

ENDLESS JOURNEY TO ENGAGE MEN IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NUSA TENGGARA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

The importance of engaging men in the efforts for ending violence against women is obvious but how to engage men in the efforts and what are the appropriate strategies become contested issues due to dilemmas and risks in it. This paper discusses the initiative of engaging men and boys in ending violence against women in Nusa Tenggara Indonesia. The idea of addressing men and boys emerged from the fact that men are often ignored in the efforts of violence against women prevention in Indonesia and most of intervention and prevention programs mainly focus on women and girls. This paper describes strategies of engaging men in the movement for ending violence against women which had been applied in the region and explores the outcomes generated by the strategies. This paper suggests that considering multifaceted factors of violence against women, strategies that address those factors are inevitable. Furthermore, feminist principles are needed to guide those strategies in building non-violent and equal society. Even though the initiative show evidences of change, there are many challenges should be anticipated in order to generate meaningful outcome.

Key words: violence against women, gender equality, men's involvement

A. Introduction

This paper presents an initiative to raise awareness on gender equality and violence against women among men in Nusa Tenggara Timur and Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia. This initial work was carried out through various strategies, such as discussions, workshops, trainings, and building men's network. Self-reflection approach was applied in this process which allowed men to have understanding about their own thinking, attitudes and behaviours related to gender and violence against women issue from their daily life practices. The ultimate goal of this process is to transform men's patriarchal attitudes and behaviours into gender responsive and anti-violence against women.

Nusa Tenggara is located in eastern part of Indonesia and it comprises many small islands with five biggest islands, namely Timor, Flores, Sumba, Sumbawa, and Lombok. The region consists of two provinces, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB). The two provinces differ in many respects, including their religion, cultural practices and traditions, but they share the same value regarding the status of men and women in society where in general, men have more power and privileges than women (Bennett, Andajani-Sutjahjo et al. 2011; Hayon 2013) In terms of population, NTT is more populated with 4,899,260 people live in the province in 2013 (Biro Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara

Timor 2013) compare to NTB with 4,630,302 people in the same year (Biro Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat 2013). The two provinces have slightly similar rates of violence against women. As reported by Rumah Perempuan, a well-known women crisis center in NTT, between 2010 and 2012 there were 568 women have accessed its service due to men's violence against women (The Indonesian Way 2012). Meanwhile, LBH APIK (Association of Legal Aid Societies for Women), an NTB based NGO, reported that in 2010 there were 657 victims of violence against women have sought legal aid to its center (Kias 2012)

Many efforts have been made to tackle the problem of violence against women in the region. However, the efforts focus on girls and women as primary beneficiaries while boys and men are not considered as a crucial part of the struggle to end the problem (Hasyim 2009). Similarly, at national level, the issue of men's involvement in anti-violence against women advocacy is rarely discussed. The idea of engaging men in this advocacy emerged in 2000 when a group of men in Jakarta declared a movement called "CANTIK" (cowok-cowok anti kekerasan) or "men against violence"(Subono 2001). This men's group was noticeable as the pioneer of a pro-feminist men's movement in Indonesia.

The discourse of men's involvement in the anti-violence against women movement also became visible in Yogyakarta in the late 1990s when Rifka Media, a newsletter of the Rifka Annisa women's crisis centre, released the headline "Melibatkan Laki-laki, Mengapa Tidak?" (Involving Men, Why Not?). In this edition, Rifka media discussed the rationale for involving men in ending violence against women in Yogyakarta as well as the debate around the issue (Rifka Media 1999). From that time on, some activities were undertaken by a group of men in the city, such as public discussions, a long march of men who oppose violence, and some other campaigns focusing on young boys.

Another important project related to men and violence is research that was conducted by Rifka Annisa in 2009. The research investigated Javanese men's views of masculinity and domestic violence in Yogyakarta and Purworejo (Hasyim 2009). This study is considered as a pioneer of studies on men, masculinities and violence in Indonesia.

The growing discussion on men and violence against women in Indonesia has influenced some non-government organizations (NGOs) to initiate programs that aim to involve men in building gender equality and ending violence against women. The programs ranging from establishing behavioural change services for male perpetrators of domestic violence to advocacy work. One of those organizations is Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Centre in Yogyakarta. The same initiatives have been also carried out by other women's organizations in Indonesia, such as Rumah Perempuan in Kupang, NTT, and Cahaya Perempuan in Bengkulu, Sumatera.

