b>1</b>	<b>Hj. Eryati</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Sofatillah, S.H.</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>3</b>	Drs. H. Subhan	Male
<b>4</b>	H. Mulus Trisla Ageng, S.E.	Male
<b>5</b>	Sofwan, S.T.	Male
<b>6</b>	<b>Nana Kencanawati, S.Pd.</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>7</b>	R. Cakra Suseno, S.H.	Male

Source: Data processed by the author from DPC Gerindra Party, Cirebon Regency

Meanwhile, legislative members of the Demokrat Faction of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council for the 2019-2024 period are as follows:

**Table 3.4.** Legislative Members of the Demokrat Faction of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council for the Period 2019-2024

Electoral District of Cirebon	Name	Gender
2	H. Mahmud Jawa, S.H	Male
3	Muklisin Nalahudin, S.H., M.H.	Male
<b>4</b>	<b>Tarseni</b>	<b>Female</b>
7	Mamat Surahmat	Male

Source: Data processed by the author from DPC Demokrat Party, Cirebon Regency

The interviews results with informants with three female legislators from the Gerindra Faction and one female legislative member from the Demokrat Faction, Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council, are as follows:

1. Hj. Eryati said that the most important thing is the family's support as part of an internal role. Besides, there is a struggle for women to sit in parliament with an impact on external roles.
2. Sofatillah, S.H. conveyed that what must be held by women is the 1945 Constitution because it states that the equal rights of men and women are guaranteed, including in expressing opinions. Thus, for women today, there is nothing that restricts women's progress in the legislative arena. To meet at least 30% percent of women's representation, it must also be implemented in improving the quality of women legislative members so that women's representation in parliament will also have a good and significant impact.

3. According to Nana Kencanaawati, S.Pd., trust, blessing, and family support are the primary keys for women to enter politics to build the nation.
4. Tarseni argued that all regions from the center, province, regency/city to remote areas should always motivate women as progress and pillars of the state, not only in parliament but also at all levels. It should be a collective struggle.

The representation of women in the political realm in the study of the perspective of gender trends in the legislative members of the Gerindra Faction of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council was through several units of analysis in the following table 3.5.

**Table 3.5.** Research Analysis Unit

<b>Women Occupying Parliamentary seats</b>	
<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	
Quality of Gender Equality in Politics	
Situation Regarding Women in Politics	

Source: Data processed by the author

**A. Data Extraction Results on the Quality of Gender Equality in Politics**

The results extracted by the author through several sources and data collection are presented in Table 3.6 as follows.

**Table 3.6.** Quality of Gender Equality in Politics

<b>Quality of Gender Equality in Politics</b>	
<b>Informants</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>Hj. Eryati</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the regency/city level, which is the space closest to the community, it is a form of responsibility for the development and social services for the community in the region.</li> <li>• It is to get equal opportunities and positions for women in carrying out their roles in the legislature and parties and just general elections with gender equality.</li> </ul>
<b>Sofatillah, SH.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The limited representation of women in the regency/city government has resulted in unfulfilled needs.</li> <li>• Not addressing women's concerns, which are part of development priorities in regional development plans, affects women's marginalization.</li> <li>• If women are already on the political stage, they should realize that their representation in their political activities with demands for gender equality naturally cannot be prosecuted again.</li> </ul>
<b>Nana Kencanaawati, S.Pd.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existence of a 30% requirement that is mandatory for women should also be supported by an increase in their Human Resources (HR) to become male partners or rivals.</li> <li>• To support women's representation in politics, there are many ways to implement it.</li> <li>• Women get political education from their parties to increase intelligence and advance women to appear in balance with the political elites of men who have been sustainable before. Also, it is necessary to make women aware of their nature in politics to channel society's aspirations through their authority.</li> </ul>
<b>Tarseni</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The explanation quoted from the book <i>Indonesian Women and Local Politics</i> written by Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi in 2015 states that there is an urgent agenda that must be done to end the practice of male domination in national politics; namely, to form a women's movement network that involves various elements of society. It is crucial considering that the women's movement tends to be divided by differences in issues and discourses raised so far.</li> <li>• A movement is carried out to raise awareness for the public that the importance of gender-equitable political practices is needed.</li> <li>• The existence of public perceptions regarding women inherent in inappropriate domestic beings in the world of politics; from this perception, it absolutely must be ended immediately.</li> <li>• From the perspective of religious interpretation, leadership is also synonymous with masculinity (as stated by Karim et al., 2020); perhaps ideally, there should be a shift towards more gender-sensitive perspectives.</li> </ul>

**Data Extraction Results on Situation Regarding Women in Politics**

Based on the results extracted by the author through several sources and data collection, the data can be displayed in Table 3.7 as follows:

**Table 3.7.** Situation Regarding Women in Politics

<b>Situation Regarding Women in Politics</b>	
<b>Informants</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>Hj. Eryati</b>	Due to the immense diversity of women's status, there must be specific criteria for women legislative candidates. Only elected women can be nominated to fulfill the 30% quota in the general election as a list of legislative candidates from political parties. Also, there needs to be a commitment to work on gender equality.
<b>Sofatillah, SH.</b>	Obtaining positive incentive support or punitive action is also linked to performance. Regional governments, including the regional legislature, which do not involve women in regional development planning and budgeting, are obliged to receive punishment, and if they involve women, positive incentive support can be provided.
<b>Nana Kencanawati, S.Pd.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The apparent lack of women legislative members is also a reflection of this shortage. In general, political parties themselves experience difficulties attracting women who are sufficiently potential and are interested in running for legislative membership.</li> <li>It is supported by the low interest of women to enter the realm of politics because many are still influenced by the stereotype that the world of politics is negative (dirty and full of games), assuming that the world of politics is not suitable for women. Thus, the atmosphere in political parties is still very much dominated by men; it impacts the parliament, which is still not conducive to women.</li> </ul>
<b>Tarseni</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As stated in the regulations regarding the mandatory 30% quota for women legislative candidates, it is one of the crucial achievements in the journey of democracy in Indonesia after the reform. This rule is also contained in several laws: Law No. 31 of 2002 concerning Political Parties, Law no. 12 of 2003 concerning General Elections, Law no. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties, and Law No. 10 of 2008 concerning the General Election of DPR-DPRD Members, which also contains the rules on the 2009 General Election.</li> <li>Information from detiknews.com written by Siti Nurul Hidayah stated that women's representation in the realm of practical politics had been pushed in such a way through various policies, but the results are still far from satisfactory. There is also data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as quoted by Scholastica Gerintya (2017) that Indonesia ranked sixth concerning women's representation in parliament at the ASEAN level. Meanwhile, at the international level, Indonesia's position was 89th place out of 168 countries, far below Afghanistan, Vietnam, Timor Leste, and Pakistan.</li> </ul>

Source: Data analyzed by the author

**4. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis results and discussion above, it could be concluded that the representation of women in the political realm through women legislative members in the Gerindra and Demokrat Fractions of the Cirebon Regency Regional People's Representative Council could be seen from the opportunity for women to push women's political expectations. There are still a minimal number of women in the regional legislature, impacting the limited ability to voice women's interests.

With quality playing a major role in gender equality in the political realm, it is not only about the fulfillment of the number of women involved in political activities but also a statutory provision that must be fulfilled by every political party to provide opportunities for women's representation in their activities in the political realm.

Besides that, women's challenge in the political realm is the low preparation of women candidates and legislators in facing the political atmosphere and culture. Formal education alone is not enough to become an asset in taking part in the political world. One of them is the ability to lobby, which is a major part of politics. Political parties also need to build communication capacity with female cadres to help open the door to communication with their constituents.

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