

# Exploring 10-years Progress Political Change, Women and Reaction of Society in Aceh

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***ABSTRACT**--This special autonomy was granted in order to address the political, economic and cultural grievances of the Acehnese people. The Aceh government has the right to use its own regional symbols, to establish local political parties and considerable rights in the economic and fiscal areas. Women's positions on politic could be seen from their involvement in the political arena and the ability of women to occupy decision-making positions. Women's inability to achieve important positions in public is influenced by many factors, including ideology and government policy, as well as by social changes. This article aims to focus on the condition of Acehnese local politic and women by analyzing their roles and positions in the politic system as well as in other institutions. The discussion intends to explore the condition of political change that has triggered the marginalization of Acehnese women in part of local many areas. This article implies that the exclusion of local politic and elite politic from public spaces is largely caused by the internal and external problems, by protracted conflicts and tsunami effected in Aceh was a new face.*

***Keyword**--Politic, Women, Society, Partai Politic,*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Aceh conflict attracted some interest for a solution since the stepping down of Soeharto (Coppel, 2006). The changing of the Indonesian presidents from the New Order to the Reformation Order for Human Rights after the lifting of the Military Operation Zone on 7 August 1998. Immediately after that, women tried to advocate a campaign for human rights of women affected in the conflict through a number of activities (Tan, 2006).

The resolution of conflicts in Aceh through the 2005 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has provided new opportunities for the establishment of local parties in Aceh (Moch. Nurhasim, 35: 2012). Negotiations mediated by Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland and Director of the Crisis Management Initiative, resulted in a peace agreement known as Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Yuhdi Fahrimal, 2: 2012). Local political parties in Aceh were the result of negotiations between the GAM (Free Aceh Movement) and the Indonesian government. The formation of local political parties gave birth to democratic and practical solutions (Moch. Nurhasim, 36: 2012).

After the fall of Soeharto, the political situation became significantly different. From the end of 1999 until early 2000, the call for a referendum started in Aceh and became stronger with the lifting of the military operation zone status from Aceh on 7 August 1998 (Bourchier & Hadiz, 2003; Smith, 2002).

The Helsinki Peace Agreement had an extraordinary effect on the lives of former GAM rebels. Through the new Aceh political party, several former rebels have held various political and social positions and won many

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favorable contracts during the post-conflict reconstruction process in the province. Besides, the community is tremendously benefited in the peace process when viewed in changes in the social level of the community.

In 2017 the political conditions were determined by the choices of the Acehnese people themselves. At present, the people of Aceh are always active in accompanying, guarding, and maintaining political stability in Aceh. However, the development of Acehnese society is still easily manipulated by corrupt political elites in achieving the goals of a political target (Zulfatah, 2017: 70).

Women also have a long history in politics in Aceh. Experience of women who contributed to the many changes in Aceh's progress to date. Acehnese women 's triumph in political activities has been proven and recorded with gold ink, which is marked by several sultans (queen) leading Aceh and Samudra Pasai Kingdom (Umaimah Wahid, 2015: 386).

Furthermore, women significantly continued from the impact of violence and sexual abuse during the war. There were many types of abuse and violence lived by Women (UNFPA, 2005). Many women also became family leaders since their husbands had fled, and their children were traumatized by the conflict.

UU no. 11 of 2006 the adoption of Islamic law into regional regulations in several regions. Along with the granting of the special autonomy rights of Aceh and the Law on Governance (Erfina Fuadatul Khilmi, 2018: 48).

The government is the party having the power formally to perform community development, including women's development. Government policies and the political elite are needed in order to fight women becoming an integral part of the local political process. The government and political elite support will move the dynamics of women's development totally and continuously.

This article aims to explain the contemporary context of Acehnese local politic and women by analyzing their roles and positions in the governmental system as well as in other institutions. The discussion intends to learn the condition factors that have triggered the marginalization of women in politic. How politic and women contribute for 10 years in Aceh? The context of this discussion starts with the independence of Indonesia. The purpose is to facilitate the analysis of the changes towards Acehnese women post-conflict Independence when the ideological and structural changes contributed to women's participation in politic

## **II. LOCAL POLITICAL PARTIES AS POWER OF CHANGE**

The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 in the wake of the Asian financial crisis and the pressures of the Reformasi movement paved the way for dramatic political liberalization. The country's new rulers lead by president Habibie sought to break up the concentration of power at the center through democratic reforms and decentralization. The return to democracy unleashed an explosion of new political parties (Ben Hillman, 2012: 421).

