

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION TO ESTABLISH ANTI-CORRUPTION IN THE VILLAGE GOVERNMENT OF KOTARAJA, HULU SUNGAI UTARA

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Abstract: The representation of women in village governance, particularly in the Village Consultative Body (BPD), is mandated by Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. Fulfillment of this mandate becomes a subject of debate when the role is merely symbolic to meet the quota of women in village governance. In this context, the method employed is qualitative analysis, utilizing a socio-legal approach that highlights the complexity of social and legal dynamics influencing women's representation in the Village Consultative Body. The role of female representatives is crucial in enhancing the welfare of rural communities, simultaneously contributing to the realization of a corruption-free village. Additionally, they possess a unique closeness and empathy towards the issues faced by women in their villages, enabling them to gain the trust of the community. Residents of Kota Raja Village also perceive female candidates as being corruption-free and capable of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, thereby earning trust from their respective neighborhood associations (RT - Rukun Tetangga). This situation is evident in the increased representation of women in the governance of Kota Raja Village, especially in the Village Consultative Body. In the newly elected Village Consultative Body for the period 2023-2029, 50% of its members are women, up from 44%. This figure demonstrates the positive perception of Kota Raja Village residents regarding the importance of women's representation in village governance. However, doubts persist regarding whether women's representation is merely symbolic and whether it reflects sincere efforts to empower women in village governance. Nonetheless, this raises further questions about the skills of female representation in addressing the complex issues faced by rural communities and application within the framework of Indonesian law.

Keywords: Women representative; village governance; anti-corruption

1. INTRODUCTION

Often, discussions surrounding the concept of Good Governance tend to overlook the imbalance in the roles between men and women, opting for a neutral stance. On the other hand, Law Number 6 of 2014 regarding Villages requires the representation of women in village governance, particularly as members of the Village Consultative Body. This issue is crucial because the principles that must be implemented to achieve Good Governance are participatory, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus, equality, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability. These principles are interconnected, making the representation of women crucial in the functioning of village governance.

According to the Village Law, residents can manage their territory more extensively. Within this Village Law, a village is defined as a legal community unit with territorial boundaries authorised to regulate and manage government affairs, the interests of the local community based on community initiatives, ancestral rights, and traditional rights recognised and respected in the governance system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

However, the noble intention to develop villages is tainted by cases of corruption that occur in village governments. For instance, the Indonesian Corruption Watch records increased corruption in villages yearly. Corruption in villages, especially concerning village budgets, is one of the fundamental problems. ICW's records show that from 2015 to 2017, there were 154 corruption cases at the village level, resulting in a state loss of IDR 47.56 billion (ICW, 2018). This trend continues to rise, with 592 cases in 2021 and a loss of IDR 433.8 billion (DW, 2023).

This problem arises because managing a significant budget at the village level is not accompanied by principles of transparency, participation, and accountability in the governance of politics, development, and village finances.

The role of women in village governance is crucial, given the mandate of women's representation in the Village Law, especially within the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Women who become members of the BPD can maximise their role as anti-corruption agents in their communities by promoting the ideas of transparency and creating a

clean and corruption-free village. Therefore, there is a need to map out how women are involved in village governance to achieve a clean and corruption-free village in the North Hulu Sungai Regency, especially in Kota Raja Village.

The authors chose the North Hulu Sungai Regency as the field research due to the Integrity Assessment Survey (SPI) by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in 2022, specifically for 14 local governments in South Kalimantan Province. The top position is held by Hulu Sungai Selatan Regency (with a score of 81.82), followed by Tabalong Regency (79.57), Tanah Laut Regency (79.68), and Barito Kuala Regency (with a score of 79.29). Meanwhile, Banjarmasin City only scored 76.23. Each other pemda, including the South Kalimantan Provincial Government, scores only 73.76, Banjarbaru City (73.10), Tapin Regency (73.93), Tanah Bumbu Regency (71.93), Banjar Regency (72.50), Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency (72.01), Balangan Regency (73.36), Kotabaru Regency (70.18), and the lowest is North Hulu Sungai Regency (HSU) with only 67.53.

