



## Traces of Gender Equality in Indonesia

Wardah Yuspin; Shofiana Eka Aulia

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: wy204@ums.ac.id, shofianaekaauliao@ gmail.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i10.601>

---

### **Abstract**

Gender is a topic that is always interesting to discuss, ranging from the problems in implementing gender equality anywhere and anytime, the pros and cons between supporters and opponents of gender, to the view of how religion views gender equality. The occurrence of violence against women makes gender equality campaigns always echoed by women activists, so that women have equal rights in all aspects of life. History records how in the Kartini era, women were considered as sidekicks with 3M tasks (macak, cook, manak), cultural values that greatly influenced the roles of women and men in the public and domestic spheres from the Kartini era until now. Kartini is a symbol of women's emancipation, how Kartini's struggle against the powerlessness of women against the patriarchal culture that developed in that era. After the Kartini era, female figures emerged in the struggle for gender equality. The fact is that there are still a lot of people who consider it taboo if women take a role in the public sphere. Meanwhile, women need support from all levels of society, including the family, in carrying out real action to empower them. Whether we realize it or not, women's empowerment activities are very dependent on stigma and support from various parties, especially men. When the wider community realizes the importance of empowering women, surely Indonesia's development will experience rapid and sustainable development. Although there are many women activists who glorify and fight for gender equality, we still often encounter gender gaps. That is why, the author feels it is important to raise the theme of gender equality in this article. The author considers it very important to introduce the history of gender equality in Indonesia so that we all know how the struggle of female heroes in fighting for justice in the form of gender equality is.

**Keywords:** *Gender; Inequality; Women's Movement*

### **Introduction**

Women and men are equal partners and equal in all respects. In accordance with the mandate and ideals of the nation as stated in the 1945 Constitution. Recently, gender equality has become a national and even global issue. It is no longer a taboo for feminist activists to speak out in every public discussion

regarding gender equality. Often gender is used as a differentiator between men and women. For example, women are considered weak, emotional, motherly. Meanwhile, men are considered as strong, rational, and valiant people.

In fact, the distinguishing characteristics and traits between men and women as in the example above can change according to the space, time and circumstances experienced by a person, that is what feminism often argues for so that the concept of gender emerges.

Starting from 2015, Indonesia experienced a demographic bonus where there was a decrease in the death rate and an increase in the birth rate as well as an increase in the country's economic growth by optimally utilizing the productive age. At its peak, Indonesia is expected to experience an explosion of the productive age population in 2030.

One of the priorities of the Indonesian government at this time is to prepare for the demographic bonus as an effort to develop Indonesia's sustainable, which we usually know as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). There are 17 development goals and 169 global actions in preparing the SDG's, one of the 17 SDG's development goals is a gender equality program.

Gender equality discrimination in Indonesia is very high, as evidenced by the participation rate of women's labor force (TPAK) is still far behind compared to men. Based on BPS data in February 2018 that female LFPR is 55.44% while men are very high at 83.01% (Kemenpppa).

There are many findings in the field of the low participation and role of women in the economy and employment due to discrimination against women. The assumption of women's incompetence in economic development and work continues to occur and even runs systematically, starting from the recruitment of workers, as well as during work. Kemenpppa found that there are many forms of discrimination against women in the workplace, one of which is the provision of different salaries between men and women. BPS stated that until February 2019 the average wage for male workers in Indonesia was IDR 3.5 million, while the average wage for female workers was IDR 2.3 million. This gap will become even bigger in increasing the participation of women in economic growth and employment.

History proves that there are many female heroes who have fought for gender equality long before the issue of gender equality has become a trending topic in Indonesia and even in the world. So how did the history of gender equality emerge and become a world issue? What are the historical traces of female heroes in fighting for gender equality? Has the International Woman's Day commemoration changed society's paradigm of gender equality? And how does Islam view gender equality?

Indonesian citizens today are very less aware of studying history. The lack of historical understanding is very influential on the ideology of today's women (what we call feminism). The low awareness of the importance of history makes Indonesian women less daring to move in fighting for career advancement as a supporter of sustainable economic development.

This condition is the background for the study of the historical traces of gender equality in Indonesia as an effort to increase awareness of the importance of gender equality in the domestic and public spheres.

### ***Research Methods***

This study uses the historical method with a literature approach. (Arikunto) argues that historical research is a systematic study of documents and sources containing information about the past. The author also utilizes library research where the author conducts research and utilizes existing library resources.