The idea that GAM might be allowed to participate in Indonesia is a democratic political system by forming its political party ignited debate in Indonesia. Supporters argued that local political parties would complement decentralization and state-building efforts in Indonesia (Kompas, 2005).

Political parties have become a priority choice for the Acehnese people who gave confidence in winning the 2006 elections, the 2009 elections, and the 2012 elections, a dominant change, and political constellation in Aceh. Political parties such as Golkar and PPP (who were once victorious in Aceh), Democrats, PDI Perjuangan, PAN,

and others, have been displaced by the Aceh Party (Moch. Nurhasim, 45: 2012). GAM's political victory can be seen as the most phenomenal political force in political history in Aceh. This development also shows the dominance of the Aceh Party and KPA in all aspects of life in Aceh, both politically and economically. The exclusivity of the Aceh Party and several organizations formed by GAM, a consolidation carried out to welcome the new Aceh political changes (Moch. Nurhasim, 2012, 45-48 :).

According to the Party Deputy Chair, 'local parties were part of the political bargain in the peace negotiations. One day when the situation in Aceh is more stable and equal with other regions, we may decide that local parties are no longer relevant. The Secretary-General of the United Development Party agreed that local parties for Aceh are only temporarily a good solution (Ben Hillman, 2012: 429). However, until 2019 this period still controlled the votes in regional elections, although in some places the trust in local parties had declined.

One way to explore the involvement of Acehese women in politics could be by looking at women representatives in the legislative institution. Women's involvement in the legislative institution, for the last ten years, has been very limited, as shown by the number of positions held by women in the Aceh National House of Representatives, (DPR) at whether province or district level, from 1999 to 2004 and from 2004 to 2009 (Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, 59:2011).

Although both the Aceh and Indonesian Governments have issued a policy on including 30 percent of representatives to be women, its implementation is still low with women representatives making only 10 percent at the present time (Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, 60 :2011).

In the voter list, the Aceh Independent Election Commission (KIP) has ratified the Permanent Voter List (DPT) in Tanah Rencong for the 2019 Election. 593 people, while female voters were 1,754,397 people (detiknews, 2018). In fact, by being trained, women still have to continue to struggle to expand the network and can grow the trust of fellow women themselves in arranging the political change. Although every opportunity in politics has been filled, it has not reached 30% of the election rules Law No. 2 of 2008.

According to Bel Hilman who has done the opinion most accepted that local parties were more trusted by Acehese than national parties, they must work harder if they want to become big parties trusted by the people ', and Aceh Party's success as unsustainable over the long term (( Ben Hillman, 2012: 430) In addition, the failure of the Aceh political party has failed to protect the community in fostering a healthy political culture for the community (Zulfatah, 2017: 74).

### **III. METHODE**

This research uses a critical paradigm. Critical paradigm attempts to explain, the explanation of conditions in Aceh totally change after the tsunami of society, for enlightenment purposes, women's emancipation. Women should be part of the political process, they will have a fighting chance the social inequality and political culture on new periode of Sharia Law in Aceh.

The research is conducted using the field research method for research that requires the researcher directly involved with the research subjects. Field research prefers having face to face interaction with the community. Field research is a form of research that aims to reveal the meaning given by public members on the behavior and

reality around. Field research is used when the subject is still open to the possibility of research exploratory most comprehensive.

#### **IV. CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT POLICY**

In the Aceh context, the Helsinki MoU and the LoGA are the legal basis for the Aceh Government elite to make a policy. Policies in Aceh are also influenced by the presence of Local Political Parties. The Aceh Parliament is dominated by the elite of the Local Political Party, that is, the Aceh Party. It was the Aceh Party elite who insisted on fighting for the birth of the Wali Nanggroe Institution Qanun and the Aceh Flag and Coat Qanun (Yuhdi Fahrimal, 18: 2012).

The autonomy granted by the Central Government to the Aceh Regional Government unit in regulating and managing its own government affairs and the interests of the local community in accordance with the specificities or privileges of the Aceh Province region both in the political, economic and socio-cultural fields. The concept of autonomy is based on Article 18, Article 18a and Article 18b of the 1945 Constitution of the State of the Republic of Indonesia. Granting the widest possible autonomy in the political field means responsibility for the Aceh government to organize regional governments democratically and manage regional governments according to the principles of good governance, that is, transparent, accountable, professional, efficient and effective (Yuhdi Fahrimal, 13: 2012).

