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Massey University

**WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN
INDONESIA: A CASE STUDY OF ENGENDERING
LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NORTH SUMATRA**

ASIMA YANTY SYLVANIA SIAHAAN

2004



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This is to certify that the research carried out for my Doctoral thesis entitled "Women and Local Governance in Indonesia: Case Study of Engendering Local Governance in North Sumatra" in the School of People Environment and Planning, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand is my own work and that the thesis material has not been used in part or in whole for any other qualification.

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**WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN
INDONESIA: A CASE STUDY OF ENGENDERING
LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NORTH SUMATRA**

A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Development Studies at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2004

Abstract

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the complexities involved in engendering local governance and to identify strategies to encourage gender equitable partnerships between stakeholders in local governance in Third World countries. Local governance refers to the dynamic yet complicated process of interaction between state and non-state actors involved in local level development processes. Considering the invisibility of women in local governance, this study focuses heavily on women's agency, that is, the way women redefine and reconstruct identities and interactions in engendering local governance despite the given constraints. The central argument in this thesis is that engendering local governance requires transformation of structures and processes of governing at the local level so that they recognise and are responsive to differences between men and women in their values and responsibilities. Relevant institutions should then integrate these differences in policies and in managing development at the local level.

Fieldwork in North Sumatra, Indonesia highlighted how the interlocking of public and private patriarchy complicates the engendering of local governance. Both within and beyond the household there are constraints put on women that impede their participation in local governance. Analysis of case studies of *perwiridan* (Moslem women's religious grouping), SPI (Serikat Perempuan Independen/ Union of Independent Women) and women working in local government found that relationships at the household level significantly influence gender relations in local governance. Reproduction of images of 'good' and 'bad' women is one of the most effective instruments to subordinate and control women in North Sumatra, meaning that it is not easy for women to formulate and defend their personal interests. Women often experience severe threats of physical, psychological and verbal violence when they attempt to influence formal decision making at the local level. Based on a further case study of the implementation of decentralisation, this study also found that decentralisation does not automatically bring local government closer to women due to the interweaving of structural, cultural, and financial barriers local government faces in implementing gender mainstreaming policies in North Sumatra. The intertwining of gendered structures of local government and gendered construction of the community contribute to the marginality of women in service delivery and in public decision making at the local level.

This study rejects the assumption that women are passive recipients in local governance since they contribute significantly in fulfilling household and community needs and interests. Through knowledge and understanding to construction of power at the local level, women creatively produce and use alternative strategies which are based on their sexuality and traditional gender roles in challenging and transforming gender inequity at the local level and in improving the quality of everyday life. By raising women's self esteem, confidence and solidarity in reconstructing gendered relations at the household and community levels, women's grassroots organisations open up alternative arenas for political expression for women which is crucial for the realisation of good local governance.

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GLOSSARY

Adat = Customary law and tradition

Anggota RT = Registered household head residing in an RT

APBD (Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah) = Regional Government Budget

APBN (Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara) = National Government Budget

Arisan lingkungan = Neighbourhood self rotating credit scheme

Balai desa = Community meeting hall

BAPPEDA (*Badan Perencana Pembangunan Daerah*) = Regional Development Planning Board

BAPPENAS (*Badan Perencana Pembangunan Nasional*) = National Development Planning Board

Becak = Thrisaw

Bilal = One who summons the faithful to prayer

Biro Pemberdayaan Perempuan = Women's Empowerment Bureau/WEB

Bu Camat = Wife of head of sub-district

Bu Lurah = Wife of sub-ward head

Bu Kepala Desa = Wife of village head/chief

Bumbu = food's spices

BPD (*Badan Perwakilan Desa*) = Village Representative Body (VRB)

Camat = Head of sub-district

Desa = Village/ administrative rural region that includes several hamlets

Dharma Wanita = Civil Service Bureaucracy Women's Auxiliary

Dibawah ketiak istri = Under wife's armpit. It is used to describe men who are under his wife's control

DPR (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*) = People's Representative Council

DPRD (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*) = Regional House of Representatives

DIPDA (*Daftar Isian Proyek Daerah*) = Regional Development Project List

Forum BPD Perempuan Deli Serdang = Forum for female VRB members in Deli Serdang

GBHN (*Garis Besar Haluan Negara*) = Broad Outline of State Policy

GSI (*Gerakan Sayang Ibu*) = Love the Mother Movement

GERWANI (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*) = Indonesian Communist Party's Women's Auxiliary

GNOTA (*Gerakan Nasional Orang Tua Asuh*) = Foster Parents' National Movement

Golkar (*Golongan Karya*) = Functional Party

Gotong royong = Practices of mutual cooperation

Gusti = Master

Hadis/hadith = Sayings and stories concerning the life of Muhammad which have been validated and codified by Islamic scholars

