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# **Implementation of Affirmative Action to Protect Women's Political Rights in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of Indragiri Hilir Regency**

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**Abstract:** Women's political rights are a centuries-long struggle. Women, who have often been considered second-class citizens, are struggling to gain the same rights as men in participating in political life. The struggle for women's political rights in Indonesia, including in Indragiri Hilir Regency, is an integral part of the history of the struggle for gender equality globally. Although there has been significant progress, there are still many challenges faced by women in accessing and exercising their political rights. Therefore, this research will discuss the urgency of women's political rights in the DPRD of Indragiri Hilir Regency in order to realise gender equality. Research methods was Yudicial empiric methods. The results showed that women in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) Indragiri Hilir Regency are very minimal, so this requires a new policy to provide space for women's representation in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) Indragiri Hilir Regency. Although there is an increase in the number of women who occupy political positions, especially at the legislative level, the number of women's representation still does not reach the ideal target, as stated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections.

**Keyword:** Political Rights, Women, Gender.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Political rights are a basic right of every human being. Women deserve to have an equal say in decisions that will affect their lives. Women have a different perspective than men. Women and men often have different political priorities. Women tend to focus more on issues such as gender equality, reproductive health, and violence against women. While men may focus more on economic or security issues. Women's political participation will ensure that the various interests and needs of society are represented. Women's political rights are a very important issue and relevant to our future. By giving women equal opportunities to participate in politics, we can build a more just, democratic and sustainable society.

Women's struggle for political rights is an important chapter in the history of the struggle for gender equality. For centuries, women around the world faced various forms of discrimination that limited their participation in political life. The traditional view of women as second-class citizens with only a role in domestic affairs has been a major barrier to them gaining voting rights and holding public office.

here are several international conventions that specifically regulate the protection of women's political rights. These conventions aim to ensure that women have equal rights to participate in political and governance processes, whether at the local, national or international level. Article 7 of CEDAW specifically mentions women's right to participate in political and public life. This article requires state parties to ensure that women have equal rights with men in voting and being elected in elections, participating in public policy-making and governance, accessing government positions and public institutions.

Many countries have constitutional provisions that explicitly guarantee women's political rights. In Indonesia, for example, the 1945 Constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens, including women, in terms of political participation. Some important legislation related to women's representation in Indonesia include:

- a. Law No. 7/2017 on General Elections, which requires political parties to nominate at least 30% women in the list of legislative candidates.
- b. Law No. 2/2008 on Political Parties, which stipulates that political parties must provide equal opportunities for women in party management, both at the central and regional levels.
- c. Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights which affirms women's rights to participate in politics and public life.

Although there are regulations that contain women's representation, their implementation can still be further strengthened to overcome the obstacles that exist in the field. This is because the presence of women in parliament is an important indicator in measuring the extent to which gender equality is achieved in a country's political system. Although in many countries, women have gained the right to vote and be elected, women's representation in legislative institutions, including parliament, is still far from balanced compared to men. Women's presence in parliament includes their role in policy-making, representation of the interests of women and marginalised groups, and their contribution to a more inclusive and equitable legislative process.

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Legal protection of women's political rights in legislation is an important step towards gender equality. However, to fully realise equality, sustained efforts are needed from all parties, including the government, political parties, civil society and individuals. Although the Indonesian constitution has guaranteed gender equality, its implementation in the field still faces various challenges.

Based on an interview with the Febry Zaldi as Secretary of the Regional People's Representative Council (hereinafter referred to as DPRD) of Indragiri Hilir Regency, he explained that the political rights of women in Indragiri Hilir Regency are relatively small at 13.3%, this has not reached the threshold as mandated by the constitution stipulated in article 245 of Law No. 7/2017 on General Elections which explains that 'The list of candidates as referred to in article 243 contains women's representation of at least 30% (thirty percent). This confirms that the constitution mandates legislative elections related to women's representation in parliament. Therefore, the research will examine how the Implementation of Affirmative

Action to Protect Women's Political Rights In The Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) Of Indragiri Hilir Regency.