Under the LoGA, political power is still dominated by local parties, namely the Aceh Party and the Aceh National Party in policy decisions in 23 districts/cities, which have given birth to many new policies in the context of the Sharia Law for the lives of the people of Aceh.

The application of Islamic Sharia in Aceh is a priority for the Aceh government. Then a number of issues arise regarding how the application is due to the absence of Islamic countries that can be used as a reference in the application of Islamic shari'a, among the reasons is the understanding and implementation of shari'a that are rigid in the reality of society, different socio-cultural and others (Syamsul Bahri, 2103: 316). Adoption of Islamic law into regional regulations in several regions. Along with the granting of the special autonomy rights of Aceh and the Law on Regional Government, the adoption of the form of a regional regulation became more widespread and mushroomed after the 1999 reform process (Erfina Fuadatul Khilmi, 2018: 47). In addition, many districts have passed laws that stress public morality prohibitions on alcohol and prostitution, for example - that are generally inspired by religious teachings and enabled by a climate of conservatism but that may not be enshrined exclusively in Islam (Elizabeth Pisani & Michael Buehler, 2016: 4).

Furthermore, during the rise of local political power after the enactment of the LoGA in Aceh, civil society lost control. Thus, along with the implementation of Sharia Law in Aceh policy actors representing parties in Aceh are still unable to make justice to the community and are still half-hearted in supporting Sharia Law in Aceh.

#### **V. REALITY REACTION OF SOCIETY**

Changes in Acehese society after the Aceh peace occurred, the high attractiveness of providing support in politics. This is new in Aceh.

One of the events which greatly affected the lives of the people of Aceh was the tsunami disaster. The tsunami that struck Aceh at the end of 2004 became a turning point for the people of Aceh. The tsunami brought many changes in society. It began with a peace agreement between GAM and the Indonesian government, approximately 8 months after the Tsunami, life. Acehese society is increasingly open and democratic. Openness to the outside world after the conflict opens new spaces to reconstruct the identity that has been formed. The new Islamic Sharia was formed a few years before the Tsunami and became an inherent identity in the people of Aceh, also reconstructed to be able to follow the openness and change of society.

### ***1.1 Community perspective***

Acehnese society is a pluralistic society, because Acehese are now the result of mixing with various nations as a result of their long historical process (Sri Astuti A. Samad, 2017: 34)

The post-tsunami Aceh community slowly began to change into a metropolitan society and was uprooted from the historical roots that prioritized the Islamic Sharia as a guide in behaving and sources of law in society. Policies related to Islamic Sharia are often not based on the will of the people who actually really want the implementation of Islamic Sharia in a kaffah (Siti Ikramatoun, 2016: 11).

When viewed from the life of the Acehese education community now far behind other developed and developing worlds, and even Acehese education is also lagging behind other Provinces in Indonesia. Aceh's education ranking is at number 25, out of 34 provinces in Indonesia, whereas Aceh's education allocation reached Rp. 3.33 trillion in 2010 (M. Shabri Abd. Majid, 20: 2014). The world of education in Aceh Province still faces many problems, one of which is complaints about inadequate educational facilities and infrastructure and is accompanied by the low quality of education at all levels of education.

In Aceh itself, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as quoted on Sunday (7/7/2019) until September 2018 there are at least 831,500 residents who are in the net of poverty. This amount represents 15.68% of the total population in Aceh. With a record poverty rate of 15.68%, Aceh became the province with the highest poverty rate on the island of Sumatra,

The prolonged conflict between GAM and the Indonesian government and the tsunami disaster has brought a social change for the people of Aceh, but because of a strong Islamic education base and social integration is still well established (Sri Astuti A. Samad, 2017: 45).

### ***1.2 Women in politics***

The experience of women in the past period, women representing women's voices have not been able to build the quality of women in terms of quality related to human resources. Apart from that it is often not a priority, for example, it can be seen that women's involvement in the peace process is very minimal. However, Acehese women are actively involved in the community at the village / village level in the activities of village organizations as development agents. The peaceful conditions in Aceh enable women to gain a new understanding of their rights. Opportunities for women to play a role in socio-political change in society give rise to leadership potential and

strengthening women's organizations. In addition, for the first time in the history of Aceh, female village leaders or keuchik leaders emerged (Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, 4: 2008).