B. Filling the Gap

As noted in the introduction that men are often ignored in most of the gender equality and anti-violence against women programs in Indonesia. This is likely to intensify men's perception that gender issues are exclusively women's issues.

When a men's involvement approach was introduced among activists in Nusa Tenggara in 2007, they felt that this was a missing approach from their efforts to stop violence against women and to achieve gender equality.. Within the following years, a series of public seminars about men and gender were held in Kupang, the capital city of NTT as well as in Mataram, the capital city of NTB, by some local NGOs such as Rumah Perempuan Kupang, LBH APIK Mataram and CIS (Centre for Internally Displaced People's Service) Timor. Most of those discussions were supported by Oxfam Australia.

In 2010, Rifka Annisa in collaboration with another eight organizations in Nusa Tenggara developed an initiative to engage men in ending violence against women. Those organizations are Rumah Perempuan Kupang, Yabiku Kefa, CIS Timor, Sanggar Suara Perempuan Soe, LBH APIK Mataram, ADBMI Lombok Timur, SANTAI Mataram and GEMA ALAM Lombok Timur. The collaboration - that was also supported by Oxfam Australia - has two main objectives;

- a. To raise awareness of men in Nusa Tenggara on men's involvement in achieving gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence against women.
- b. To form a group of male facilitators as well as a group of males at community level and build network with Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru, a national alliance of men to support gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence against women in Indonesia.

C. Strategies

Although there is a general agreement among feminists that violence against women is deeply rooted in the unequal power relations between men and women in society (DeKeseredy 2011), the WHO study on women's health and domestic violence against women revealed that violence against women is a complex problem (Moreno 2005). The study maintained that there is no single factor triggering violence against women. It is a multifaceted phenomenon. Therefore, to eliminate the violence requires multiple levels of intervention.

Lori Heise (1998) is a scholar who introduced the ecological framework, a comprehensive analytical framework to understand violence against women. The framework explains different factors that make violence against women occur. Those factors are; personal history, microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem. According to the framework, a male who witnesses marital violence when he was a child, is abused, or grows up without a consistent or available father is more likely to become violent than other males. At the microsystem level (regarding the immediate context in which abuse takes place such as a family or other intimate or acquaintance relationships), violence against women is more likely to occur

within the family where males are dominant, take control of family wealth and use alcohol. The violence also tends to happen in families where verbal conflict is frequent. The last two factors are beyond individual history and family history, related to the social and economic status of men and women (exosystem) and to beliefs and norms with regard to men and women in society (macrosystem). For instance, violence against women is more likely to happen in communities where men are considered as the owner of women, manhood is defined by aggression and dominance, and interpersonal violence is accepted (Heise 1998).

By considering the multilayered factors shaping violence against women, the initiative to engage men in violence against women prevention in Nusa Tenggara developed strategies which tried to cover multiple dimensions of violence against women. This can be seen from the strategies employed which addressed both individual and broader aspects of the violence.

There are four main strategies which have been applied: capacity building for male facilitators, two hours of discussion at community level, a public campaign using various media, and building a network of men to support gender equality and to end violence against women.

C.1. Capacity building for facilitators

This strategy consists of four activities: training for facilitators, community discussions, module development, and reflection workshop for male facilitators. The workshop was conducted to create a space for facilitators to reflect on their own gender-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, as well as to gain lesson learned from the activities they have done at the community level, especially to identify challenges in engaging men in the issue of gender equality and appropriate approaches for future development of the programs.

The aim of this capacity development for male facilitators is to form a group of male facilitators in the region who are expected to be leaders, resource persons, and role models for other men on the issues of gender equality and violence prevention. The group is also projected to play an important role in establishing men's networks to end violence against women in the region as well as at the national level. Moreover, the facilitators assist new male facilitators to develop their capacity to promote gender equality and violence prevention in their own communities.