Based on this survey, the position of North Hulu Sungai Regency is the lowest among the 13 local governments in South Kalimantan. It is even the most inferior compared to other regencies and cities. Given this situation, it is essential to understand the perspective of the role of the community, especially Village Heads and Village Apparatus, regarding the necessity of women's representation, especially in creating a clean village government.

Therefore, this research addresses three issues: what factors influence the representation of women in village governance in promoting a corruption-free village in North Hulu Sungai Regency, what strategies can be employed to enhance women's representation in village governance in combating corruption and realising a corruption-free village in North Hulu Sungai Regency, and how do the community's perceptions and roles concerning women's representation in village governance contribute to the realisation of a corruption-free village in North Hulu Sungai Regency. These issues aim to map out the factors affecting women's representation in village governance and their role in promoting a corruption-free village in North Hulu Sungai Tengah, especially in Kota Raja Village, which serves as the research location. The researcher's goal is to

identify the strategies used by women involved in village governance to combat corruption and achieve a corruption-free village, as this will make it easier for women to gain community support in realising Good Governance.

2. METHODS

This research is a socio-legal study to understand how the law works in society, especially regarding the rule requiring women's representation in village governance. This method uses qualitative analysis, conducting interviews with respondents who are considered stakeholders to obtain primary data (McConville, 2007).

This study has two types of research materials: literature and empirical. The literature research consists of:

1. Primary legal materials comprise various laws and regulations on villages and women's representation.
2. Secondary legal materials include books, legal journals, and various mass media articles.

For the empirical method, researchers choose respondents who are stakeholders and the primary data sources for this study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Overview of Kota Raja Village, North Hulu Sungai

Based on its astronomical location, North Hulu Sungai Regency is at coordinates 2' to 3' South Latitude and 115' to 116' East Longitude. Geographically, the North Hulu Sungai Regency has the following boundaries: a) West borders with South Barito Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, and Tabalong Regency. b) East: borders with Balangan Regency. c) South: borders with Central Hulu Sungai and South Hulu Sungai Regencies. d) North: borders with South Barito Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, and Tabalong Regency. The government of North Hulu Sungai Regency was established in 1953 under Law No. 27 of 1959 and Law No. 3 Drt. of 1953, since the formation of the second-level region in Kalimantan (Indonesian State Gazette 1953 9, Supplement to the Indonesian State Gazette 2756) under the law (Indonesian State Gazette 1959 Number 72, Supplement to the Indonesian State Gazette 1820) with the capital in

Amuntai, spanning an area of 892.7 km² or 2.38% of the total area of South Kalimantan Province. North Hulu Sungai Regency consists of 219 villages/urban villages divided into ten sub-districts. These sub-districts are Danau Panggang (147.55 km²), Paminggir (196.78 km²), Babirik (71.93 km²), Sungai Pandan (61.10 km²), Sungai Tabukan (18.47 km²), Amuntai Selatan (156.97 km²), Amuntai Tengah (84.72 km²), Amuntai Utara (37.86 km²), Banjarang (109.56 km²), and Haur Gading (37.97 km²). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of North Hulu Sungai, in 2020, the population of North Hulu Sungai Regency reached 226,727 people. BPS data from 2022 also shows that HSU Regency has a poverty rate of 6.14% with a poverty depth of 0.85, while the economic growth rate is at -0.67% with a Human Development Index of 66.12 and a Gender Empowerment Index of 70.36. Meanwhile, Kota Raja Village is located in the Amuntai Selatan Sub-district with coordinates 115.22285 East Longitude and -2.434743 South Latitude. Kota Raja Village comprises 871 households spread across 8 RT. Kota Raja Village is a middle-class village with a self-help classification and the following boundaries: a) North: Jumba and Palampitan Villages/Urban Villages. b) South: Jarang Kuantan Village/Urban Village. c) East: Kota Raden Village/Urban Village. d) West: Teluk Paring Village/Urban Village.