## **METHOD**

The research method used in this study is the Empirical Juridical research method, this study will analyze the legal protection of women's political rights in the Indragiri Hilir Regency DPRD which is associated with the data found. The Empirical Juridical Research Method is a research method used in legal science to analyze legal facts or phenomena that occur in society by conducting direct observations of the practice or application of law in the field, in this case legal protection of women's legal politics. In this method, researchers collect data through interviews with parties related to the topic discussed. The empirical juridical research method is very useful for analyzing the effectiveness of the application of law in society, to find out how the law is accepted, applied, or even violated by society, and to explore the inconsistency between written law and existing social reality.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Although the constitutions of many countries have guaranteed gender equality and women's political rights, in practice, many challenges remain. These challenges are complex and interrelated, involving social, cultural, political and economic aspects. The patriarchal system that places men as leaders and key decision-makers is still strong in many societies. This creates the view that politics is the domain of men. In addition, stereotypes that compartmentalise gender roles, such as women as caregivers and men as breadwinners, limit women's space in politics. Violence against women, both physical and psychological, creates a sense of fear and intimidation that prevents women from participating in politics.

In addition, based on interviews with the Indragiri Hilir District Social Service, high poverty levels often make women focus more on fulfilling basic needs rather than participating in politics. Poverty and gender equality are closely linked and form a cycle that is difficult to break. Poverty often exacerbates gender inequality, while gender inequality also exacerbates poverty.

In fact, women can bring different perspectives and champion issues that are relevant to women and children. Women's involvement in decision-making can lead to more equitable and sustainable policies. The presence of women in parliament can inspire young women to aspire to greater heights. In Indonesia, despite efforts to increase women's representation in parliament through the 30% quota policy, there are still many challenges to overcome. Many political parties are still not serious in fulfilling the 30% quota.

The struggle to increase women's representation in parliament is a long and complex one. However, with concerted efforts from various parties, we can achieve gender equality in politics and create a better future for all. Affirmative action or affirmative action in the context of women's politics in the DPRD is a concrete effort to increase women's representation in regional legislative institutions. This policy aims to address gender imbalances in politics and provide a fairer opportunity for women to participate in decision-making. In addition to the much-discussed gender quotas, there are several other solutions from affirmative action that can be considered :

1. Political Education :

a) Women-only political education programmes: Provide training programmes specifically designed to enhance women's political capacity, ranging from an understanding of the political system to public speaking skills. Women's political education is a learning process that aims to equip women with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to actively participate in political life. This political education is critical to achieving gender equality in politics and ensuring that women's voices are heard and represented. The government, political

parties, non-governmental organisations and academics need to work together to develop a comprehensive political education programme.

b) a training programme specifically designed to improve women's political capacity, ranging from an understanding of the political system to public speaking skills. Women's political education is a learning process that aims to equip women with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to actively participate in political life. This political education is critical to achieving gender equality in politics and ensuring that women's voices are heard and represented. Governments, political parties, non-governmental organisations and academics need to work together to develop comprehensive political education programmes.

c) Integration of gender education in the curriculum: Integrate gender issues into the formal education curriculum from an early age to instil the value of gender equality. Politically educated women are better able to fight for their interests and those of their communities.

## 2. Political Party Support:

a) Allocation of campaign funds: Provide a fair allocation of campaign funds for women candidates to reduce the resource gap. Moreover, political campaigns are increasingly expensive, and women often struggle to raise sufficient funds.

b) Internal party mechanisms: Implement internal party mechanisms that support women's candidacy, such as quotas at the party board level. This is because political parties have a very crucial role in encouraging women's representation in the legislature. They are the gateway for women to enter politics and fight for their interests.

## 3. Role of Media:

a) Balanced coverage: The mass media should give balanced coverage to the achievements and contributions of women in politics. In addition, political parties that are committed to gender equality will have a more positive image in the eyes of the public.

b) Awareness campaigns: Conduct public awareness campaigns to change people's perceptions about the role of women in politics. The different perspectives brought by women can result in policies that are more comprehensive and responsive to the needs of society.

## 4. Law Enforcement:

a) Strict laws: Enforce laws that protect women's political rights and provide strict sanctions against acts of discrimination and political violence. The 30% quota policy is an effective measure to increase women's representation in legislative candidacies, an important step to ensure women's participation in political, economic, and social life on an equal basis with men. For this reason, the state needs to adopt clear and firm legal policies that support gender equality in various aspects of life, especially in political representation. Women's representation in the legislature and in various positions of power is key to ensuring that policies produced can reflect the interests and needs of all levels of society, including women.

b) Complaint mechanism: Provide an easy and safe grievance mechanism for women who are victims of political violence. Before filing a complaint, it is important to understand what is meant by discrimination in political rights. Discrimination in political rights occurs when a person is treated differently or unfairly for reasons of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or other reasons protected by law. Examples of discrimination in political rights include :