C.2. Community discussion

This activity is done based on the module that had been developed by facilitators as described above. The module consists of several topics which address daily life, such as engaging fatherhood, being a responsible husband, sharing household task, and domestic violence. The module incorporates videos and other creative arts to enhance the learning process, including traditional theatre, storytelling, and traditional songs.

The specific topics related to men's daily life were chosen to help participants who are mostly from rural areas to comprehend the concept of gender as well as to avoid any resistance among males due to the existing stereotype that gender issues are a western issue. Each discussion takes about two hours. The discussions were conducted in 34 communities, and carried out by eight main facilitators who held three to four sessions in each community.

C.3. Public campaign

The strategy aims to increase community awareness of the importance of male engagement in building gender equality and ending violence against women. The public campaign also is designed to reach a wider audience in order to get more people, especially men, to support the movement.

Various media such as radio, newspapers, and traditional arts are employed to promote new norms of being men and invite men actively to get involved in anti-violence against women activism. For example, facilitators in NTB used a popular traditional theatre called *Rudat* as a media campaign. The theatre usually involves a single standard story but for the campaign's purpose, the story was modified and the issue of violence against women was included. Moreover, to measure the audience's understanding toward the issue, the facilitators held quizzes at the end of every performance.

Another campaign was conducted by giving a community-level award for the husband who has best shown a set of attitudes and behaviours that support gender equality in his family. The selection of candidates is based on the recommendations of community members who interact with the candidates in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, the awarded candidate was required to be a role model for other men in his community. Although it is considered to be a creative strategy, this campaign was criticised for having the possible risk of providing men with new privilege and therefore sustaining and strengthening male domination over women.

The criticism of the strategy has raised once again an existing debate on the risks and dilemmas of men's involvement in preventing violence against women. Pease (2008) warns that there are some dangers in engaging men in anti-violence advocacy. Among those dangers is that men may gain more praise for their efforts than women. They may also receive more positive acknowledgements and gain more media coverage, often out of proportion to their involvement. This is because the involvement of men in the anti-violence against women movement is influenced by their privileged position in patriarchal society (Flood 2001).

This criticism was very important to make facilitators and participants of the programs aware of those possible risks and to help them develop principles to ensure that the engagement of men is to support women to be free from violence and to achieve gender equality and not to sustain and strengthen women's oppression.

C.4. Establishing a nationwide network of men to support gender equality in Indonesia

Feminist theory argues that violence against women is not merely an individual matter but also a structural issue. This violence occurs because of broader social structures which make women more vulnerable to violence than men. Therefore, individual intervention is considered inadequate to abolish the problem without the addition of strategies addressing structural dimensions of the problem.

The fourth strategy, of building a men's network to end violence against women, is based on this understanding. Male facilitators of and participants in the programs need to create a political alliance among themselves and other pro-feminist men in the country. The network

is intended to enable men to support each other and to ensure their accountability to women's groups. In doing so, they can have a strong influence among men's groups outside the network and possibly can advocate for policy change in regard to preventing violence against women in the region and in country.

Besides strengthening the network among facilitators and participants in Nusa Tenggara, the programs enabled the facilitators and participants to join and contribute to the existing national men's network in Indonesia. The national men's network is called Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (New Men Alliance). The alliance was established in 2009 in Bandung West Java by male and female activists from Jakarta and Yogyakarta and followed by activists from Aceh, Bengkulu, and Kupang.

By being a member of the national men's network, the facilitators and participants of the programs in Nusa Tenggara were able to participate in the network's national consultation, to access its resources regarding men's involvement in the anti-violence against women movement, to share their experiences with other members of the network, and to gain input from other members of the network to develop further programs to engage men in Nusa Tenggara.

D. Self-reflection Approach

Elimination of violence against women requires transformation of individual men and women as well as structural change that reorganises the pattern of relationships between them. As part of promoting individual transformation, the initiative in Nusa Tenggara to engage men in building gender equality and preventing violence against women adopted a personal reflection approach for the entirety of its programs. Self reflection according to Carver and Scheier (cited in (Grant, Franklin et al. 2002) is a process of inspection and evaluation of one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to enable oneself to understand one's own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This understanding is a central factor for a person to change.