3.2. Function and Duties of the Village Consultative Body

Indonesia is a unitary state that uses a decentralisation system in its government administration. In this division of governmental power, the village is one of the smallest units in Indonesia's governmental structure. As per Article 1 number 43 of Law No. 23 of 2014 on Local Government, villages are recognised by the state as legal community units with their government and are authorised to regulate their governance without interference from other parties. Moreover, Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages significantly influences the perfection of autonomy, previously limited to regional governments. This law provides a more transparent and definite relationship between villages and the central government and between villages and provincial governments (Wisnaeni, 2022).

For the governance at the village level to function effectively, there needs to be an institution capable of managing it. The village government, headed by the village

chief, also known as 'kepala desa', is assisted by village officials as part of the village government apparatus. Another critical institution in the village governance structure is the Village Consultative Body (BPD). Its members represent the village population, chosen democratically. The Village Consultative Body (BPD) is more comprehensively regulated in Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, specifically in Section Seven. The BPD's functions or tasks, as stated in Article 55, include (a) discussing and agreeing on draft Village Regulations with the Village Head; (b) collecting and channelling village community aspirations; (c) supervising the performance of the Village Head.

Additionally, the rights or authorities of the BPD, as mentioned in Article 61, are: (a) to oversee and request information about village governance from the Village Government; (b) to express opinions on village governance, village development, community development, and village community empowerment; and (c) to receive operational costs for carrying out its duties and functions from the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget.

The powers of BPD members, as stated in Article 62, include (a) proposing draft Village Regulations, (b) asking questions, (c) submitting proposals or opinions, (d) electing and being elected, and (e) receiving allowances from the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget. With these duties and authorities, the BPD plays a crucial role in overseeing, discussing, and making decisions related to governance and development at the village level, ensuring active community participation in these processes.

The structure of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) is a partner to the village head in empowering the village community. Its members consist of community leaders representatives from neighbourhood units (RT) and community units (RW), elected by the village population. It's important to note that the village head and village officials are kept from being members or chairs of the BPD, thus ensuring its supervisory role over the village head.

Meanwhile, the Village Community Institution (LMD) is regulated by Law No. 6 of 2015 and the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 110 of 2016. The LMD's management consists of village officials and community leaders, with the village head

as its chair. This indicates the significant role of the village head in the village governance structure or autonomy (Kushandajani, 2017).

The Village Consultative Body (BPD) is a deliberative institution at the village level that plays a role in discussing and approving village government policies. Its purpose is to strengthen institutional performance at the village level, build solidarity, and enhance community participation and empowerment. This is achieved by organising Village Consultations, a forum where the BPD, Village Government, and community representatives can discuss and reach a consensus on strategic issues in village governance. The outcomes of these Village Consultations are recorded in the meetings' decisions, which form the basis for the BPD and Village Government to create village government policies.

Under Law No. 9 of 2015, the Village Consultative Body is considered to have fulfilled its role when it has participated in making village policies and accommodated the aspirations of the community (Rodhiyah & Harir, 2016). From the community's standpoint, a key aspect felt in the era of regional autonomy is the increased transparency in village government management and the shortening of bureaucratic processes. This, both directly and indirectly, can positively affect the progress of village development (Ngarsiningtyas & Sembiring, 2016).

The presence of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in village governance is evidence of community participation. This aligns with the primary objective of establishing the BPD, which serves as a manifestation of the entire village community and represents a high-level institution. The BPD also fully embodies and executes the sovereignty of the village community (Malik, 2020).

The Village Consultative Body (BPD) is a state institution playing a crucial role in realising good governance in a democratic environment. According to Surbakti, as cited by Abdul Muis, there are four indicators of democratic government:

1. Extensive authority granted to autonomous regions.
2. A relatively balanced power distribution between the legislative and executive bodies in the regions.
3. Political and legal accountability of those in authority.