## ***Discussion***

### **1. Traces of the History of World Gender Equality**

The topic of gender inequality does not only occur in Indonesia but also in the West. Europe and America, which we all know as developed countries and the direction of the world, cannot be separated from gender inequality. According to (Webster's New World Dictionary), gender is defined as the visible difference between men and women in terms of values and behavior. Meanwhile, according to the (women's studies encyclopedia), gender is defined as a cultural concept that seeks to make a distinction in terms of roles, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics between men and women who develop in society.

History records, the beginning of the feminist movement fighting for gender equality in 1550-1700 in England. In 1785 in the Netherlands there was a movement for gender equality through the publication of scientific works that carried the big theme of women's voices for justice. The feminist movement in the Netherlands was followed by the feminist liberal movement in France in the XVIII century which then spread to the Continent of Europe to America.

The situation that was very concerning in Europe and America at that time, where the patriarchal culture was very thick, made women in Europe and America aware at that time, thus forming a feminist movement. At that time, women in America and Europe did not have the right to politics, education, property, and were even discriminated against by their own families. Although some women can get an education or school, it is very difficult to get a job on the grounds that they are women. The elite, middle and lower classes at that time did not have the opportunity to work freely because they thought women were the dirtiest, weakest, and lowest creatures. Problem after problem emerged that made women in America and Europe dare to speak out for justice and gender equality.

### **2. Traces of Indonesian Female Heroes in Struggling for Gender Equality**

The gender equality movement in Indonesia has started to emerge even before Indonesia's independence. History has proven that there are many female heroes who fought for justice and gender equality.

RA Kartini is one of the female heroes in Indonesia. There is a lot of literature that tells the story of Kartini in promoting gender equality. In the Kartini era, the movement of women was very limited. We know the term women as *konco wingking* with 3 tasks, namely *macak*, *cook*, and *manak*. This thought occurred because at that time the ancestral customs were still firmly held from generation to generation, so the term the second sex emerged, the term was very popular among natives and even colonizers.

We all know that in the Kartini era, women were not allowed to enjoy education because men thought that women did not deserve to be educated, women's aspirations were not heard, daughters were under the control of their parents in the full sense of their father's so that they were free to choose any prospective son-in-law, and wives under the control of their parents. husband's full power.

Many women in the Kartini era felt injustice to the culture that developed in society. Thus, a revolt against women's injustice has emerged. RA Kartini was the pioneer of the rebellion movement at that time so that a women's emancipation movement was born.

Besides RA Kartini, we know the female hero from Aceh, namely Cut Nyak Dhien. Cut Nyak Dhien is a picture of gender equality, where women can also take part in public affairs and can even become leaders. According to Ahmad (2015), the gait of Acehnese women who dominate in the public sphere as a pattern of social engineering in Aceh, where Acehnese women will dynamically face the era

of modernization that dominates in the position of roles in the public sphere, there are similarities in the roles played as men, but requires a clear explanation with ethical standards in social engineering in the Acehese community in particular.

Even though at that time Cut Nyak Dhien was the leader in a war against the invaders, there was still discrimination against women. The assumption is that women are very weak creatures so that they are inappropriate to carry out public policies and even become leaders.

In 1872-1924, an emancipation fighter from North Sulawesi emerged named Maria Walanda Marawis. History records that North Sulawesi at that time was predominantly Orthodox. The culture that developed at that time did not allow women to have higher education and were forced to marry young. One of the ways to voice gender equality that Maria does is by boldly realizing her ideals in the Minahasa Road election, from Minahasa Road Maria she gives demands for gender equality. At that time, women did not have a voice in making their choices. Maria succeeded in changing the veil and women's voices were recognized in all elections. The expression of Maria Walanda Marawis which is very well known in the Minahasa community, "women are the pillars of the family, on the shoulders of women there is a future for children".

In the New Order era, more and more female figures emerged who dared to voice gender equality such as Dewi Sartika, Rohana Kudus, etc. And after the reform era, Indonesia had its first 5th female President, Megawati Soekarnoputri. From Megawati, the role of women in Indonesia began to be recognized in the public sphere. The feminist movement is growing. Women began to be trusted to develop their wings in the fields of politics, economics, education, etc. Until now, Megawati has an important role in Indonesian and even world politics. Not only the first female president, Megawati is also the only chairwoman of a female political party.

### **3. International Woman's Day and Its Effect on the Development of Gender Equality**

Every March 8, women around the world celebrate International Woman's Day. History records, the first originator of International Woman's Day was Clara Zetkin, a leader of the political office in Germany.