Halus = Refined, cultured

HAPSARI (*Harapan Perempuan Sukasari*) = the Hope of Sukasari Women

Ibu = Mother or married woman; polite form of address to woman in higher position

Ibu rumah tangga = Housewife

Infaq = (voluntary donations which are usually given to the poor, orphans and widows)

Inpres (*Instruksi Presiden*) = Presidential Instruction

Jaring Pengaman Sosial/JPS = Social Safety Net

Jilbab = Moslem women's dress

JOIPARA (*Jaringan Organisasi Independen Pembela Rakyat*) = Network of Independent Organisations of the Defender of the People

Kabupaten = District

Kader = Cadre/head of a ward's assistants

Kartu Tanda Penduduk = Identity card

Kasar = Rough, rude

Kawula = People/servant

Kecamatan = Sub-district or ward

Kelurahan = Village/ administrative urban region that includes several hamlets

Kepala Lingkungan = Neighbourhood chief/ Head of hamlet

KB (*Keluarga Berencana*) = Family Planning Program

Kecamatan = sub district

Kelompok Pelaksana PKK = Implementation group of PKK

Kelompok remaja = Youth Section (one of functional sections of RK)
Kepala desa = Head of desa (rural village)
Kepala lingkungan = head of a ward
kerja bakti (voluntary work in mutual cooperation)
Ketua Umum = chief/head/CEO
Ketua RT = Chief of RT
Keyboard porno = Vulgar keyboard
Kodrat = Natural talents
Kodrat and martabat = Natural talents and proclivities
Mitra sejajar = Harmonious gender partnership
Peran ganda = Women's dual role
KORAMIL (Komando Rayon Militer) = Local military command
KORPRI (*Korps Pegawai Republik Indonesia*) = Indonesian Civil Servant Corp)
Kota = Municipalities
Kualat = Doomed
Ladang = Dry field
Propeda (Program Pembangunan Daerah) = Regional Development Program
Propenas (Program Pembangunan Nasional) = National Development Program
LKMD (Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa) = Institution for the Defence of Village Society
LPJ (Lembar Pertanggung Jawaban) = Accountability report of head of local government
Lurah = Head of urban locality
Madrasah = Islamic school which offers secular as well as religious subject
Malu = Shy
Mandor = Head of workers
Mbak = Older sister; Javanese word to address older sister and older woman
MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*) = People's Consultative Assembly
MenUPW (*Menteri Urusan Peranan Wanita*) = Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women

MNPP (Menteri Negara Pemberdayaan Perempuan) = State Ministry of Women's Empowerment

Menokohi suami = Fooling husband

Minta ijin = Ask for permission

Musyawarah = searching for consensus through compromise and syntheses

Otonomi daerah = Regional autonomy

PAD (Pendapatan Asli Daerah) = Local revenue

Panca Dharma Wanita = Five Women's Obligations

Pancasila = Five Principles of Indonesian State Philosophy

Pantun = a rhyming, four line stanza that is sung

PMD (Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa) = Village Community Empowerment

Peran ganda = Multiple role

Perempuan baik = Good women

Perempuan nakal = Bad women

Perwiridan = Moslem women's religious grouping

Pertemuan Akbar Perempuan Pedesaan = Great Meeting of Rural Women

PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia) = Indonesian Communist Party

PKK (Pembinaan/Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga) = Family Welfare Development Program

POSYANDU (Pos Pelayanan Terpadu) = Integrated Health Service clinic

PROPENAS (Program Pembangunan Nasional) = National Development Plan

PROPEDA (Program Pembangunan Daerah) = Regional Development Plan

PSW (*Pusat Studi Wanita*) = Women Studies Centre

PUSKESMAS = Public primary health care centre

Qur'an = the Moslem holy scripture

Remaja mesjid = Moslem youth group

Repelita (Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun) = Five Year Development Plan

RT (Rukun tetangga) = Neighborhood association

RK = North Sumatra municipal government unit; must be divided into smaller RT units

Sambel = Chilli sauce

Sawah = wet-rice field

Sembako (**sembilan bahan pokok**) = Nine basic necessities

Semiloka = Combined seminar and workshop

Sekretaris Daerah = Regional secretary

STM (*Serikat Tolong Menolong*) = Neighborhood associations

Silaturahmi = Psychological bond

Syariah = Islamic law

SPI (*Serikat Perempuan Independen*) = Independent Women's Union

Takut = fear

Tokoh adat = Customary leaders

Tokoh agama = Religious leader

TPP2W (*Tim Pengelola Program Peningkatan Peran Wanita dalam Pembangunan Daerah*) = Management Team for the Enhancement of Women's Role at the Local Level

Undang-undang = Laws

Ustad = A person who teaches Islamic principles

Warung = Small stall where food, groceries and other goods are sold