

## **Women and Corruption in Indonesia (Phenomenological Study of the Role and Position of Women in Eradicating Corruption)**

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**ABSTRACT.** The case of corruption in Indonesia is an old issue that has caught the attention of the Indonesian people until now. Corruption occurs when public money or state money is not used in accordance with the will of the people and is not allocated properly. This paper seeks to reveal the position and role of women in eradicating corruption in Indonesia. The existence of women in politics can be seen clearly with the increase in the number of women's participation in politics. Women began to show their potential, qualities and convince the public that they could bring about positive changes in government. The role of women in government and politics is followed by the increasing number of women who are suspects and convicted of corruption cases in Indonesia. The research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach and data obtained from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and in-depth studies of the results of a survey of women's perceptions of corruption in Indonesia. The results of the study show that in several corruption cases, women often become objects or victims and are also perpetrators of corruption. Women in Indonesia also consider corruption as a common thing that has even become a culture in people's lives. The position of women in corruption can be divided into four positions, namely as an object, abject, anti-subject, and subject. The role of women is very important in the anti-corruption movement, so that anti-corruption attitudes and actions take root in all levels of society.

**Keywords:** [women; corruption; role; position; Indonesia]

### **INTRODUCTION**

The case of corruption in Indonesia is an old issue that has caught the attention of the Indonesian people until now. The problem of corruption is also an interesting thing to talk about. Corruption occurs when public money or state money is not used following the will of the people and is not allocated properly. Corruption is also a disease for society because the people involved in corruption are those who should be role models for the community, elected because they promised the people, they are educated and should be highly knowledgeable, and before they carry out their duties, they have also been sworn in according to their religion or belief. But corruption cases are still alive in Indonesia.

The Anti-Corruption Education Center stated that eradicating corruption requires a common understanding of the criminal act of corruption itself because with the same perception, eradicating corruption can be carried out quickly and directed. Prevention and eradication of corruption as an extraordinary crime is not only the task of the government and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) but requires the participation of the community. According to Widoyoko (2013), to be able to fight corruption crimes, a coalition of social movements is needed in society, because efforts to eradicate corruption cannot be separated from the democratization movement against corrupt elites who control political institutions. The dominance of political institutions in Indonesia causes discrimination, not only against ordinary people but also against women (Widoyoko, 2013).

The existence of women in politics can be seen clearly with the increase in the number of women's participation in politics. Women began to show their potential, qualities and convince the public that they could bring about positive changes in government. The limited rights of women have faded, and many women can be involved and play a role in various fields of national and state life.

However, the participation and role of women in politics are also followed by an increasing number of women who are suspects and convicted of corruption cases in Indonesia. Given that in some cases of corruption, women are often the object or victim and even become perpetrators. According to ACCH (Anti-Corruption Clearing House) records, from 2006 to 2016 there were 46 women caught in corruption cases.

In the note “The Quality of Government Standard Dataset” in January 2017, there is a correlation between the proportion of women in national parliaments and the level of corruption in several democracies such as Japan, England, Spain, Finland, and Sweden (Stensöta & Wängnerud, 2018). Countries such as Finland and Sweden, which have women parliamentarians above 40 percent have very good control over corruption. In Indonesia, the 30 percent rule for female legislative candidates is still just a number and does not represent women's representation in the legislature. There is a large gender gap in all the resources that female candidates need to achieve political success. Women in Indonesia still face prejudice from political parties and society regarding their capacity to be able to represent the community in regional and national representative institutions (Aspinall et al., 2021). The media, through their coverage of women politicians, are still trapped in the great wall of patriarchy which regards women as weak and emotional (Susilo et al., 2019).

The role of women in social, economic, political, legal, and cultural life has actually existed for centuries. The role and contribution of these women can be seen from the amount of time devoted to each activity carried out both in productive, reproductive, and social activities. UNDP and UNIFEM (2010) noted that the lack of representation of women in decision-making positions in the public sector has led to the development of economic and social policies that favor the perspectives and interests of men, as well as the investment of national resources taking into account the benefits for man (Hossain et al., 2010). The results of the analysis by Debski and Jetter (2015) on countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America show that when more women are involved in political and business activities, fewer cases of corruption occur (Debski & Jetter, 2015).

With these conditions, it is clear that the role of women in Indonesia must be further enhanced in terms of public participation and government policies. The powerlessness of women in corruption cases is shaped by factors such as socioeconomic disparities and cultural norms that make women more vulnerable to corruption (Carranceja, 2021).

This study seeks to further explore the role and position of women in corruption cases in Indonesia. How women in Indonesia are willing and able to see, hear and discuss the problem of corruption that has taken root in Indonesia. In addition, to find out how the role and position of women in anti-corruption education, especially in the family environment, home environment, work environment, to the wider community environment.