4. The active participation of community elements in the regional political process. (Sonhaji, 2015).

Smith defined *Good Governance* as:

A government that is democratically organised within a democratic political culture and efficient administrative organisations, plus the right policies, particularly in the economic sphere (Smith, 2007).

The emphasis on the term 'economic sphere' indicates a tendency towards policies favouring free trade, privatisation of state-owned businesses or companies, and poverty prevention measures such as increased budget allocations for education and health. However, there are various debates concerning the trend towards free trade, which is feared to spur uncontrolled capitalism, as expressed by concerns raised by Ghodsee. (Ghodsee, 2018). Meanwhile, the United Nations defines Good Governance as policies aimed at sustainable human development, executed by a government that is democratic, decentralised, empowering, and accountable. Five key criteria serve as a reference for this definition (Graham et al., 2003):

Table 1 *Good Governance Principles*

The Five Principles of Good Governance

Legitimacy and Voice	<p>Participation: Women and men have equal rights and voice in decision-making, directly and through representatives who advocate for their interests. Broad participation is formed through the freedom of association and assembly.</p> <p>Consensus Orientation: Good Governance mediates differing interests to reach agreements in the common interest. Where possible, this approach is also applied to policies and procedures.</p>
Direction	Strategic Vision: Government leaders, together with the community, have a broad perspective on Good

	Governance and human development, as well as an understanding of what is needed for these interests.
Performance	Responsive Effective and Efficiency.
Accountability	Accountability: Policymakers in government, the private sector, and civil society organisations must be accountable, as well as institutional stakeholders. Transparency: Transparency is fostered through the free flow of information.
Fairness	Persamaan Hak (equity): laki-laki dan perempuan memiliki kesempatan yang sama untuk meningkatkan serta memelihara kesejahteraan mereka. Rule of Law: Governance is conducted according to legal frameworks.

Based on these principles, the realization of Good Governance demands proper government accountability, which requires legislative oversight. At the village level, this body is the BPD.

3.3. Representation of Women in the Village Consultative Body of Raja Hulu Sungai Utara City

Women's representation in the membership of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) is regulated in Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. Specifically, Article 56, paragraph 1, states that the filling of BPD members should be democratic, further emphasized in Article 72, paragraph 1, of Government Regulation No. 43 of 2014. This regulation dictates that the filling of BPD membership should be done democratically, either directly or through representation, while ensuring the sovereignty of the people. Additionally, the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 110/2016 concerning the BPD mandates the inclusion of women in the BPD structure. At least one female member

must be placed in a membership structure that ranges from a minimum of five to a maximum of nine members.

In the village of Kota Raja, it is noted that there are nine elected BPD members for this period, with eight representing each neighborhood unit (RT) and one female representative. Out of these nine BPD members, five are women. From our interview with Mrs. Heldawati, the female representative in the BPD of Kota Raja, several factors influence the involvement and representation of women in the village, including:

a. Trust and Capability

Most women elected in the previous BPD elections had already been trusted and responsible for implementing village services and programs such as BKR Cadres and Family Planning Cadres, executing programs like Posyandu for toddlers, adolescents, and older people. Their reliability in serving as village cadres and the fact that the village government or administrators of Kota Raja village are predominantly women contribute to this trust.

As per an interview with the Head of Kota Raja village:

"The current administration of Kota Raja Village, or the present government, is predominantly female. Starting from the Secretary of the Village, the Village Treasurer, and the clerks, the majority are women who have also passed skill tests according to the procedure, thus being elected based on their expertise."