- 1) Refusal to register as a voter.
  - 2) Barriers to standing for election.
  - 3) Unfair treatment in the voting process.
  - 4) Discrimination in access to political informat.
- ## 5. Partnerships with Community Organisations :

a) Cooperation in advocacy

Work with community organisations to advocate for policies that support gender equality. Cooperation in advocacy is a very important approach to achieving the goal of social change or better policies. In the context of advocacy for specific issues, such as women's rights, child

protection, social justice, or public policy change, collaboration can amplify voices and deliver greater impact. Collaboration in advocacy involves various parties who have the same interests and goals, be it individuals, civil society organisations, government agencies, the private sector, or the general public. By working together, these parties can support each other, share resources, expand networks, and strengthen the message.

b) Women candidate development

Provide training and mentoring to female candidates to participate in political contestation. By involving women, political parties can broaden their support base. Coaching female legislative candidates is essential to ensure that they are not only able to run for office, but also have the ability and readiness to carry out their duties effectively if elected. While many women have great potential to participate in politics, they often face various challenges and barriers, such as gender discrimination, limited access to resources, and limited political experience. Therefore, the development of female candidates needs to be thorough to prepare them to compete fairly and successfully.

### **Challenges that Remain**

Although various efforts have been made, there are still many challenges that must be overcome to achieve gender equality in politics, especially for women in Indragiri Hilir Regency, including :

a) The patriarchal culture that is still strong

Patriarchal culture is a social system that places men at the centre of power and authority. This system has been embedded in various aspects of life, ranging from family, society, to politics. As a result, women often experience discrimination and inequality in various fields. Traditional views that place women as subordinates are still difficult to change. Many women do not have equal access or opportunities with men to get education or training in politics, both formal and informal. This political education is important so that women can understand how political parties work, the nomination process, and how to influence policy.

b) Lack of support from political parties

The lack of support from political parties for women is one of the major challenges in fighting for gender equality in politics. Not all political parties are serious in implementing affirmation policies for women. The lack of support from political parties for women is a major obstacle to women's equal political participation. To create meaningful change in terms of gender equality in politics, political parties need to make internal reforms that support women's empowerment, both through quota policies, education, and financial support. With this increased support, it is hoped that women will have greater opportunities to participate in policy-making that is more inclusive and equitable.

c) Limited resources

Women often face limitations in terms of access to the resources necessary for a career in politics, such as campaign funds, training, and logistical support. Without these resources, women tend to find it more difficult to win elections or even gain positions within party structures. Many political parties focus more on strategies for male voters or the majority group, neglecting issues that are important to women. Political parties may be more likely to place male legislative candidates in constituencies that are considered more favourable or have more potential to win, ignoring women or assuming that women will not be strong enough to win seats in some areas.

d) Political violence against women

The threat of violence and intimidation is still an obstacle for women in politics. Women involved in politics are often subjected to physical violence, whether in the form of direct physical attacks, beatings, or attempted murder. For example, women who compete in elections or become opposition leaders can become targets of attacks from those who feel threatened by

their presence. Addressing political violence against women requires a concerted effort from governments, political parties, civil society and international actors to create a safe and inclusive environment for women in politics.

The role of women in parliament is not just about fulfilling quotas, but has very significant implications for society as a whole. Women's representation in the legislature is a breath of fresh air for change and progress. Here are some reasons why the role of women in parliament is very important. Women bring a unique and different perspective in looking at various issues, especially those related to gender, reproductive health, violence against women, and family welfare. With women in parliament, policies produced tend to be more sensitive to the needs of women and children. The presence of women in parliament can help change the negative stigma against women who pursue a career in politics. With more women involved in politics, a culture of gender equality can be gradually built. Women's representation in parliament is key to achieving gender equality and sustainable development. By providing greater space for women to participate in politics, we can create a more just and democratic society.

One of the most effective ways to increase women's participation in politics is to implement stricter gender quota policies in political parties. Countries such as Rwanda and the Nordic countries have shown that gender quotas can significantly increase women's representation in parliament.

## CONCLUSION

Increasing women's representation in parliament is a long and complex process. It requires commitment from all parties, including the government, political parties, civil society, and individuals, to realize gender equality in politics. With joint efforts, we can create a more inclusive and representative political system. Although much progress has been made in terms of women's political rights, the challenges of implementation still remain. As happened in the Regional Representatives Council Indragiri Hilir Regency, women's representation is still at 13.3%, this is still far from the expectations of the election law which states that a minimum quota of 30% must be met, so there needs to be legal protection carried out by the government, such as making a policy that 30% is not only a requirement but an obligation that must be implemented by political parties.

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