In applying a self-reflection approach, the programs used personal experience as a starting point for discussion and analysis of the problem of violence against women. The approach also requires participants of the programs always to evaluate and examine their own perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to gender and violence against women in their daily lives. Moreover, participants are encouraged to be critical about the broader social forces on which their attitudes and behaviours are based.

The approach was used during training for male facilitators, reflection workshops, and discussions at community level. The common challenge was how to encourage men to open up and reflect on themselves. To overcome the challenge, the facilitators found that it is crucial to create a safe and comfortable space for men to talk about themselves. To encourage men to disclose, facilitators of the programs disclosed first before male members of the community. Therefore, the programs showed that facilitators are a means to apply the self-reflection approach among men and they are also role models for other men.

E. Meaningful Changes

To evaluate the outcomes of the programs, a reflection workshop was conducted in Yogyakarta in the middle of 2012, with all facilitators from eight organizations attending. Each facilitator conducted a focus group discussion in his community prior to the workshop to gain information about changes among men at his community.

The main objective of the reflection workshop was to reflect on facilitators' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to gender, masculinity, and violence, before and after getting involved in the programs. The workshop also aimed to provide a space for facilitators to share their findings about changes among men at their community to enable them to map the outcomes of the programs at community level.

During the workshop, participants shared their own personal changes after participating in the programs for more than a year. The workshop revealed that there are significant personal changes among facilitators and participants which were manifested in men's roles and men's relationships with women in their households and communities, such as sharing household tasks and negotiation on the use of contraception. As one facilitator said, "Now I start doing domestic chore." Another said, "When I do not find any food on the table I will manage it by myself" (Rifka Annisa 2012). Regarding the use of contraception, one facilitator said that previously he did not agree that a man should use contraception. After his involvement in the programs he realized that using contraception is part of his responsibility as a husband. Therefore, he took an initiative to use condom, stating "Now I volunteer myself to use condom" (Rifka Annisa 2012).

The programs also changed men's perceptions about sexuality. Generally, sexuality is considered a taboo topic in Indonesia. As a consequence, it is rarely discussed and people are reluctant to talk about their sexual lives. This is true even among married couples. One facilitator felt that after participating the program he could communicate about sex with his wife more easily. He also felt that he had a better and more enjoyable sexual relationship with her: "Now I can build an effective communication when I have sex with my wife and I feel my sexual life is more enjoyable" (Rifka Annisa 2012).

Another facilitator shared personal changes that he has made and his opposition to the use of violence in solving marital conflict. He said that previously he smoked a lot of cigarettes and also often drank alcohol, and he preferred to spend the night with his friends outside and come back home the morning after. He said that after the program however, "Now I quit smoking and I stay at home during the night, even though most of my friends away from me". He also said, "I do believe that violence is not the right way to solve the problem at home" (Rifka Annisa 2012).

Similarly, facilitators found changes among men's roles at their community, such as men's willingness to share household tasks, even though some of them still feel ashamed when they did the household chores in public space. Although the programs created some important changes among male facilitators and participants, long term assessment is still needed to

evaluate the sustainability of the changes and to investigate whether the individual change is followed by transformation of relation between men and women.

F. Conclusion

Men's involvement in activism aimed at achieving gender equality and ending violence against women is becoming an emerging issue among activists, practitioners and policy makers in Indonesia. The initiatives which have been taken in Nusa Tenggara are examples of this trend. Although men and boys increasingly are considered to be an inevitable part of the project to achieve feminists' agenda, engaging them in the project carries some dangers that can create negative effects for the achievement of the agenda. Therefore, it is necessary to develop feminist principles to guide activists, practitioners and policy makers in engaging men and boys in gender equality and violence against women prevention programs.

To create meaningful impact, men's involvement strategies should be applied in many levels of activities since violence against women is caused by social factors at multiple levels. Moreover, as the men's engagement programs in Nusa Tenggara showed, self-reflection is an important component of the project because it allows participants to transform patriarchal attitudes and behaviours as well as patriarchal norms which maintain men's oppression over women in society.

As an initial effort, the engagement of men in achieving gender equality and participating in anti-violence against women activism in Nusa Tenggara encountered some challenges. Those challenges should be considered by activists, practitioners and policy makers in order to make better programs which can generate positive impact for the lives of women and girls as well as men and boys in the country.

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