The Chairperson of the BPD of Kota Raja village added that a similar phenomenon occurred in the BPD elections, where women candidates were elected in their respective neighbourhood units (RT) because they were seen as capable and able to carry out their duties and trusts, thereby gaining confidence from their electoral areas.

b. Self-Motivation

Apart from community support, as explained by Mrs. Heldawati in an interview, another factor is the desire to help women in the village and address various women-related issues. It is often felt that only women can truly

understand other women's experiences. If men represent women, they may only partially accommodate women's needs. Women also tend to feel more comfortable sharing with other women, so joining the BPD allows them to absorb and represent women's aspirations more effectively.

c. Healthy Village Politics

The representation of women in the BPD of Kota Raja village, exceeding 50%, signifies the absence of money politics. It would be challenging for women to have significant capital for candidacy and the election process. It is also noted that in the previous term, 4 out of 9 BPD members were women, and this number has increased in the current period. The Chairperson of the BPD of Kota Raja village confirmed that half of the BPD candidates were women. Mrs Heldawati also affirmed that there was no monetary, political competition among candidates during the election process, contributing significantly to the health of democracy and women's representation in creating an anti-corruption village in Kota Raja.

3.4. The Role of Women in the Realization of the Anti-Corruption Village

Researchers found several roles played by women in Kota Raja village in realising an anti-corruption village, including:

a. Promoting Independence and Equitable Community Welfare

Female BPD members focus on poverty alleviation, giving special attention to impoverished and vulnerable families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the village received several programs to maintain economic stability and community welfare. Here, the BPD played a role in ensuring the targeted distribution of aid to each neighbourhood unit (RT). In an interview, Mrs. Hildawati explained that she prioritised aid for families headed by women, widows, and older people. She also ensured that social assistance and family hope programs (PKH) were not misdirected or distributed based on kinship, reflecting steps towards female representation in creating an anti-corruption village in Kota Raja.

Mrs. Hildawati, a female BPD member of Kota Raja, also helps village women access free healthcare services by assisting with BPJS health insurance administration and necessary letters from the village government. She often goes beyond administrative help, providing transportation to healthcare facilities for families without vehicles. This empathy and sensitivity reflect the support among women in Kota Raja village.

Furthermore, the female BPD members actively monitor and assist in the operation of small and medium enterprises (UMKM) managed by women in Kota Raja, promoting independence, family welfare, and positive self-actualisation for women in the village.

b. Monitoring Development Implementation and Conveying Aspirations

Female Kota Raja BPD members actively participate in formal and informal meetings or deliberations. They supervise development projects based on empowerment, such as enhancing crafts and small businesses to improve women's economic income in the village. Additionally, they actively monitor and oversee the village's development projects.

From these interviews, researchers conclude that increasing women's representation in village governance should begin with healthy village politics that do not normalise money politics. This approach creates a clean democratic process and enhances women's participation in village governance. The representation of women in Kota Raja is directly proportional to empowerment programs for women and village development.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Several factors affect women's representation in village governance in fostering an anti-corruption village in Hulu Sungai Utara District. These include the active participation of female BPD candidates in village activities before their election. Moreover, they possess a special closeness and empathy towards issues faced by women in their village, enabling them to gain the community's trust. The residents of Kota Raja village also believe that female candidates are less likely to be involved in

corruption and can fulfil their duties and responsibilities, thus gaining trust from their electoral areas (RT).

The strategies employed by female representatives include promoting independence and equitable welfare directly within the community. Additionally, they actively supervise government programs implemented in their village. For instance, they recheck recipients' data of the Family Hope Program (PKH) and social assistance (bansos) to ensure no misdirection of aid or distribution based on kinship. These female representatives also actively provide direct services to the poor and uneducated in the village, such as assisting with the administration of BPJS Health insurance and necessary letters from the village government, due to many residents' unfamiliarity with administrative tasks.

There has been an increase in women's representation in the governance of Kota Raja village, particularly in the BPD. In the newly elected BPD for the 2023-2029 period, 50% of the members are women, an increase from the previous 44%. This reflects a positive perception among the residents of Kota Raja village regarding the importance of women's representation in village governance.

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