Women awareness about marginal conditions today has a strong trigger to perform the counter to the ruler ceremony so that it is possible for them to appear as parts of the civilization process. But in the progress of Aceh in various fields, the problem of women has not been able to be a success in development (Umaimah Wahid, 2015: 385).

Entering decentralization on political issues, there was a change in Indonesian politics. Acehese women began to involve themselves in regional elections at the regional, provincial and central levels. Increasing women are involved in politics, but there are still problems both internal and external. In this case it is inseparable from the existence of men who widely dominate the political arena. Men are very dominant in formulating the rules of the political game and defining standards for evaluation. Furthermore, political life is often regulated according to male norms and values. In some cases, even according to male lifestyles (Nurul Jeumpa, 166: 2016). Seeing this phenomenon, the power of women's political beliefs is still masculine which places men as those who deserve to be leaders. Women's thoughts must be changed so that women can politics freely in society.

The government has recognized the needs of women by accommodating forms of affirmative action through the formation of a Women's Empowerment Agency at the provincial level (Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem, 4: 2008). Furthermore Indonesia was one of the earliest countries to ratify CEDAW, namely 1984, shortly after the convention was ratified. CEDAW ratification is stipulated in Law No. 7 of 1984. Further, 2000 Indonesia ratified the results of the Beijing Convention (1995) and made it an area in Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 on gender mainstreaming and Election Law No.12 / 2003 article 65 (1) minimum quota 30% women in the list of legislative candidates (candidates).

However, gender inequalities rooted in socio-culture have resulted in fewer women reaching higher education than men. As a result, women do not have adequate knowledge and cannot take part in politics. However, when viewed men involved in politics in Aceh in particular, have the same average level of education as women (Nurul Jeumpa, 158: 2016). Gender equality has begun to become a priority for Indonesia 1998 CEDAW was ratified by Indonesia, one of the goals of national development must continue to be pursued by the government. In fact, in today's condition, Indonesia still needs time to transfer women's issues.

One of the biggest challenges to increasing women's political participation is the internal conditions of political parties, which are still very discriminatory towards women. Political parties are the main key that determines women's political participation. In addition, it is not only to fulfill the quota so that women who are elected or invited can be in the form of nepotism and women who have not been eligible for politics. The party cannot provide full support to women so that women struggle alone in carrying out campaigns and outreach to the community. The formation of thinking power in politics is not possessed by women so that the approach to society, especially in men's communities, is more complicated. According to one of the legislative candidates in the party itself, the men feel that they are in the presence of women so that women experience internal conflicts with fellow party members.

Naimah Hasan (2008), in her writing, explains that women at the present time are involved in decision-making (executive), but only to a limited degree. The same also applies to legislative and judicative institutions. In the

contemporary context, Acehese women not only have limited access or opportunity, but also lack strategic positions in any institutions (Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, 57: 2011). Institutions legislative, there are only a limited number of women in legislative positions (Suksi, 2011).

Weak human resources for women and power, on the contrary some women have education but are not gender sensitive so the presence of women in strategic positions does not help women in the issue of women's participation in development in Aceh. This can be seen in rural areas in Aceh that only a few women are independent, so they cannot encourage their children in the learning process. One example of Jari Aceh in North Aceh is that it has made free English speaking classes, and previously there had been meetings with each woman. However, it still takes a long time to encourage the learning process.

The efforts of women activists in the Duong Pakat Inong Aceh I, II was Women's Congress conducted in Banda Aceh. One of the agenda items was to discuss women's issues, conflict, and peace. The topics discussed in the Congress also included Islamic law, Informal Law, women and social changes, women roles in peace-promoting in Aceh, access to economic and human resources, as well as women's roles in politics and decision-making (Blackburn, 2004 ). This has encouraged women to be involved in various opportunities as agents of development and politics, but the struggle has not yet yielded maximum results.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The neighborhood legislature of Aceh has experienced noteworthy political and authoritative change because of the more prominent self-sufficiency of nearby government contrasted with different areas. The law on the administration of Aceh (LOGA), Law No 11/2006, has definitely changed the national and sub-national relations by moving force and budgetary assets to the Aceh locale.

Seeing the Acehese women condition today that have not found a good formula to rise maximally as Aceh human resources, then it gives rise to a big question for women themselves, Acehese people generally, and especially for Aceh government and political elite.

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