## **METHOD**

This research is a qualitative research conducted by conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with stakeholders related to corruption in Indonesia. The determination and use of this method is related to the purpose of the research, namely to scan social problems and then look for solutions. Technically methodical, this research was conducted through interviews and focus group discussions. The research approach used is phenomenology, which focuses its attention on the conscious experience of an individual (Bungin, 2011). Phenomenology holds the view that humans actively interpret their experiences, so that they can understand the environment and places a strong emphasis on perceptions and interpretations of human subjective experiences, in this case related to the role and position of women in eradicating corruption in Indonesia. Phenomenology uses direct experience as a way to understand the world by examining it consciously through the feelings and perceptions of the person concerned (Pawito, 2008).

Interviews with several informants were held from April – September 2021, and a focus group discussion was held online on September 29, 2021 by inviting two expert informants and seven women representing students, anti-corruption activists, journalists (media), and lecturers. Two expert informants are Prof. Dr. Wening Udasmoro, DEA (WU) as a professor of gender studies and Dr. Devie Rahmawati, M.Si (DR) as a lecturer in communication science and Expert Staff of the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemkominfo RI).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## Women and Corruption in Indonesia

The greater involvement of women in various public sectors is, of course, progress. It's just that globalization and the current interactive era have consequences for women's lives, including in Indonesia. One important issue that may be overlooked by the cyber community is corruption in Indonesia. Women as a group who are often marginalized in various social and political issues may become increasingly ignorant of the issue of corruption when they get a "new world" that is able to bring various kinds of pleasures to their lives. Women are the most disadvantaged group in a corrupt system. In many countries, including Indonesia, people who win legal cases tend to get involved with corrupt law enforcement officials.

Corruption as defined by Hermien Koeswadji as something that has to do with a person's dishonesty in terms of his attractive nature, or for the sake of, favoring, charming, even one that can make someone deviate (likely to lead a person stray) Koeswadji (1994). Thus, corruption should not only be defined as a criminal act as stated in Article 2 paragraph 1 (one) of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Corruption which explains the criminal act of corruption that anyone who unlawfully commits an act of enriching oneself or another person or a corporation that can harm the state finances or the state economy, shall be subject to a criminal sanction. In everyday life in the family, school, campus, or workplace, the notion of corruption in a broad sense must also be instilled as stated by Hermien Koeswadji above. And women should be able to become agents who play a role in preventing corruption in the surrounding environment, and not become perpetrators of corruption.

The first informant, Wening Udasmoro (WU) said that *"Corruption is a crime that does not recognize gender, but women are often described differently when they commit corruption"*. With this statement, it can be seen that the portrayal of women is carried out differently by society and the media. When corruption is carried out by men, the media often leads to public opinion that the actions taken by that person are due to the demands of the wife's cost of living. However, it is different when there are female politicians who commit criminal acts of corruption, the public and the media tend to look at their lifestyle and family life. As the results of research from Susilo et al (2019) who saw that in political life in Indonesia, the media still focuses on the personal lives of female politicians such as their family lives rather than their performance.

Corruption must be viewed with an intersectional perspective, which is not only a gender issue, but there are issues of ethnicity, age, social class, and education because there are different mechanisms, methods, and effects of such intersections. When corruption is carried out by officials or politicians who have privileges, they will get different treatment when undergoing trials until they become prisoners. In the context of Indonesia, corruption is perpetrated by women with various ethnic backgrounds, social classes, and ages. According to the "I, Women, Anti-Corruption" (SPAK) movement initiated by the KPK, most women do not want to be involved or use the methods taken by men when involved in corruption. Corrupt judicial procedures and systems make it difficult for women in many cases to win the legal process in a transparent and open manner (KPK, 2014). This puts women in a difficult position to get equal rights with men.

As we have seen in the last decade, there have been many corruption cases involving women in Indonesia, starting from the Century case which allegedly involved Sri Mulyani who is now the Minister of Finance, the case of embezzlement of customer funds by Malinda Dee, the traveler's check case involving Nunun Nurbaeti and Miranda. Goeltom, also the case of Wa Ode Nurhayati (PAN faction) in the Acceleration of Regional Infrastructure Development (PPID). Even the case of Wisma Athlete and Sport Center Hambalang which turned out to involve a lot of women in it such as Angelina Sondakh, Mindorosalina Manulang, Yulianis and also Athiyah Laila who is Anas Urbaningrum's wife. Not to mention the corruption case that ensnared the former Banten Governor Ratu Atut Choisyah, until later several female regional heads were involved in corruption cases such as Siti Mashita Suparno (former Mayor of Tegal), Atty Soeharti (former Mayor of Cimahi), Sri Hartini (former Regent of Klaten), Rita Widyasari (former Regent of Kutai Kartanegara), Imas Arymningsih (former Regent of Subang), to Sri Wahyumi Maria Manalip (former Regent of Talaud).

The number of women in Indonesia who are entangled in corruption cases can be caused by many things. As stated in the book *Anti-Corruption Education for Higher Education* Kemendikbud RI, mentioned the factors that cause corruption. There are internal factors that cause corruption that come from the personal self which includes moral aspects concerning the weakness of faith, honesty, shame.