Since 1911, International Woman's Day has been celebrated every year. Women take advantage of the IWD moment to carry out gender equality campaigns in any form. IWD is not only a symbol of one organization but all elements of women regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, and nation.

*International Women's Day* become a means of reflection for all feminist movements in promoting gender equality. The trending topic in every IWD warning is a form of gender inequality in the form of violence against women. We all know that sexual crimes are a violation of human rights, although we all know that sexual crimes can be experienced by all groups, both men and women, the majority of victims who experience sexual violence are women.

Through IWD, women around the world campaign to stop sexual violence against women. We all know that in April, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian House of Representatives ratified the P-KS Bill. Indonesian women have high hopes for the P-KS Bill. Nevertheless, feminist activists continue to campaign together as a form of social movement to fight violence against women.

#### 4. Islam and Gender Equality

Many people argue that Islam is unfair in the gender equality movement, even though from various literatures the Western feminism movement emerged because of the loss of faith in the church. Islam came to change one's perspective on religion.

Surah Al Ahzab verse 33:

لَا تَرْجُجِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةَ الْأُولَىٰ أَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ آتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ اطَّعْنَ اللَّهَ لَهُ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ ۙ

*And stay in your homes and do not be adorned and (behave) like the ignorant people before, and pray, pay zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Verily, Allah intends to remove sins from you, O people of God and to cleanse you thoroughly.*

The verse above is often interpreted as Islam does not support the feminist movement. Men, especially husbands, often forbid their wives to take part outside the home with the argument of the verse above. Husbands assume that the wife's job is to stay at home taking care of her husband and educating children.

Fiqh scholars such as Abu Hanifah, Imam Syafi'i said that housework is not the wife's obligation, if the wife does not want to do housework, she should not be forced. Islam teaches each of its followers to be fair between men and women.

QS Al Hujurat verse 13:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ لِنُكَلِّمَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِنُذَكِّرَ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَأَنْتُمْ كَانُوا يُكْفَرُونَ

*O people! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, then We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*

The verse above clearly shows the equality of position between women and men in the eyes of Allah SWT both in muamalah and in worshiping Allah. The verse above serves to erode the view that Islam does not support the gender equality movement.

There is no verse in the Quran that explicitly explain gender differences. The verse of the Qur'an explicitly states that men and women have the potential to have the same faith and piety, as stated in the word of God, QS An-Nisa verse 124:

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ سَوَاءٌ فِي عِندِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

*And whoever does good deeds, both male and female, while he is a believer, then they will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the slightest.*

#### Closing

Before the independence of Indonesia, the condition of women was very worrying. Even in the world women are not only number two but like objects that have a form and cannot make a sound. Gender equality emerged from Europe and America. Based on the historical research that the author did, a historical trace study of gender equality really needs to be done as an effort to foster enthusiasm in the

struggle for the ideology of feminism. Synergy between women, men, and the government is deemed very necessary in the fight for gender equality. The spirit of RA Kartini, Cut Nyak Dhien, and other female heroes we need to emulate in carrying out the mission of justice and gender equality. When gender equality is always carried out in all aspects of life, both in the public and domestic spheres, it will certainly bring benefits to Indonesia's development growth and further reduce the number of violence against women. One of the main factors in the existence of violence against women is preserving the cultural tradition that women are weak and powerless so that they can be easily exploited.

Islam came with the principle of rahmatan lil alamin which is to bring mercy to the whole world. The Qur'an clearly states that there is no distinction between men and women. The culture of the Quraysh infidels that made women considered inferior, slaves who could be freed by anyone so that until now they have often been harassed both in the public and domestic spheres.

### References

gerakan perempuan di indonesia - Jurnal UGM, <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id> .

Rilla, Sovitriana (2020), *Kajian Gender Dalam Psikologi*. Ponorogo: Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia, Hal: 8.

<https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/index.php/page/view/23>.

Albi, Anggito dan Johan, Setiawan (2018), *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jawa Barat: CV. Jejak, Hal: 7.

Mestika, Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Jakarta: Obor Indonesia, Hal: 1.

<https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/>.

Dedi, Amrizal, *Metode Penelitian Sosial Bagi Administrasi Publik*. Medan: Ilmiah Aqli, Hal: 62.

Lia, Nuralia dan Iim, Imadudin, *Kisah Perjuangan Pahlawan Indonesia*. Ruang Kata, Hal: 72.

<https://jurnal.untan.ac.id/>.

<https://core.ac.uk/>.

<http://repository.uinjambi.ac.id/>.

Al-Qur'an dan Terjemah.

<https://media.neliti.com/>.

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).