Furthermore, it concerns aspects of attitude or behavior, namely consumptive lifestyles and social aspects such as family that can encourage someone to behave corruptly. In addition, there are external factors as a factor causing corruption due to external causes. Some of these external factors are usually related to economic aspects such as income or salary is not sufficient. There are also political aspects concerning political instability, political interests, gaining and maintaining power. No less important are the management and organizational aspects, namely the lack of accountability and transparency, the legal aspect is seen in the poor form of legislation and weak law enforcement and social aspects including the environment or society that does not support anti-corruption behavior (Kemendikbud, 2011).

The second informant, Devie Rahmawati (DR) conveyed that quite a number of corruption cases were carried out by women, one of which was caused by the consumerism and materialistic lifestyle that began to appear in the television era to the digital era. A materialistic lifestyle that is supported by a "show-off" culture in the digital space that began to emerge from childhood. The role of women in anti-corruption behavior education is the first educator in the family. From several cases of corruption committed by women and the factors that cause corruption, a movement is needed to encourage women to be aware of the latent dangers of corruption.

The anti-corruption movement as an effort to prevent corruption should provide a wider space for women to participate in it. As Carranceja (2021) points out, women's empowerment is a powerful tool for reducing corruption because it complicates social networks and mechanisms that allow corruption to proliferate. In the context of the problem of corruption in Indonesia, what is more important is how women play a role in family education and the formation of children's character regarding the nature and behavior of anti-corruption. One of the important things in family education is increasing children's understanding of the problem of corruption, it is deemed necessary to provide family education based on honest, fair and open character.

### **The Position of Women in Corruption in Indonesia**

The movement to fight corruption can improve the opportunities and quality of life of the community, including women. According to a report from Transparency International, countries with higher gender equality experience lower levels of corruption, while gender inequality provides fertile ground for corruption through male networks (Chêne & Rheinbay, 2016). As gender equality and anti-corruption are closely related and mutually reinforcing, considering women's position in corruption can help design effective anti-corruption mechanisms. Although having more women in politics does not necessarily mean less corruption, a stronger position of women in the political system can create a better political environment.

In corruption, the position of women cannot be separated from power relations and with other actors. The position of women, according to WU informants, can be seen from the side of the object, *abject*, anti-subject, and subject. The position of women as objects in corruption is often a messenger who is subordinated in power relations with superiors. Women (wives) are also often positioned as the cause of the corruption by men. This position places women as "victims" or weak parties of corruption crimes committed by men. In Indonesia, the media plays an important role in objectifying women when it comes to corruption.

The position of the *abject* or the state of being cast off is when women are punished more severely for the same act (corruption). *Abjection* occurs when women commit corruption, so what is discussed is not the issue of corruption, but clothing, facial surgery, hijab, and others. Women are seen more about their personal life, marriage, or romance by the media and the public when they are caught in corruption cases, so it seems that there is an additional punishment in the form of "social punishment" which is heavier for women. When former Pinangki prosecutor Sirna Malasari was arrested for corruption, the media and the public looked more at his dress style than the corrupt actions that had been committed by abusing his authority and position as a prosecutor.

The position of women as anti-subject in corruption is seen when many women are involved in the public sphere, the greater the opportunity for corruption. The United Nations (2020) stated that overall, women are more affected by corruption than men because women have lower socioeconomic power than men, and women access certain public services where corruption is more likely (Carranceja, 2021). Hedonism lifestyle, social pressure, the desire to own material, commodities and consumerism are the things that contribute to acts of corruption. Related to these anti-subject actions, for example,

playing with the budget, trading positions, colluding with businessmen, and cooperating with high conflicts of interest. Corruption involving female regional heads in Indonesia involves many of these anti-subject actions.

The position of the subject of women in acts of corruption is when high expectations arise for women not to be criminal (corruption) so as to provide fear and caution against acts of corruption. This subject position provides positive motivation for women not to commit acts of corruption because they have concerns about the consequences of acts of corruption, such as imprisonment and leaving their families. The position of women as subjects to mobilize anti-corruption becomes very important by utilizing individuals and communities. Education, media, a strong system, strong regulations, and apparatus with high integrity can become channels in the anti-corruption movement. Education is the main channel in efforts to internalize anti-corruption traits and behavior from children to teenagers.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that in several corruption cases, women often become objects or victims and are also perpetrators of corruption. Women in Indonesia also consider corruption as a common thing that has even become a culture in people's lives. The role of women is very important in the anti-corruption movement, so that anti-corruption attitudes and actions take root in all levels of society. The position of women in corruption can be divided into four positions, namely as an object, abject, anti-subject, and subject. The position of women as subjects becomes very important in anti-corruption education as a way to prevent acts of corruption. Early anti-corruption education for children by women (mothers) is expected to be an effective preventive effort against corruption eradication.

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